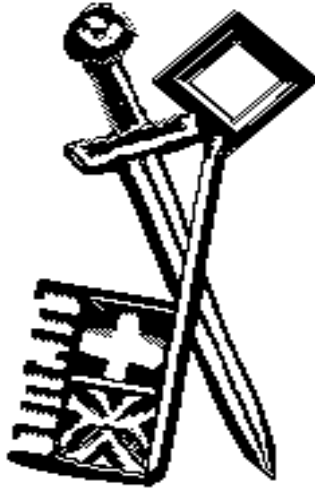


***CONFRATERNITY
OF
PILGRIMS TO ROME***



NEWSLETTER

December 2014 No. 21

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(December 2010 – June 2014)

Editorial

This is the twenty-first issue of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome's *Newsletter*.

There are four articles, in the first of which Martin Desforges discusses the cycling pilgrimage from Canterbury to Rome that he and his sister made in August-September 2014. Next comes the third of Bronwyn Marques' series of "Recipes along the *Via Francigena*," with one from the Champagne area of France, after which Brian Mooney introduces us to Danilo Parisi's *Liber Perigrinorum*, the large tome in which he records the passage of all those pilgrims who cross the river Pô on his ferry launch. This is followed by a detailed update on the "Pilgrims Crossing Borders" project (Trondheim to Jerusalem), the Chairman's Report and AGM Minutes for 2015, a book review and the "Secretary's Notebook, all of which items are interspersed with a number of short texts containing information likely to be of interest to our members. At the end there is an index to the articles and book reviews published in issues numbers 11 to 20 of our *Newsletter* (December 2010 to December 2014),

Articles are **always** needed for future issues although, in the interests of variety, we do not normally include more than one account of a pilgrim journey per issue. Note, however, that the views expressed in these articles are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the CPR.

When submitting articles (most versions of WORD are acceptable – short items can be sent by email) please do **NOT** use automatic or preset formatting as this causes a lot of problems with the layout and, if you include photos, please send them as separate files, indicating where they should be placed in the article, i.e. not integrated into the text formatting.

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A Pilgrimage from Canterbury to Rome: A Cyclist's Tale

Martin Desforges

Introduction

In August-September 2014 I cycled from Canterbury to Rome. This article does not give details of the route we followed (although it does provide an outline of the main towns we visited) but sets out, instead, some of the principal factors involved in planning and carrying out our journey, and ends with some reflections on the aftermath of the pilgrimage.

Preparation

I spent nearly a year planning the pilgrimage, starting with an internet search for some basic information, and downloading a number of documents that gave a great deal of information about the routes, timing, weather, and accommodation. I joined the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome, and read most of the information and articles in their *Newsletters*. I met up with a priest who had cycled from Canterbury to Rome in 2008 with a group of fellow priests and teachers from a Catholic Secondary school in his parish. He loaned me his collection of maps and an outline of the route they took, together with a two-volume set of route maps published by the Associazione Internazionale Via Francigena (AIVF). I also read the two volumes on the *Via Francigena* written by Alison Raju and published by Cicerone Press.

Over the past 25 years I had made a number of long-distance cycling journeys in Britain and Europe of between 250 and 700 miles, some with family, some with friends. I usually travelled with camping equipment, using it in good weather, but staying in hotels if the weather was bad. Cycling and running have formed a regular part of my life and I assumed that my usual fitness levels would be good enough for the planned journey. One of my sisters had agreed to accompany me on the pilgrimage, and we had a preliminary four-day ride through the Yorkshire Dales to reassess our compatibility and agree a range of daily distances we might aim to cover in the varied terrain we would cycle through between Canterbury and Rome. We also talked at length about accommodation – camping, hostels and hotels – and agreed to take camping gear for the good weather but use hostels or hotels when the weather was bad or when there were no campsites.

In retrospect we both enjoyed the journey, felt we knew each other better at the end of our pilgrimage, and had talked a great deal about our childhood, our different perspectives of our early lives, and our individual approaches to spirituality and religion. The opportunity to have conversations on these and many other topics enhanced our enjoyment of the pilgrimage.

Planning the Journey

My usual approach to cycle touring is to use a road atlas with a scale of about 4 miles to 1 inch (3 km to 1 cm). This scale shows all surfaced roads, and includes

the names of even the smallest villages, together with road numbers. As far as possible I aim to avoid main roads with fast-moving traffic, especially those that are used by large lorries and trucks. This may mean some slightly longer routes between major towns, but will provide rather more pleasant cycling conditions.

However, there is a need for flexibility – what you think will be a quiet road sometimes turns out to be a short cut used by heavy commercial traffic or what looks like a main road may be little used if a new motorway has been built nearby. In recent years the widespread use of satnavs by motor vehicles has led to an increase of traffic on minor roads, yet another factor in trying to plan to cycle on quiet roads. For me this route planning is part of the fun of cycle touring, and although we planned to visit the main towns on the *Via Francigena*, we would choose our own routes between them.

When to go and how long to take

Neither I nor my sister were in full-time work, and so had flexibility on when to go. We thought that to set off towards the end of the summer would give us cooler weather as we travelled south, and fit in with plans for a holiday once we arrived in Rome. We chose to leave Canterbury in late August, and planned to be in Rome by mid-September, giving us 21 days en route. We had to agree a start date as we wanted to begin the pilgrimage with a prayer and blessing in Canterbury Cathedral. I had emailed the Cathedral and Canon Clare had agreed to meet us in the early evening of August 25th, to take us to the pilgrim chapel in the cathedral and pray with us before giving her blessing. It also allowed us to stay for evening prayers, and start our cycling early on August 26th. In Rome we planned to attend the weekly papal general audience given each Wednesday in St Peter's Square. We needed to apply for tickets through our parish priest some weeks before we left, for the audience on September 17th. Finally, my wife was to fly out to Rome to meet us and we needed to book an apartment for the time we would stay there. So our target was to arrive in Rome on Monday September 15th and stay until September 20th, before going on to enjoy a two-week holiday in other parts of Italy.

The Journey

Day 1, August 26th: Canterbury–Dover–Calais–Guînes–Lumbres. Camped outside Lumbres, 85 kms.

Day 2, August 27th: Lumbres–Arras–Bapaume. Stayed in house of secretary of local society of the Amis de Saint-Jacques, 104kms.

Day 3, August 28th: Bapaume–Tergnier–St Gobain–Laon. Heavy rain, stayed in hotel, 118kms.

Day 4, August 29th: Laon–Corbeny–Reims–Châlons-en-Champagne. Camped in Châlons, 122kms.

Day 5, August 30th: Châlons–Coole–Corbeny–Brienne-le-Château–Bar-sur-Aube. Hotel, 112kms.

Day 6, August 31st: Bar-sur-Aube–Renneport–Richebourg–St Martin-lès-Langres–Langres–Chalindrey–Champlitte. Camped in Champlitte, 93 kms.

