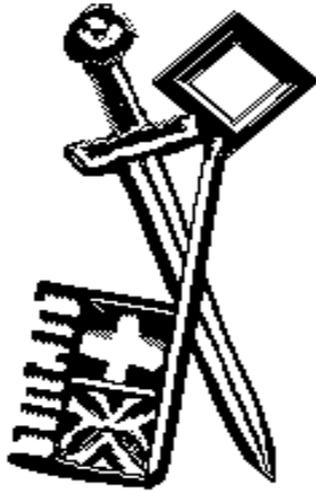


**CONFRATERNITY
OF
PILGRIMS TO ROME**



NEWSLETTER

April 2012 No. 15

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Editorial

This is the fifteenth issue of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome's *Newsletter*.

There are eight articles, two book reviews and the section entitled "Secretary's Notebook," containing short items of information likely to be of interest to our members

Alison Raju discusses the history and background to the Hospice at the Great Saint=Bernard Pass, Robert Muirhead investigates the pros and cons of towed or "hiking" carts as an alternative to rucksacks, after which Alberto Alberti offers us a series of memories of his first pilgrimage to Rome from the south. Luigi Nacci provides a brief history of volunteer *hospitaleros* in Italy, following which Joe Patterson presents the Chairman's Report he gave at the CPR AGM on March 3rd this year. Information on obtaining the *Testimonium* once the pilgrim reaches Rome, after which the editors of this *Newsletter* make an appeal for articles for future issues so that we can continue to publish our *Newsletter*

We would like to thank Ann Milner once again for providing a PDF file for the electronic version of this issue.

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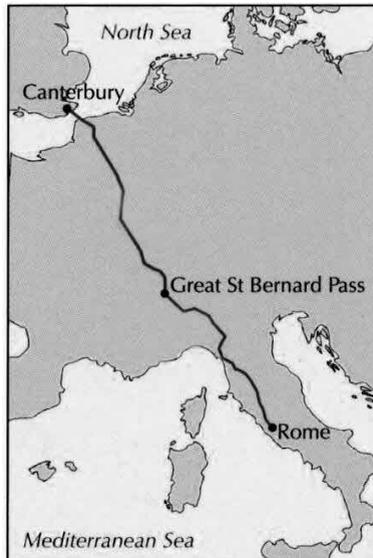
Chris George

The Hospice at the Great Saint-Bernard Pass

Alison Raju

The Pass

The crossing over the Col du Mont-Joux (i.e. "Mount Jupiter"), as it was referred to in former times, nowadays known as the Great Saint-Bernard Pass (2,472m, 8114 feet above sea level), has been in existence since the Bronze Age. This was the shortest route over the Alps and much used, despite temperatures varying between -30°C in winter and $+19^{\circ}$ in summer and an average annual snowfall of 20 metres. Linking the Val d'Aosta (in what is now Italy) this route was taken first by the Celts, in the first century BC, and then by the Romans as a rapid passage between northern Italy and their provinces in Gaul and along the Rhine. The Romans built a temple to their god Jupiter (Jove) at the pass in 50AD (though there were probably Druid altars in existence there before that), along with two other buildings (*mansios*) that served (like inns) to accommodate travellers passing by. It is the highest place in Europe inhabited all year long but is inaccessible by road for some seven months out of the twelve.



(Photo: Michael Krier)

At first the passage over the Col was just a footpath along the side of the lake, enlarged in places to take carts, but a road as such was constructed in Roman times by Emperor Augustus in the year 12 BC and then paved and enlarged under Claudius in 47 AD. Like all Roman roads this one, too, was equipped with milestones, of which two are still in existence: number I in Martigny and number XXIV in Bourg-Saint-Pierre. The Romans also maintained the road, traces of which can be seen in two places by the modern pilgrim on foot as he/she climbs up to cross the pass: near the top of the Combe des Morts, approaching it from the north, and the exit from the Plan-de-Jupiter behind the old customs building on the Italian side of the lake. Excavations in the area have revealed numerous identical artifacts and ex-votos of one sort or another on both sides of the crossing - coins, plaques, effigies and so on - left for Jupiter by grateful travellers, thus attesting to its continuous use, and many of these items are on display in the hospice museum today. Gradually however, with the Barbarian invasions towards 400 AD the Romans withdrew from the area, the road fell into disrepair and the Col became increasingly dangerous, not only because of climatic conditions (avalanches, for example) but also due to the bandits and others who had taken refuge in the former *mansios* to hold travellers to ransom as they passed: merchants, pilgrims, itinerant workers, kings, bishops and other prelates, the poor and the indigent... This route was, in fact, far more frequently used than we probably imagine today.