Day 7, September 1st: Champlitte–Dampierre-sur-Salon–Besançon–La Vèze–Ornans. Camped in Ornans 108 kms.

Day 8, September 2nd: Ornans–Pontarlier–Ste Croix–Villeboeuf–Orbe. Camped in Orbe, 107 kms.

Day 9, September 3rd: Orb–Lausanne–Villeneuve–Martigny. Camped in Martigny, 120 kms

Day 10, September 4th: Martigny–Aosta by post bus then Aosta–St Vincent–Pont St Martin–Ivrea. Pilgrim hostel in Ivrea, cycled 82 kms

Day 11, September 5th: Ivrea–Vercelli–Pavia. Pilgrim hostel, 130 kms.

Day 12, September 6th: Pavia–Piacenza–Busseto–Fidenza. Pilgrim hostel, 104 kms.

Day 13, September 7th: Fidenza–Fornovo di Taro–Cassio–Berceto–Pontremoli. Pilgrim hostel, 95 kms

Day 14, September 8th: Pontremoli–Aulla–Sarzana–Camaiore–Lucca. Youth hostel. 108, kms

Day 15, September 9th: Morning in Lucca then Lucca–Altopascio–San Miniato Basso–San Miniato Alto–San Gimignano. Camped, 90 kms.

Day 16, September 10th: Morning in San Gimignano then San Gimignano–Monte Riggioni–Badesse–Siena. Pilgrim hostel, 40kms.

Day 17, September 11th: Siena, rest day from cycling and spent the day there. Pilgrim hostel, 0 kms.

Day 18, September 12th: Siena–Buonconvento–San Quirico–Radicofani. Cold and wet – rained heavily all day. Pilgrim hostel, 80kms.

Day 19, September 13th: Radicofani–Aquapendente–San Lorenzo Nuovo–Bolsena. Camped in Bolsena, 50kms.

Day 20, September 14th: Bolsena–Montefiascone–Viterbo–Bracciano. Camped, 95 kms.

Day 21, September 15th: Bracciano–Osteria Nuova–Boccea–Via Boccea–St Peter’s Square, Rome. 55kms, arrived at 12.00p.m.

Comments on Schedule

We were fortunate in terms of weather for most of our journey. The first day from Canterbury to Rome was really bad, and the last two hours on day 3 into Laon were very wet, but we dried off in a hotel that night. The worst day of all was the one from Siena to Radicofani. It started raining as we left Siena and stopped only in the last 30 minutes as we reached the top of the steep climb from the river valley up to the hill town of Radicofani. At nearly 3000 feet above sea level the air was cold, and this was the most uncomfortable day of the ride.

In our preparatory reading and planning the roads from Martigny to Aosta appeared to pose the biggest problem. Firstly the road from Martigny to Sembrancher is narrow with many lorries and little or no hard shoulder. Secondly the road from Bourg-Saint-Pierre to the entrance to the Saint-Bernard tunnel has many shelters or *gallerias* to protect it from stone slides and avalanches. For several kilometres it is more like a tunnel with windows in the side, and on these stretches there is no hard shoulder. We decided that these two sections were too dangerous to cycle and opted for the bus. With hindsight

and knowing where the bus stops, we could have opted to get the bus to the tunnel entrance and then cycled over the col, but parts of the descent from the Italian end of the tunnel to Aosta are on very narrow roads, again with some heavy lorries.

We had several punctures, but as we carried spare inner tubes, we replaced the punctured tube, and mended the puncture at night. The roads in Italy were in considerably worse condition than those in the UK, France or Switzerland. There were many large potholes and significant subsidence in many places. We had one accident, caused by the bad road surface. It happened at the end of a heavy rain shower on the way into Pavia. I was cycling slowly and took one hand off the handlebars to brush the rain drops of the perspex map cover so that I could read the map. At exactly this point the front wheel went into a pothole and stuck there. I went over the handlebars, and fortunately my cycle helmet took the force of the impact on my head. I escaped with a badly grazed knee, bruised ribs and a grazed shoulder. The bike suffered only from twisted handlebars.

The first few days of a long ride demand a certain mental resilience. The distance to be covered can seem overwhelming and doubts about physical fitness, robustness of the bike and the vagaries of weather can lead to anxiety. After the first 3-4 days it was clear we could make the daily distances comfortably, and by the time we reached Italy the problem was that we might arrive in Rome too early. From Lucca onwards we slowed down considerably, spending time looking round towns, visiting churches, and riding at a more leisurely pace. We did not want to arrive in Rome before September 15th as we might have had difficulty finding comfortable accommodation at a reasonable price. Our arrival in Rome was timed to perfection in terms of meeting up with Helen and the time we had booked an apartment.

Passport stamps and the certificate

We started off feeling a little sheepish wandering into churches, cathedrals or tourist offices to ask for a stamp on our pilgrim passports. However, once we realised that we were not treated like obsessional oddities for such requests, it became enjoyable. Some of the stamps were quite beautiful, with the large one from San Miniato Alto the prize of the pilgrimage. Indeed I found it hard to stop collecting these stamps, and when in Assisi two weeks after the finish of our ride to Rome, I could not resist getting a stamp from the basilica of St Francis.



We failed to get a *Testimonium* when in Rome. Security guards were adamant that nobody was allowed in to the sacristy of St. Peter's via the side entrance on the left of the square. We were told that we had to queue, go into the basilica and enter the sacristy from inside. This we did, found the office with the stamp, and had no problem getting our pilgrim passport stamped. In discussions with the three men on duty at the desks here, we were told that the *Testimonium* was no longer issued by the Vatican. On return home I followed the instructions in Volume 2 of the Cicerone guide to the *Via Francigena* and sent off a photocopy of my pilgrim passport, with the stamped pages, together with a photocopy of my UK passport, and a request for a *Testimonium*. I have not yet had a response (sent in mid October), nor received a reply.

Themes from the Pilgrimage Journey

Three weeks on a bike gives a great deal of time for thought and reflection. Pedalling is a repetitive activity, automatism develops, and the mind can freewheel. By the end of the second week of our journey a number of themes were emerging, and during the rainy morning in Siena I had made short notes to ensure I had sufficient material to help refresh my memories when I reflected on the whole pilgrimage experience after we reached Rome. In Rome I made a few more notes, and left the matter for a further 5 weeks when I had returned home and was settling back into everyday life. I want to address each of these themes in turn.

1. The interest, kindness and hospitality shown to us by so many people. I am sure that most people interacted with us in a different way when they realised we were pilgrims cycling to Rome. In Canterbury Cathedral, after private prayer and a blessing from Canon Clare we went to evening prayers in the cathedral. Canon Clare had asked the Minister responsible for the service to pray for us by name and that we had a safe and fruitful journey. As we left at the end of the service some members of the congregation came to talk with us, assure us of their prayers, and asked us to pray for them when we arrived in Rome. They also wanted to talk about the journey itself, the route, where we would stay and how long it would take.