Much later the road was improved to take vehicular traffic. This opened in 1892 on the Swiss side but not until 1905 in Italy, though in winter, of course, as today (apart from a helicopter) the only access to the hospice is on foot, on *raquettes* (snow shoes) or on skis. (This also means that any emergency work that needs to be done in the Hospice during the seven to eight months long winter period – electrical, plumbing etc. – implies too that the electrician or plumber in question is able to ski...) Life continued like this, more or less, until the advent of the road tunnel in 1964 though the type of vehicle had changed – from the charabancs and other horse-drawn traffic to the modern motor vehicle. However, one of the inventions that greatly altered transport up to the Col - and elsewhere, obviously - was the invention, around 1000 AD, of a heavy-duty horse collar, thus allowing the transport of much greater loads than was previously possible.

The tunnel was built in 1964, starting above Bourg Saint-Pierre, near Bourg Saint-Bernard, on the Swiss side but emerging much lower down in Italy, in Saint-Rhémy-en-Bosses, due to the much greater incidence of avalanches on the southern side of the pass. As a result not only can vehicles of all types now travel from Switzerland into Italy (and vice versa) all the year round, passing under, rather than over, the Great Saint-Bernard Pass, but this change has also had a major impact on the nature and function, life and work of the Hospice (see below) as travellers no longer need to pass that way, even in summer.

The Hospice

With the barbarian invasions and the lack of road maintenance at the Col the situation at the pass became so bad, so the story goes, that Bernard de Menton, then Archdeacon of Aosta, undertook to “silence the devil” who had obviously taken charge of the area, though it is more likely that St. Bernard (who encountered a lot of travellers coming down from the pass on the Italian side) simply came under pressure from users of the route to do something about the situation. (There is a painting of St. Bernard in one of the altarpieces in the hospice church today where he is portrayed trampling the devil underfoot, much as Santiago Matamoros - “Saint James the Moorslayer” - does with the Moors under his horse’s feet in depictions along the *Camino de Santiago*.) St. Bernard was eventually able to rid the area of all the troublemakers and established a small hospice at the pass in c. 1050 AD, “recycling” the stones from the Roman temple and *mansios* to provide, free of charge, a place with food and shelter for all who passed by. His hospice building, though much enlarged today, has never closed its doors in all that time, open continuously for almost a thousand years.

A monastery and hospice for travellers had already existed in Bourg Saint-Pierre since the ninth century, some 800 metres lower down on the northern side of the pass, and probably a Benedictine foundation; it is likely that St. Bernard’s original hospice was built as an extension of this establishment (destroyed later by the Saracens towards 940 AD). The first building at the Col was a small simple affair, with three large rooms on the ground floor, a bell-tower (to guide travellers at night and in bad weather), a chapel (dedicated to Saint-Michel) and accommodation on the first floor for the religious community who soon came to manage the hospice. Parts of this original structure are still visible in the building today. However, it was run not by monks (i.e. in a closed order) but, from the end of the eleventh century, by the *chanoines réguliers* whose role it was – and still is – to go out into the community and who follow the rule of St. Augustine.