We enjoyed a brief encounter with a man during our lunch on the second day, when he came out of his house to talk and give us fruit as well as offering us hospitality for the night - this was a spontaneous act of kindness to strangers. A similar thing happened in Corbeny, when a woman leaning from her window saw we had not managed to buy bread, and gave us a loaf. The women in the cathedral in Arras who insisted on finding us accommodation and spending some time making sure we knew exactly how to find the house they had arranged for us to stay in. In Châlons, the two families next to us on the campsite giving us so much food, beer and encouragement. In Italy many lorries and cars hooted as they past us or came towards us, smiling and waving, sometimes shouting "buon cammino". The men in Ivrea, representing the Associazione della Via Francigena, giving us food, water and much encouragement. The sisters in the cathedral in Vercelli asking so many

questions about our journey so far, giving us water, and saying they would pray for our safe arrival in Rome. The cyclist outside Pavia who showed concern and checked we were able to ride on into the town after my accident, and returned to give us information on where to reach the hostel in Pavia.

On my previous cycling tours we had had some similar experiences - a night on a campsite in Le Mans during the 24 hour race there when we had been given food and beer by a neighbouring group. In central France we had been invited to breakfast with a school group camping nearby. However, the frequency with which these type of events occurred on this journey suggested that the knowledge that we were on a pilgrimage did affect many of the people we met. It seemed that perceptions of us as pilgrims led to a more open and trusting relationship that in other circumstances would have taken much longer to develop. The help and support freely given to us by strangers gave us a fresh perspective on how humans can interact with each other. How can we ensure that we carry into our own daily lives this open way of interacting with people?

2. Serendipity of contacts when things were turning a little difficult. It had rained heavily in Laon, and we were wet and cold. I needed new cycling shoes and we needed food for an evening meal. We found a hotel, and from our room window we could see a bicycle shop and a small food supermarket just across the street. Our problems solved with having to walk a long distance in the rain. When I had fallen off my bike outside Pavia and needed to sort out the wound on my leg, the return of the cyclist to give us instructions on how to get to the hostel, minimising the distance I had to cycle. A good Samaritan turned up just when needed most.

We never failed to find a campsite, hotel or hostel at the end of the day, and usually within only a few minutes of entering the town or village. Only once did we nearly run out of food, but were saved by a roadside Aldi just on our route, and that night stayed in a nearly empty campsite with a restaurant. The proprietors went out of their way to feed us like honoured guests and to ensure we had sufficient calories for the next days ride.

3. I struggled with finding the balance between pilgrimage as an opportunity to focus on self and what pilgrimage might mean to me, and the needs of people we met and interacted with on our journey. What was the purpose of spending three weeks away from my wife and extended family? Was this simply three weeks to indulge in the pleasure I get from cycling, leaving behind the responsibilities I have as a husband, father and grandfather? How did I think pilgrim behaviour should differ from my behaviour in my ordinary life? What expectations did I have about the outcomes of the pilgrimage?

Pilgrims need a certain focus and commitment to travel each day. This can lead into selfishness with your own needs taking precedence over everyone else - no time to chat with those interested in your journey, lack of sensitivity to the needs of others, making too much noise when you want to get up and away early in the

morning as others sleep. At this time, only a few weeks since the end of the pilgrim journey, it feels too early to have answers to these questions. Perhaps there are no answers, just a continuing struggle to balance the various aspects of life into a meaningful whole.

4. One unexpected aspect of our journey was the effect of spending so much time with my sister Libby. She is five years younger than me. I left home at 18 to go to university, and never lived there again for more than a few weeks at a time during holidays. It is 50 years since we lived together, a much longer period than the 13 years we both lived in the family home together with our parents and our other brothers and sisters.

One thing I enjoy about cycling is the solitary nature of the activity. Companionship is possible, but conversation not required. You cycle in single file, the noise of wind and passing traffic means conversation is best limited to the frequent breaks from cycling – for drinks, café-stops, meal-stops, puncture-repair stops. We found ourselves talking a good deal about our childhood days when we were living together as family members, and discovered our very different memories of, and different perspectives on, these experiences.

What was very clear was the profound influence our Catholic upbringing had on us. We had both taken a great deal of pleasure participating in the rituals of church services - mass, singing the divine office, saying the Angelus. We also felt very much members of a universal church. It did not matter that we were in France or Italy, the rituals were familiar. The values of working for the common good, a fundamental part of Catholic social teaching, were also part of our lives. Libby had worked for Oxfam for many years, both in England and overseas, supporting development towards a better life for different societies. I, together with my wife Helen, had worked in Tanzania for many years as a volunteer missionary within the Catholic education system, training secondary school science teachers. We talked a good deal about these influences, how they had informed important life decisions, and the struggle to put these values and principles of the common good into practice.

5. The next thought was about cars and other motor vehicles, and how they dominate the environment. In towns the excessive numbers compared with available road space leads to traffic jams. Motorists demanding the right to park anywhere means that not only roads, but pavements and pedestrian precincts become clogged with vehicles. The noise of engines, car horns, squeals of tyres all are commonly accepted nuisances caused by a thoughtless use of motor vehicles. The exhaust fumes and carbon particles from diesel engines pollute the air we breathe, with many cities regularly breaking the EU guidelines on acceptable levels of pollutants. In both urban and rural areas the excessive speeds cause dangers to pedestrians. Compared with 25 years ago the dense network of small roads in rural France has many more vehicles now. How much is this due to the increasing numbers of vehicles, and how much to the use of satnav systems directing people onto these smaller roads?

Cars are getting bigger, both longer and wider, meaning that fewer can park in the existing spaces compared with the average car size of 10 or 20 years ago. Cars represent personal space and there are problems if this space is invaded. The better noise insulation and comfort means that car drivers and passengers are oblivious to the noise they cause. Speed limits are widely ignored, causing dangers to pedestrians and cyclists. The transition from car user to pedestrian causes problems. Doors are opened without thought, often into the path of pedestrians, or on the roadside into the path of oncoming cars or bikes. What steps can be taken to control cars? Who will have the political courage to take the first steps? How can we achieve a balance between the undoubted benefits of cars and the disruption, discomfort, pollution and danger they create for other people?

6. In contrast bikes are arguably one of the best of human inventions. They are relatively cheap, quiet, easily stored, cause no pollution, and allow long distances to be covered. I won't rehearse here the profound social and genetic effects of bicycles in the 20th century but, as cars become more and more dominant, it seems that bicycles and their riders become less visible to both motorists and pedestrians. For short journeys in towns they provide the perfect means of transport, but the infrastructure of cycle paths in most towns is abysmal – short lengths of road marked with paint are called cycle routes, which often end abruptly. Or pavements divided by a painted line to differentiate pedestrian and cycle paths. At every side road the cyclist is expected to stop, with priority given to the cars on the side roads. I noticed in Italy the popularity of electric bicycles, both for rent as local authority projects and in private ownership. How can bicycle use be encouraged, especially within towns, thus reducing the negative aspects of motor vehicle use?

7. As we cycled through cities, towns and villages in France and Italy, the profound influence of Christianity was clear. Churches still form some of the largest and highest buildings. The interiors of these churches are filled with culturally important artifacts - paintings, statues, mosaics, carved furniture, stained glass windows. In many places the more important and older churches are packed with tourists, often to the extent of needing some supervision and control. Who pays for the maintenance of these buildings? How can we balance the need to raise money with the need for people to be able to use churches for the intended purpose: prayer, spiritual reflection, and a place of peace? As we travelled through Lucca, San Gimignano, and Siena and saw the huge crowds flocking to these towns in cars, coaches, double-decker buses, and seeing the churches full of people taking endless photographs, I reflected on the contradiction between this behaviour, the fall in church attendance for spiritual reasons, the declining membership of most Christian denominations, the rise of secularism, and the interest in churches as tourist destinations.

On my return home I learned that all churches in France built before 1905 are maintained by the state. I was surprised that in a country with such a clear division between the secular state and religions the state should take on this responsibility. The French government now wants to start charging for entry into those churches attracting large numbers of tourists, in order to raise money for repairs and maintenance. This is opposed by the Catholic Church on the grounds that it would be impossible to differentiate tourists from those wanting to pray and attend services for spiritual reasons rather than for tourism.

Many of the churches in Italy had notices outside stating that entry was free and that nobody should pay money to enter. Others charged up to €10 for entry, but usually had a separate entrance for those going to pray or attend a service, and there was normally a roped-off area for this purpose. Unfortunately this seemed to attract tourists who thought they were missing something special, causing them to climb over the rope and take photos. When we attended services or simply went to pray in such churches we often felt like an alien species or exotic creatures.

8. The advent of cheap digital cameras 10-15 years ago means that endless photos can be taken without the costs associated with developing and printing film. The images can be deleted, looked at on computers at no cost, and printed if you so wish on your home printer. I am not aware of any research looking at what exactly tourists do with the huge numbers of digital photos taken. The use of mobile phones and tablets as cameras seems to have caused a further increase in the number of photos taken. Social media are probably responsible for the rise in *selfies*, where churches and the art works held by them form the background to the photographer's *selfie*, or the photo taken by a partner or friend to ensure you are the main feature. I saw *selfie*-sticks for the first time - telescopic sticks that cameras can be clamped onto and *selfies* taken at distances greater than arms length.

Social media sites and ease of communication on the internet through email and personal websites seems to have changed the nature of tourism. Instead of focussing on the object of your visit - architecture, mosaics sculptures, paintings, natural phenomena, views - everything is experienced through the view finder of a camera, a mobile phone or a tablet computer. The images taken can then be forwarded to many people or loaded on to a web site or shared through social media. The emotional aspect of these experiences must be altered in fundamental ways by viewing everything in this way.

These obsessions with taking photographs, especially *selfies*, can lead to selfish behaviour, showing little respect for the needs of others, and for the holy nature of churches. This was particularly so when tourists wander into services and start taking photos.

Conclusion

All these confused thoughts continue to flow through my mind at different times of the day, but especially as I make the transition from sleep to wakefulness in the morning. I found the pilgrimage an important and deeply moving experience that continues to make me re-evaluate many aspects of my life. It also reinforces my view that such experiences should form a regular part of your life, and I am already looking forward to the next one.



Arrival at the Vatican

Recipes along the *Via Francigena* (3): Champagne Region

Bronwyn Marques

Chicken with Champagne and mushroom sauce

Champagne wine is famous the world over. In cooking, it gives a delicate flavour to a dish. This recipe, featuring Champagne partnered with chicken and small mushrooms, is easy to make.

Preparation time 10 min

Cooking Time 40 min

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 10 ml olive oil
- 8 pieces chicken (thigh and leg), on the bone
- 2 French (Echalion) shallots, finely chopped
- 5 ml Brandy
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ½ bottle Champagne
- 600 g mushrooms
- 125 ml cream
- 75 ml finely cut fresh chives
- 12 fine asparagus spears (to accompany)

Directions

1. Heat half the olive oil in a heavy-based saucepan over medium heat. Add the chicken and cook for 3-5 minutes, turning, until browned all over. Stir in the shallots and cook for about 5 minutes.
2. Add the brandy and stir well to combine. Season with salt and pepper, then add the Champagne. Bring to a simmer, cover with a round of baking paper then a lid, and cook for 20 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, heat the remaining olive oil in a large frying pan over high heat. Cook mushrooms for 3-4 minutes or until softened and golden.
4. Transfer mushrooms and chicken to a bowl and cover to keep warm. Heat chicken cooking juices over high heat and bring to the boil. Cook for 10-15 minutes or until reduced to about 125 ml. Add cream and simmer for 2-3 minutes or until slightly thickened.
5. Return the chicken to sauce and heat for 5 minutes until warmed through.
6. Divide mushrooms among serving plates and top each with two pieces of chicken. Spoon over sauce and sprinkle with chives.
7. *Serve with steamed and sliced fine asparagus spears.*

* * * * *

On the road with Saint Francis

From time to time we are asked for information about the 350km “Assisi route,” which leads from La Verna (where Saint Francis received the *stigmata*), via Assisi to Rieti, taking in all the important places associated with his life.

A walker’s guide book to this route has been available in Italian for some years now, *Di qui passò Francesco*, by Angela Maria Seracchioli but an English edition was published in 2013 by Terre di Mezzo Editore. Its title is *On the road with Saint Francis*, its ISBN 978-88-6189-247-7, 208 pp, includes maps and costs in the region of £20.

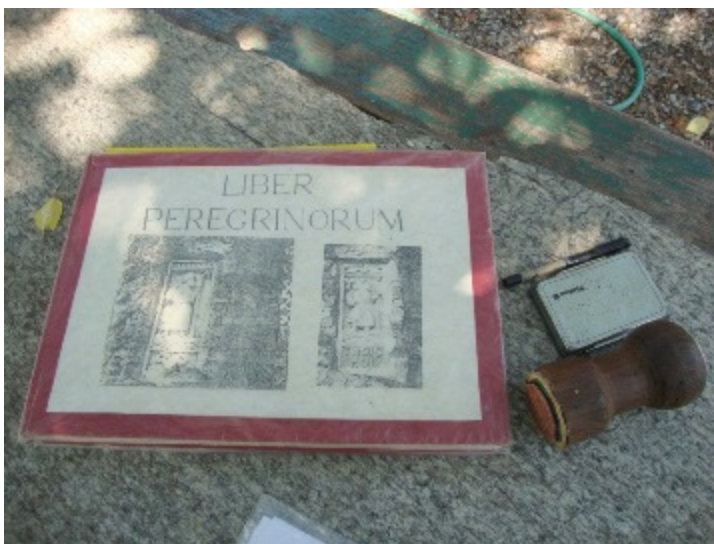
They do not keep it in stock but can obtain it for you quickly if you contact (or visit) The Italian Bookshop (part of the European Bookshop, not far from Piccadilly Circus), 5 Warwick Street, London W1 5LU. (020)-7240-1634. www.italianbookshop.co.uk, email: italian@ebs.co.uk

* * * * *

2014 – Record year for the *Via Francigena*

Brian Mooney

The year 2014 was a record for the *Via Francigena*. A total of 735 pilgrims crossed the River Pô via Danilo Parisi’s ferry launch, up from 520 in 2013 and 533 in 2012 and more than double the 2011 total of 350. Danilo has been operating his service for pilgrims since 1998 and he has kept an invaluable record of each crossing between the north bank of the river and his welcoming home *Caupona Sigerico* on the south bank at Soprarivo di Calendasco. Just two pilgrims signed the *Liber Peregrinorum* in 1998 when Danilo first revived the ancient river crossing 17 years ago, but since then his pilgrim log has become a treasure trove of information about the *Via Francigena*.