The hospice was enlarged by a third (to north and west) in the 13th century but in 1555 a fire destroyed the roof and the tops of the walls. Repairs began three years later (the hospice had always attracted large donations from the wealthy who lived in the area as well as others and a map dating from 1302 shows its holdings in land and other property stretching from London to Sicily); the walls were raised, the roof covered in stone and the hospice protected by fortifications by this time. Prévôt (provost) Antoine Novat (1671-1693) remodeled the hospice still further, adding a new ground floor so that the original one now became its first floor. The present church was also built at this time (1689). Then, from 1895-1899, with the great increase in the numbers of visitors to the Col as a result of the rising interest in travel and helped by opening of a road for vehicular traffic, the building that is now the hotel (its present use dates from 1925) was constructed as an extension to the hospice, connected by a bridge over the road at first floor level. The other, small, building at the pass, on the hill

behind the hospice, is the morgue (now closed), where those who died on their journeys were buried. Electric light and central heating were installed in the hospice in 1911 and with the rise of motorised traffic to and over the Col and then the building of the tunnel underneath it in 1974 it became necessary, as already indicated above, to envisage a different type of activity for the *congrégation* that runs it.

Right from the outset the hospice provided food and lodging free of charge, for every passing traveller, whether going north or south, whether rich or poor, soldier, merchant, pilgrim etc., and records show, for example, that in the year 1817 34,863 meals or rations were served, which supposes the annual passage of about 20,000 people. Statistics are not available for the entire period the hospice has been in existence but figures indicate that 17,110 travellers passed by in 1868, 16,597 in 1877 and 14,985 in 1881. However, a large part of the work of the *chanoines* consisted of accompanying these people up to the Col in winter and bad weather and then partway down on the other side the following day and, as necessary, rescuing them.

A team of *chanoines* with food supplies (on skis in winter) and later on with dogs went down on both the north and the south sides of the Col to meet anybody coming up. Avalanches were – and still are – common, especially on the Italian side, and travellers needed to be careful that they didn't stray from the path. With the advent of the telephone in the late nineteenth century, however, the guiding and rescue work became much easier and more highly organised. From 1887 those coming up from Bourg Saint-Pierre, for example, passed the Cantine de Proz, an inn about 10km below the pass, where (until it disappeared when the Barrage des Toules - a reservoir - was constructed) calls could be made up to the Hospice to announce their arrival and a team with a rescue dog and provisions dispatched to escort the traveler(s) up to the Col. Before this time, however, the very practical role of the *chanoines* was to set off regardless each day, downwards either north on the Swiss side or southwards to below the snowline into Italy, in case anybody was coming up. There was a similar arrangement on the Italian side where this service was provided by the army since local men could do this work in place of their military service. Emergency refuge cabins were later built at Les Tronches (1917) and Hospitalet (1921) on the Swiss side, equipped with a telephone and supplies for those caught there in bad weather (and these still exist today). Despite this assistance, though, deaths along the way were not uncommon and there were also a number of *chanoines* who lost their lives doing this work.

The Congrégation du Grand-Saint-Bernard

This order was founded in the eleventh century by St. Bernard de Menthon with monks from the monastery in Bourg Saint-Pierre. He founded a new religious community at the Col but whose aim was not only to provide hospitality for all types of travellers but also to celebrate Mass and the four daily religious offices and live according to the device *Jci le Christ est adoré et nourri*. The provost of the *Congrégation* was nominated by the Pope until 1458, when the seat was occupied by the House of Savoy, but in 1752 a Papal bull accorded the *chanoines* the right to chose their own leader freely and since then he has been resident in Martigny. Today there are about forty *chanoines* working in nine parishes, the hospices at both the Great Saint-Bernard and Simplon passes and most of them still come from the area, though unlike the nineteenth century, when most of them came from the Aosta valley, today they are mainly from the Swiss side of the pass. The order was formerly engaged in teaching too, as they used to run the Collège de Champittet in Lausanne and an agricultural school in Aosta as well. Then, from 1930 to 1952, at the request of the Pope at the time, they also agreed to undertake missionary activity in the Tibetan Marches, where they built a hospice at the Col du Latza, at 3800 metres above sea-level. This activity was cut short by the communist invasion of 1949, however, and one of their number, the Bienheureux (Blessed) Maurice Tournier, was beatified as a martyr in 1993. Today there are three *chanoines* (one of which is the Prior), one oblate and one postulant working full-time at the Hospice du Grand Saint-Bernard but as life up there demands a good level of physical fitness to live and work there all year round the members of the *Congrégation* move down from the Col to Martigny once they reach the age of sixty and devote themselves instead to working there and in the surrounding parishes.