Once again, the vast majority were heading for Rome, but there were also a total of 18 who recorded Jerusalem as their final destination. Five were journeying north to Santiago de Compostela, and one to Canterbury.

A total of 200 had come all the way on foot from Canterbury, a significant increase on the 137 who had started from St Augustine's See the previous year. The number of cyclists coming from Canterbury remained constant at 22. (Although Danilo carried a total of 86 cyclists last year, most two-wheeling pilgrims avoid the ferry route and arrive in Piacenza having crossed over the bridge higher up the river).

There was a notable increase in 2014 in the number of women making the journey - 291 compared to 186 the previous year. Solitary walkers accounted for 221, up from 125 in 1013.

As usual the Italians predominated, followed by Germans, French, Swiss and Dutch, but there were also a record number of different nationalities - 32 in total. New countries included Japan, Israel, Morocco, Indonesia and Montenegro. There were just 17 British pilgrims; the number from *Inghilterra* (the way the Italians record our ill-defined United Kingdom) totals only 92 since Danilo's records started, which puts Britain in sixth place in the overall national rankings.

Danilo, a former rugby player who has turned the *Via Francigena* into a fulltime passion, endorses each pilgrim's passport with a magnificent octagonal *Transitus Padi* stamp. Of course, not all pilgrims opt for the blissful ride on his launch, and many pilgrims start for Rome closer to their goal, but his figures provide a pretty accurate picture of long-distance pilgrim traffic along the *Via Francigena*.

Addition to the CPR Library, August to December 2014

Margaret Simonot

Voutaz, Jean-Pierre and Rouyer, Pierre:*Discovering the Great Saint Bernard*. Martigny: Les Editions du Grand-Saint-Bernard, 2014. 199pp. Location: CPR. [Acc.no.:](#) 6032

Pilgrims Crossing Borders Newsletter 2, 2014

We would like to thank all those who have signed for *Pilgrims Crossing Borders* (PCB), the relay from Norway to Italy and the Holy Land. The number of participants increased from 45 in June to 82 in December 2014 - and we are still counting... Pilgrims from the following countries have signed up to walk shorter and/or longer sections of the walk: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. On an average we have 10 - 20 pilgrims who will walk stages in each country along the way. We expect more participants to join, and we know that there will be a significant number of "day-trippers", participants who will walk shorter sections of the way to show solidarity with the cause. We welcome participation on all levels, long-haul walkers as well as "day-trippers."

This year will be full of events for PCB, and we are looking forward to all this with hopeful expectations. Our itineraries*** are ready with some 175 stages distributed over six months. We will begin our walk as planned from Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim on Wednesday 22 April 2015. To celebrate the start of the relay, there will be a pilgrims' service in the cathedral, with liturgy written especially for the occasion. The church bells will toll to salute the departing pilgrims who will be sent on their way with blessings from the Bishop and Dean of Nidaros/Trondheim.

*** <http://picrobo.blogspot.no/2014/10/itineraries.html>

Routes and Resources

We will follow ancient pilgrim routes where possible. From Trondheim to Oslo we'll follow *Gudbrandsdalsleden*, the most commonly used route of the St Olav's ways. [The Pilgrim Confraternity of St Olav](#) will organize this first part of the walk (Trondheim-Oslo) in co-operation with the National Pilgrim Centre and the regional pilgrim centres in Norway.

From Oslo we'll follow the pilgrim way to Larvik on the south coast of Norway. The Confraternity of St James, Norway will organize this walk. From Larvik we'll embark on a ferry bound for Denmark on May 29th. Through the north of Jutland (the Danish mainland) we'll follow the pilgrim route from Hirtshals to Viborg with members of Nordjysk Pilegrimsforening. From Viborg we'll walk along *Hærvejen* (i.e. the army road, also known as the Ox Road), the ancient way from Viborg via Flensburg to Hamburg. Pilgrim Pastor Elisabeth Lidell will lead the way from Viborg to Padborg near the German border. Here we'll meet up with Pilgrim Pastor Bernd Lohse and his fellow pilgrims who will lead the way from Padborg to Jacobi Kirche in Hamburg where there will be cultural events to celebrate the pilgrims' arrival.

In Hamburg we'll meet members of the Via Romea Stadensis, a German pilgrim association whose members promote the *Via Romea*, the ancient route from Stade (ca 40 km east of Hamburg) to Rome. Volunteers from this association will lead the way through Germany from Hamburg all the way to the Austrian border. Through Austria and up to the Brenner Pass we'll be escorted by members of the Jakobsgemeinschaft Tirol and fellow pilgrims in Austria. Once in Italy we'll meet pilgrims from the Club Alpino Italiano and the Via Romea Germanica (the Italian sister organization of the Via Romea Stadensis) who will guide us from the Brenner Pass through north and central Italy to Rome where we'll have three days of rest and celebration 14 -16 October 2015.

In Rome there will be a concert with music by the Trondheim Soloists in the Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista del Genovesi on 15 October 2015. Details regarding this event will be published on our blog picrobo.blogspot.no. All participants and supporters are invited to attend this concert.

What to expect (and not)

We are well organized thanks to voluntary efforts from participants, supporters and pilgrim associations. The latter have prepared our itineraries and offered to help us on our way. Idealistic local guides will as a rule walk with us on most stages. If the local guide for some reason can't lead the way (this will be exceptional), you will be given directions and advice on how to reach the next destination and where to find suitable accommodation. As pilgrims we can to adjust to different circumstances, that's a part of going on pilgrimage. Here's a rough outline of what to expect.

The daily walking stages will be approximately 20 km. As a rule we will walk, but should the situation (extreme weather, local conditions etc) call for it, modern means of transportation are allowed.

Accommodation

The accommodation will as a rule be of pilgrim standard, i.e. basic facilities. The price level will vary from country to country, but we'll choose reasonably-priced accommodation. Chances are that you might be offered private accommodation thanks to local hospitality here and there. In such cases, we pay the actual price given by our hosts.

From Trondheim to Oslo you will need to book your accommodation in advance, and suitable accommodation will be recommended in the itinerary. On some sections (e.g. from Schmalkalden to Mittenwald in Germany), you will be asked to pay a small deposit to cover possible cancellation fees. This deposit will be deducted from your expenses toward accommodation, so it's no additional cost. Accommodation through Denmark and North Germany will be booked for you in advance. Your local coordinators can tell you more about this (see page 24).

Luggage transport

You can choose to travel light - like so many pilgrims do - in order to be independent of luggage transport but this will, however be available on some sections, thanks to the local coordinators (Denmark, North Germany, South Italy etc). On other sections luggage transport can be improvised in co-operation between the pilgrims, the local guides and the hostel-keepers. We pay for this by splitting the costs between us. The price will be at cost.

Package tours

Most of our walk is organized by voluntary associations. There are, however, some sections where we have so-called "package tours" (which means that you pay a fixed price for the guide, accommodation and luggage transport).

1. In Denmark 7- 21 June: From Viborg to Padborg with Pilgrim Pastor Elisabeth Lidell.
2. In North Germany 21 June - 1 July: From Padborg to Hamburg with Pilgrim Pastor Bernd Lohse.
3. In the Holy Land 17-28 October: From Nazareth to Jerusalem with Pilgrim Pastor Einar Vegge.

On the above-mentioned sections you pay a fixed price in advance to have everything taken care of. Itineraries and costs from Viborg to Padborg and Hamburg are listed on our blog under *itineraries*.

Our Pilgrimage in the Holy Land

On October 17th we depart by plane from Rome to Tel Aviv in order to begin our walk in the Holy Land on October 18th. This pilgrimage will offer its participants the opportunity to both meet and talk with local people and visit holy sites. Our walk will go through Israeli as well as through Palestinian territory, and much of the programme will be organized in conjunction with the Alternative Tourism Group (ATG), a Palestinian NGO specializing in tours and pilgrimage.

Participants who wish to join this walk will need to book their own return flight to Tel Aviv, where we will meet in the airport on Saturday, October 17th at 6:00 p.m. From Tel Aviv we will travel together to Nazareth, where we will spend the night (October 17th) in a monastery.

Our walk begins on Sunday morning October 18th from Nazareth. We will walk to Nain, Afulah, Zebabdeh, Faraa, Nablus, Salfit, Aboud, Jifna and Ramallah before we reach the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem; there we will be welcomed in the Augusta Victoria Church on Tuesday October 27th. The following day we will go down to Jerusalem's old city, where we will spend the day together with religious leaders at its holy sites.

Together with Bishop Munib Yunan we will organize an extension to the pilgrimage from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, Jericho and the Jordan Valley, from October 29th to 31st. We also plan to have a cultural programme with contributions from musicians and artists. The intention is to give our pilgrimage a character of its own and foster mutual contacts together with local communities. We hope to have pilgrim concerts in Nablus, Ramallah and Jerusalem and, for those who continue the pilgrim walk further, in Bethlehem, Jericho and the baptismal site in the Jordan Valley.

This walk will be organized as a package tour from Tel Aviv and back (we pay a fixed price for our guide, luggage transport and accommodation). A maximum of 20 participants can join this walk. In the event that more than 25 people wish to take part in it, we will consider having two groups walking the same route, the second group starting one day later than the first (20 people have already signed up for the walk in the Holy Land). An itinerary with walking distances and accommodation for this walk will be published on our blog early in 2015.

Our walk in the Holy Land will take place in conjunction with Israeli as well as Palestinian authorities, and their advice will be decisive for our walk. We are praying for peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land.

How to join

Once you have decided which part you want to walk, please notify the local coordinators for the section/s you have chosen (please see [itineraries](#)). We recommend that you notify the respective coordinators via email (see e-mail addresses on page 24).

If, for example, you would like to walk in Denmark from Hirtshals to Padborg, you must send your registration by email to Andreas Blinkenberg and Elisabeth Lidell. Your registration could, for example, look something like this:

To (coordinator's name)

I would like to join the walk from Hirtshals to Padborg (30 May - 21 June). Please let me know when and where to meet on the first day [date] and please send an itinerary for the walk with dates and distances.

Your name:

Your E-mail:

Your mobile phone (please include country code):

All our coordinators are listed on page 24 below. If you are uncertain about which coordinator to notify, let us know and we'll assist you. Please let us know where and when you would like to join us. You will be very welcome.



Our pilgrim staff and diary

Necessities and Blessings

To join the relay, you need to have some walking experience and be able to walk approximately 20 km a day for the stages you sign up for. If you plan to walk longer distances, make sure to have days of rest at sensible intervals. As true pilgrims we will stand shoulder to shoulder and help each other when needed. But, in order to be covered against unforeseen circumstances, we urge you to take out an adequate travel insurance just in case.

We believe this walk will be a wonderful experience - filled with adventures, new friendships and cultural as well as spiritual input. We are well organized, our prospects are good and we are ready to contribute along the way, volunteers as well as pilgrims. If you have questions, please feel free to ask, we are here for you (see below). We wish you all the best.

Alberto Alberti, *Vice-President Rete dei Cammini*

Stein Thue, *Relay coordinator*

Einar Vegge, *Pilgrim Pastor in Nidaros*

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Stein Thue (Coordinator PCB)	+47 911 12 479	stein.thue@gmail.com

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Chairman’s Report: 8th Annual Meeting of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome, March 7th 2015.

Joe Patterson

Thank you for coming here today to our 8th AGM. I hope you find it interesting.

Some nine years ago we set up what was to become this Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome. I was part of the original group and William Marques became our leader. Initially our membership was small but over the years has steadily increased. To day it stands at 301 fully paid up members. However some 685 members have joined the CPR since its inception. A measure of how we are doing is that in 2009 we issued 32 Credentials. In 2011 there were 62, in 2013 130 credentials were issued and last year. 2014 we issued 172. So far this year, 2015, we have issued 39.

As our membership has grown so to has our workload. In 2008 we were a small informal group. Now we are a formal group complete with clear rules and a Constitution. We have an elected Committee (Steering Group) numbering nine people and three co-opted members. We will be making changes to this later in this meeting.

Currently the Steering Group, in no particular order, is as follows:

William Marques	Membership Secretary
Bronwyn Marques	Secretary and Minute Secretary.
Robert White	Treasurer
Ann Milner	Webmaster
Alison Raju	Newsletter Editor
Alison Payne	Currently without portfolio (but that will not last long!)
Yvonne Loftus	Magic organiser of anything and everything
Jim Brodie	Facebook expert
And lastly me...	Joe Patterson, currently Chairman.

Thank you all for your help and input during the year.

I must also thank Chris George who helps Alison Raju in producing the *Newsletter* and Margaret Simonot, a member of the Confraternity of St James, who volunteers to be responsible for our library.