As well as the hospitality, guiding and rescue work, many of the *chanoines* were very well-educated and prominent in various spheres of learned activity, one of the most well-known of which was the Chorherr Murith. A great natural historian and specialist in Alpine flora and fauna, geology and entymology, he initiated (something rare for a cleric at the time) the archeological investigations from 1890-93 which uncovered the remains of the Roman temples, two *mansios* and an enormous haul of Roman and other coins and artifacts. The hospice also had (and still has) a very extensive library, including some very rare books and manuscripts copied out by former *chanoines*: Papal bulls, legal and land registry documents, correspondence with the high and mighty and so on. A fire in the twelfth century destroyed part of their archives and of the 150,000 items left part are now in the hospice itself, the rest in the library of the University of Turin. The *chanoines* also maintained (and still do) a weather station at the pass (the original one, dating from 1817, can now be seen in the museum), from where they continue to send daily reports to the meteorological office in Zurich.

A *livre de passants* (visitors book) records the names of all those who passed through the hospice (Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury who made his journey to Rome in 990 AD is also mentioned there). Numerous kings, popes and other exalted persons travelled over the Col, alongside the poor and the indigent, the pilgrims, workmen, merchants and others, but probably the most spectacular and well-known examples were Hannibal, who crossed the Alps with his elephants in the second century BC and Napoleon, who went over the pass on May 20th 1800 accompanied by 40,000 soldiers, 5,000 horses, 50 canons (which had to be hauled up there by hand on hollowed-out tree trunks) and eight howitzers. The entire operation took eight days to complete, during which time each and every soldier received the ration of bread, cheese and wine traditionally allotted to each passer-by. This obviously caused a massive drain on the hospice's resources and the debt was only settled (and then only very symbolically) by President Mitterand in the mid-twentieth century.

Dogs

In the general public's mind today, however, it is the dogs that are most associated with the Great Saint-Bernard Pass – the enormous black, white and brown dogs with gentle faces, docile by nature but with huge physical strength, as well as, in popular conception at least (though this is probably a myth), a barrel of brandy attached to its collar. The origin of these dogs is uncertain though it is thought that they may be a cross between a Great Dane, a Newfoundland dog and a mastiff, and although there are references to them being used for this work as early as 1708 the exact date when this began is not known. They were used to guide the *chanoines* onto the correct path when it was snow-covered, as they have such an acute sense of smell, and to pull people out of avalanches and to take the victims back to the hospice on sledges. The most famous of all dogs was one Barry (so-named because, when he was a puppy, he was thought to resemble a little bear (*Bär* in German) and who is reported to have saved the lives of some forty travellers during his working life. On his "retirement" he was taken to Berne where he was looked after by a priest and then, when he eventually died, he was moved to the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle there where (stuffed) he can still be seen today.

Subsequently Barry was the father of many more dogs and since then the best male dog of each year's litter has been named after their famous ancestor – Barry 2, Barry 3 and so on. Barry 4 died in an "accident at work" (he fell into a ravine) but he too can be seen today – in the hospice museum at the Col – while the original Barry's present successor – Barry 8 – is very much alive and well. Nowadays, however, although two dogs are trained each year for avalanche work, the Great Saint-Bernard dogs are no longer used for general rescue purposes. Difficult to train they have now been replaced by German shepherds who not only learn much more rapidly but also weigh far less, so that two dogs at a time can be taken out in a helicopter instead of only one. The Great Saint-Bernards are still bred, however, and some twelve to fifteen puppies are born each year. (There is a very long waiting list, though, the purchaser has no choice of animal and they cost in the region of 1800 to 2000 CHF each.)

Originally the dogs belonged to the hospice but in recent years the Fondation Barry was founded, based down in Martigny where all the dogs are kept during the winter and where the puppies are born. Each spring some twelve to fifteen dogs are brought up to the hospice "on loan" for the summer months, basically as a tourist attraction. They are looked after by a team of trained dog handlers and the visitor will see them both in their enormous cages in the museum kennels and being taken for walks in twos and threes in the hills around the hospice.