During the year we co-opted three members to the Steering Group and who we hope to make full members later in this meeting: Brian Mooney, Jonas Ewe and Philippe Seurre

I thank all members for all the work they have done and for the help, guidance and friendship they have given me.

The Steering Group tries to meet at least four times a year. This past year we have held three meetings, as well as an EGM/Open Day and, of course, the AGM. Following the EGM in November we hosted another Open Day. This was very well attended. We had presentations by two Italian speakers who had come specially for this event. Alberto Alberti spoke about the proposed pilgrimage from Trondheim to Jerusalem and was followed by Giovanni Caselli talking about the *Via Francigena* and other routes through Europe. All very interesting. So thanks to them both.

At our AGM last year it was proposed that we should present our own Testimonials This was not adopted by the meeting. However we accepted that that it could be difficult to find the office in Rome responsible for issuing them. To overcome this we have produced a map, which clearly shows how to get there. This map has now become an integral part of the most recent edition of our Pilgrim Passport.

Once again thank you for coming and I hope you enjoy the rest of our programme today.

* * * * *

Minutes of the 8th Annual General Meeting of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome: March 7th 2015, 10.30am in St James' Church, Piccadilly, London.

1. **Apologies** Ann Milner, Anne Froud, Anthony Brunning, Howard Nelson, Janet Skinner, John Curtin, Martin Desforges, Paul Chinn, Paul Cockerill, Philippe Seurre, Yvonne Loftus.

2. **Welcome** The Chairman, Joe Patterson, welcomed and thanked everyone who attended the day.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** the minutes were agreed as complete and correct.

4. **Presentation of Annual Report** Joe Patterson presented the Chairman's Report for 2014, a copy of which is given above.

At the end of 2014 we had 301 paid-up members. We have had 685 members who have joined throughout the years.

JP thanked all members of the Steering Group for their efforts, including the 3 co-opted members. The next Steering Group meeting will be on May 9th.

5. **Presentation of accounts** Robert White (Treasurer) circulated a copy of the accounts to all present (a copy of which is on our website). The Confraternity finished the year with a balance of £2,569.00. Membership has increased by 40 over the year.

The major outgoings were for meeting room hire, printed *Newsletters*, credentials (9 pilgrim passports) and speakers' expenses. Total subscriptions increased by £522.00 He explained the income and expenditure to all at the meeting.

He noted that the CPR is not a profit-making organisation. Subscription revenue has increased considerably, which has increased our reserves.

The Accounts were accepted.

6. **Election of Steering Group Members** Joe Patterson introduced the Steering Group members. The current members were re-elected to continue for the following year.

It was agreed at the November EGM to increase the number of Steering Group members from 9 to 12 as many Steering Group members are not always available for meetings. The EGM agreed to nominate 3 extra people to the group: Brian Mooney, Jonas Ewe and Philippe Seurre.

The members of the Steering Group were agreed and accepted.

7. **AOB** Joe Patterson announced his retirement and told the meeting that the Steering Group had selected Brian Mooney as the next Chairman. JP therefore handed over the chairmanship of the meeting to BM.

BM thanked JP for all the work he has done for the CPR and the *Via Francigena*. He then declared the meeting closed.

* * * * *

Return of the French Pilgrim Staff

In late 2013 group of some 30 French pilgrims from the Association Via Francigena France (AVFF) based in Reims (a town twinned with Canterbury) walked from Dover to Canterbury, accompanied by several CPR members. They brought with them a very fine, purpose-made carved pilgrim staff, which they handed over to us to keep until we returned the visit and walked with them again.

They will be returning to Canterbury on July 31st this year to walk down to Dover and would like one or more members of the CPR to meet them at their point of departure – Canterbury Cathedral – and formally hand back the staff again. More details will be available later and will be posted on our website.

* * * * *

New book

One of our Australian members, Robert Muirhead (who has also written articles for our *Newsletter*) has recently published his book, *The Long Walk - A Pilgrimage from Canterbury to Rome*, on Amazon. It describes his 2080km journey on foot along the *Via Frangena* in three long stages between 2012 and 2014. To obtain it see

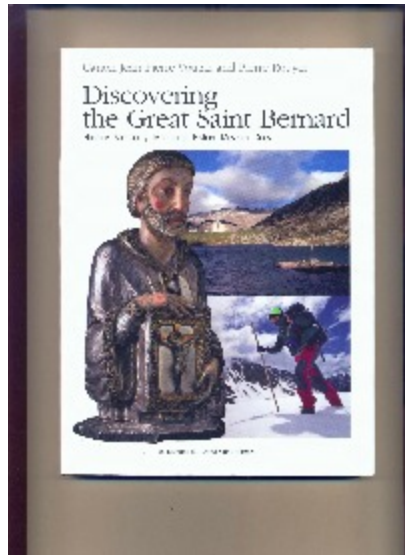
<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00QRQTD04>

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Book Review

Discovering the Great Saint-Bernard

Canon Jean-Pierre Voutaz and Pierre Rouyer. *Discovering the Great Saint Bernard: hospice, spirituality, mountains, history, museum, dogs*. [English translation by Alison Raju.] Martigny: Les Editions du Grand-Saint-Bernard, 2014. 199 pp., ill. ISBN: 978-2-9700940-0-5



Hic Christus adoratur et pascitur
(Here Christ is worshipped and fed)

This book is beautifully presented and generously illustrated, and gives us a comprehensive account of the history, life and mission of the centuries-old - and indeed almost mythic - travellers' hospice at the summit of the Great Saint Bernard Pass (2473m). It is divided into sections covering

- Saint Bernard of Aosta
- The Great Saint Bernard Congregation
- Life at the Hospice
- The Church Treasury
- The Canons, the *Maronniers* [the original mountain guides] and their Dogs
- Passers-by today and yesterday
- The Archives
- The Hospice Museum
- Alpine Nature
- Walks, Pilgrimages and Mountain Camps

Each of these sections consists of a series of short contributions by different hands, though most of them are attributed to the two principal authors, Canon Jean-Pierre Voutaz, the archivist to the GSB Congregation, and Pierre Rouyer,

who shares responsibility for the hospice museum. A book created this way demands firm editorial control, however, and rather too much is taken for granted: e.g. there is no map showing the relationship between the two Saint Bernard passes, nor the location of the several local parishes for which the Congregation has, or has had, responsibility. It is also a little irritating to be given information in a less than systematic order: we have to wait some time before discovering which rule the Canons follow (they are Augustinians); and interesting, indeed important episodes (e.g. the mission to Yunnan and its associated martyrdoms) are mentioned with tantalising brevity, and without any “see below” reference to indicate that the story is told more fully later on.

That said, we do end up with a rich and multi-faceted account of a life of prayer, worship, solitude, scholarship, and hospitality, in extremely harsh conditions, which has lasted for almost a millennium, and is even now redefining its mission as modern technology (communications and transport) renders its older patterns of life and service obsolete. The hospice motto “Here Christ is worshipped and fed” clearly underlies all that the Congregation has done, and continues to do. The section on “Life at the Hospice” includes particularly touching descriptions of the experience of offering hospitality in the context of a religious community, and could form the basis of some very interesting exchanges, if they could be arranged, with members of the Confraternity of Saint James who offer hospitality on the pilgrim routes to Santiago.