The role of the Hospice post-tunnel

As explained earlier, the road tunnel under the pass, opened in 1964, considerably altered the life and work of the Hospice. Still open all day, all night, every day of the year, it has now become a place where individuals or groups can go to spend the night or a few days, whether as part of an organized retreat or just for a rest in quiet, peaceful surroundings and, when the weather is kind, beautiful scenery. (Nowadays, of course, travellers pay for their accommodation and from 1940 onwards a fixed charge has been in operation.) The daily cycle of four liturgical offices plus Mass continues as before, in the crypt during the week, in the church on Sundays and holidays but during the summer months, when the hotel is open (and all other travellers stay there), accommodation in the main Hospice building is reserved for walkers, cyclists and riders, as well as those who arrive on skis or snow shoes where necessary. Many of those who stay there or just spend the day before moving on are ordinary walkers, some in ones and twos, others in larger groups while others come for walking pilgrimage/retreats lasting several days, often organized by the hospice itself. Then, of course, there are pilgrims, mainly on foot, the majority bound for Rome (with the odd one or two continuing after that to Jerusalem) though there are also a few going to either Canterbury or continuing to through Switzerland, France and Spain to Santiago de Compostela. In winter, however, when some 6,000 people a year go up to the pass, anybody can stay there as, by definition, since there is no vehicular access from mid-May to mid-October, they have to go up there under their own steam. Some just go up to the pass to ski, but there are many others who combine outdoor activities with a retreat and there are many group activities of this nature during this period. Managing food and other supplies for a winter that lasts for seven months obviously requires draconian organization, and tons and tons of potatoes and twelve hundred kilos of cheese, for instance, all need to be transported up to the pass before the end of September and in large enough quantities to last until well into the following spring. For once the snow starts to fall the only way up to the Col, apart from on foot, is by helicopter.

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Cammino di Sant'Agostino

Members who have already walked to Rome (and others) may be interested to learn that a new *cammino* has recently been organised, the *Way of Saint Augustine*. ~~By knowing this~~ It runs from Pavia to Genoa, in the north of

See

[_____](#) for more information about the route and details of maps, accommodation, daily stages, etc.,

The website is available in English and several other languages though at the time this edition of the CPR *Newsletter* went to press not all the translations had been finished.

Towed carts (“hiking trailers”) as an alternative to rucksacks

Robert Muirhead

Why use a cart?

Many long-distance walkers and pilgrims try to minimise the weight of their backpack, but this is not always possible if you plan to camp, or if you need to carry several day's food and water. A practical alternative is to tow a cart and there are now many different designs available.

Those with knee or back problems may also be better off towing a cart, rather than having to give up long walks because they can no longer comfortably carry a backpack.

More and more older people are walking long distances. A cart can make their walks more enjoyable than struggling with a heavy backpack.

A cart will also allow you to take many of the comforts of home with you. It gives you freedom and flexibility. You don't have to get up before the sparrows to set out on the “camino gallop” to secure a bed for the night.

Most carts are compact enough to take into your room if you choose to stay in a hotel, so you don't have to leave your cart outside the building and worry about theft.

Good carts carry the load low and close to the wheels. so a load of say 20kg will feel like only 9kg. It's a matter of forces, fulcrums and levers. As Archimedes said. "Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it and I shall move the world."

A cart feels quite effortless on flat terrain and going downhill. although there is extra effort in physically pulling the cart over rocks and other obstacles that one would simply step over with a backpack. However, even with a cart, you may also want to wear a small day pack containing the items you need quick and

What about hilly terrain?

It takes the same amount of energy to raise a given weight through a given height, no matter if the weight is carried or towed. You burn the same amount of calories either way. But a cart takes less "effort" because one pulls the cart with the whole body, leaning into the harness, in a biomechanically more efficient way than carrying a backpack where the stance is more upright and the entire weight falls on the back and legs.

Being able to stop and rest without bearing any load or having to take off a pack is also an advantage of a cart on steep hills.

But manhandling a heavy cart over rocks on steep terrain can be tiring. Some designs allow the pack and cart to be worn like a backpack for short periods when negotiating difficult terrain or water.