Impossible not to mention the dogs. We are given some splendid mountain-rescue stories, but we are not told why, in the end, they were withdrawn from active service.

While the sections on the life, history, and spirituality of the Congregation are inspiring, for this reviewer the sections on the Archives, the Museum, and Alpine Nature are in many ways the most interesting. The Archive is astonishingly rich, clearly holding material for a comprehensive account of the political, ecclesiastical and financial history of the hospice and the Congregation, though it is not evident from the Bibliography that it has, so far, been used for the this purpose. There must be many a PhD thesis waiting to be written! The Museum contains coins, found on the site of the nearby Temple to Jupiter, from the reigns of every Roman emperor from Augustus to Theodosius: is any other site so rich? It is evident from the Alpine Nature section that the hospice lies at the meeting point of two tectonic plates, each with quite different geologies.

Alison Raju has produced a skilful translation of an often difficult text. French rhetoric just doesn't sound right in English, and indeed accurate translation makes matters worse, not better (thus “the immense sky which inhales our gaze and our thoughts” - p. 170). There do remain occasional lapses: *charisma* (“compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion in others”) is used throughout for *charism* (“the extraordinary graces given to individual Christians for the good of others”); we have Augustine of Hippone (for Hippo); and “the Yunnan” (from the French *le Yunnan*, no doubt, while English drops the article).

Sadly, there are numerous irritating misprints: among them, on p. 34, we are told that “the provots” was “extremey moved”; and p. 44 tells us that a mission proposed in 1930 was approved in 1031!

But these are quibbles, and Alison Raju has done us all a major service in making this lovely book available in an English which carries no more than the occasional whiff of its French origins. A copy has been placed in the library, and anyone planning to follow the *Via Francigena* should certainly include it in their preparatory reading.

Howard Nelson

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When did you arrive in Rome?

We know how many *pilgrim passports* we issue each year - 130 in 2013, 172 in August 2014 – and so we have a more or less accurate idea of how many pilgrims set off for Rome during that period. However, very (very) few of you tell us that you actually made it all the way there and received your *Testimonium*.

So far, however, the only two people we know about who made the journey in 2014, from Canterbury and arrived safely in Rome in September last year are the author of the first article in this issue of our *Newsletter*, and his sister, who made their pilgrimage by bicycle. So we are still waiting for news of the remaining 170 other pilgrims who set off in 2014 but who have, so far, remained silent...

We would like to know, though, so that we can include a section in the *Secretary's Notebook* section of future issues of our *Newsletter* and compile a database for our website. Email either pilgrimstoromesecretary@yahoo.com (the CPR secretary) or alisonraju@btopenworld.com (the *Newsletter* editor) and tell us where and when you started, whether you walked, cycled or rode and when you arrived in Rome.

* * * * *

Continuing after Rome

We are quite often asked about continuing on from Rome to Jerusalem. There is no guide book in English at present but if you can read Italian you have two to choose from:

Itinerari a Piedi: La Via Francigena nel Sud - un Percorso de 700 km da Roma.
Touring Editore. ISBN: 978-88-365-6287-9. (About £10.)

Monica d'Atti & Franco Cinti, *La Via Francigena nel Sud verso Gerusalemme. Guida di spiritualità*. Edizione San Paolo, 2014.. ISBN: 978-88-215-9238-6. (About £13.)

They do not keep them in stock but the Italian Bookshop (see page 16 above) can obtain them for you very quickly.

These will take you down through southern Italy along the Via Francigena del Sud to either Bari or Brindisi, from where you can take the ferry to Patras in Greece. After that you can walk eastwards to Athens (no guide book available at present). From there, unfortunately, there is no longer a boat journey to Haifa, in Israel, and it appears that there are no regular or reliable shipping services from Cyprus to Israel either. You will therefore have to resign yourself to an air journey for this section and then walk to Jerusalem once you have crossed the sea.

One of our Australian members, Robert Muirhead, informs us that the guidebook to the route in Israel is called "Hike the Land of Israel, by Jacob Saar and Yagil Henkin, subtitled Israel National Trail and the Jerusalem Trail. It has information on navigation, accommodation and 1:50,000 maps. There are also "trail angels" listed who provide accommodation and help with various matters, including water and food caching for the Negev Desert section of the INT so walkers don't have to carry, for example, 6 litres of water. It seems to be the "Bible" (if I can put it that way) for those two hiking trails. I think you can also get GPS waypoint data as well."

He warns, however, about attempting to use Israeli hiking discussion group and other websites, which he describes as "a magnet for hackers..." (Take note!)

For suggestions and information about other ways to walk to Jerusalem see the website of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Jerusalem:

<https://sites.google.com/site/pilgrimstojerusalem/Home>

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Secretary's Notebook

Bronwyn Marques

At the end of 2014 we had 301 paid-up members from the following countries:

Andorra 1, Australia 45, Belgium 2, Canada 18, Cyprus 1, Denmark 7, Finland 2, France 5, Gibraltar 1, Iceland 1
Ireland 13, Italy 1, Japan 1, Netherlands 3, New Zealand 2, Norway 3, Poland 1, South Africa 3, Spain 1, Sweden 1, UK 131, USA 55.

Some idea of the growth in the number of people intending to walk / cycle the Via Francigena in any one year (though not the number receiving the Testmonium) can be seen from the number of credentials issued by the CPR since we started numbering them. Figures for recent years are:

2009 - 32
2010 - 57
2011 - 62
2012 - 117
2013 - 130
2014 - 172

Recent Blogs

A couple of years ago David Flusfeder made the journey along the Via Francigena as research for his novel John the Pupil:
<http://www.4thestate.co.uk/2014/11/david-flusfeder-behind-john-the-pupil/>

Sue Brightling describes her preparation and first part of the Via Francigena from the planning stage onwards:

<https://letsgetwalking.wordpress.com/>
[Toni Paterson's blog of her walk from Lausanne to Rome](http://allroadstorome.com/)
<http://allroadstorome.com/>

Future Meetings Both will be held in the Conference Room of St James Church, Piccadilly, starting at 10.30am

Saturday November 14th 2015 CPR Open Meeting. Speaker to be announced.

Saturday March 7th 2016 CPR Annual General Meeting and Open Meeting. Speaker to be announced.

CPR Library This is situated in the CSJ offices at 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY (020-7928-9988) and details of the items held can be found via our website. If you find (or write) a book or article about the *Via Francigena* or a pilgrimage to Rome by another road please let us know as we can then review it for our *Newsletter* and obtain a copy for our library.

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Howard Nelson, 2011.

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Guide to Accommodation and Services on the *Via Francigena*. Part 1: Canterbury to the Great Saint-Bernard Pass.

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