Even with a cart, you have to make sure the load is not too heavy. Packing disciplines learned with a backpack are still useful. Don't indulge in too much luxury, like the young woman I saw pushing a small cart in which her little dog lolled in comfort, while she carried a backpack.

Most of the websites for carts have photos and videos of carts in use on various terrains, so you can get a good idea of how they perform in relation to the walks you want to do.

The downside of a cart is that you might have to avoid sections of a route that you would normally want to use. For example, you might want to follow historic pilgrimage trails as closely as possible.

Advance route planning is required to avoid potential problems. One cart user commented to me that if a route was deemed "not suitable for bikes" in his guidebook he did not use it.

Will a cart impede my natural gait?

I have seen videos of users walking with their carts and the cart sometimes has a sort of stop-go motion on flat ground. That could take a bit of getting used to if the cart is out of synch with the body.

When towing a cart you also have to take wider turns on corners so the cart does not hit obstacles on the side of the path. The user always has to be conscious of where the wheel is going and adjust his path accordingly.

The cart design also needs to allow room for a normal gait without the legs hitting the cart.

Most carts have some sort of towing harness attached to the body, but a few rely on pulling with the arms. I prefer a harness that leaves my hands free to use a walking pole on difficult terrain.

Being locked into a harness has a downside if you happen to fall on steep terrain. You can't quickly dump a cart like you could if pulling it along by hand. Of course, the same difficulty exists strapped into a backpack. Although with a backpack you could use a "tump line" like Nepali porters, but that is another story.

A cart might feel a little odd at first, but users seem to adapt quickly.

One wheel or two?

Many users say that one-wheel designs have a stability problem on uneven terrain if the load in the pack is not balanced and carefully centred on the frame. However, the user can simply grasp the towing poles when the cart seems likely to tip over.

Two-wheel designs are more stable and require less care to balance the load, but the harness needs to be flexible to cater for twisting and turning of the cart on rough terrain.

Two wheels are also more difficult to manoeuvre around obstacles on rough terrain than one wheel.

Generally speaking, two-wheel designs seem intended for recreational use on ~~walk paths or trails~~ ~~walk paths or trails~~. One-wheel designs seem better suited to more demanding

I opted to consider only one-wheel designs in my research.

Other things to look for

Larger wheels are better than small wheels on rough terrain and for going over kerbs, logs etc. Wide or “fat” wheels are better than narrow wheels because they won’t jam as easily in cracks and crevices.

Most of the carts I looked at weigh only 3 - 5kg, so weight is not a big factor. But remember that lighter carts may also be the flimsiest and most likely to fail on a long walk.

Ideally you should see the actual cart to judge reliability, but this is often not possible. Ask for good quality close-up photos of key parts of the cart if they are not shown on the maker’s website.

Welding thin metal components causes metallurgical changes and introduces stresses that can become weak points if the welding is poor. Ideally, you want the fewest welds possible on tubing and other light components, because they may be potential failure points.

Look especially at how the wheel axle is attached to the frame, because that is where most of the stress will be concentrated.

You want plenty of metal around all bolts and joints to give strength and minimise cracking.

The cart should look simple and rugged. not complicated and flimsy. It is not a fashion accessory, so don’t choose the prettiest cart with all the flashy features.

It will flex and bend many thousands of times going over all sorts of terrain on a very long walk. The cart must be able to stand up to rough treatment. You want to pamper yourself, not your cart, even if you do come to love it on a long walk.

If you need to travel by plane to the start of your walk, the cart needs to be able to survive airport baggage handling, so you don’t want it to have loose straps flopping about and flimsy bits that are going to break in transit. Some carts allow partial disassembly for easier transport, but the lighter and more foldable a cart

What cart to choose?

The examples below were suggested to me by contributors on one of the pilgrimage websites (<http://www.caminodesantiago.me/board/>). There are probably other excellent carts, but my selection will give you a good idea of the various designs available.

My final choice boiled down to the smaller (50-pound load) of two Dixon carts (<http://dixonrollerpack.com/>). It has a wide, decent-sized wheel and was the cheapest (\$US295) of all the carts I researched. The maker, Bob Dixon, will tailor the harness to your body size and he is very helpful generally. The smaller cart comes with a pack and the whole assembly can be carried as a backpack.

Another good choice is the Carrix (<http://www.carrix.ch/harcarre.html>). The Carrix agent in Australia sells the cart and pack for \$A995. I think it is made in Switzerland, so it might be cheaper in Europe. The wheel is a little smaller than I would like, and I think the triangular frame design would be less stable than the Dixon cart. However, the Carrix has won an award and you can find weblinks to an impressive set of photos from its users.

The “Trackmate” (<http://www.prohikeaustralia.com.au/index.html>) is a very novel one-wheel design made in Australia. It costs \$A565. The maker, Patric Roberts is extremely helpful. The cart can be converted into a comfortable chair (see videos on the website) for use in camp. There is also a small table attachment. Stability of the single-wheel design is enhanced by having towing poles instead of a flexible harness.

The “Monowalker” (<http://www.monowalker.com/>) looks fantastic but it is too complicated and costs 980 Euro. It has a large wheel, which is good, but it is inflatable like a bike wheel, which means carrying tools, repair kit and pump. The “Monowalker” also has brakes, which are a good idea for heavy loads on descents, but it adds complexity and more things to go wrong, not to mention the added weight of the components. Better to take a load light enough to be safely controlled without brakes. Also there seems to be no pulling harness, only towing handles.

The “Wheelie III” (<https://www.radicaldesign.nl/en/products/walking-trailers/wheelie-iii>) is a good example of a two-wheel design. It costs 529 Euro with a pack. It has a harness and towing handles. This cart might be worth considering for walkers who prefer two wheel designs.

The carts mentioned above are obviously quite expensive, but it is virtually impossible to try before you buy. Some of the websites have excellent photos and videos showing the carts in use, and these are very helpful.

be willing to show you their cart or discuss their experiences by email. You could also ask the manufacturer if there are users in your area who would

Make your own cart!

Many people make their own carts and some of these designs are quite impressive. A few are also Heath Robinson contraptions! People apply their ingenuity to golf carts, bicycle frames – even wheelbarrows.

The most basic design I have seen was a simple luggage trolley pulled along by a walker on the *Camino Francés*. Not the sort of trolley provided by airports, but the flimsy type of trolley you can buy to strap a suitcase onto. People are wonderfully inventive and it is always fascinating to see novel approaches to solving the problems that all walkers have to deal with.

Whether bought or made, a towed cart is a practical, enjoyable way to liberate yourself from the shackles of a heavy backpack.



(Photo: author)

On carts in general

They are a good option if the walker has a back problem that prevents carrying a backpack. They may not be a good option if you simply want to take more stuff. That defeats their advantages to a large extent.

There is still a lot of effort involved in hauling a loaded pack uphill, especially over rough terrain. Even going downhill, there is quite a downward load on the body. They certainly don't make walking "effortless" – unless used on flat, well-maintained paths designed for simple recreational walks.

So, one should take very little more in a cart than one would normally carry in a pack.

Editor's note: the author undertook this research as he is planning to walk with a cart along the *Via Francigena* later this year. He has indicated that he is willing to answer questions from interested readers via the pilgrim forum:

<http://www.caminodesantiago.me/board/equipment-questions/topic10360.html>

* * * * *

New Pilgrim Refuge in Rome

A new (pilgrim-only) refuge has now been opened in the Piramide/Porta San Paolo area of Rome by the Italian Confraternità di San Jacopo, the "Spedale della Provvidenza e San Benedetto Labre," c/o Istituto Suore Figlie della Divina Provvidenza, Via Galvani 51, 00153 Roma.

It is open from Easter to the 30th September, has 40 bunk beds, toilets and showers, is ONLY available to pilgrims with a credencial (pilgrim passport) and for a stay of no longer than two nights. Prior reservation essential (48 hours notice needed). There is no fixed charge but you should leave a donation.

It is in the Testaccio area of Rome and can be reached on foot (2.5 miles from the Vatican/St. Peter's), by bus (number 75 from the Termini railway station) or by underground: the nearest metro station to the Vatican is Ottaviano, on Linea A – change at Termini (in the "Anagnina" direction) onto Linea B (in the "Laurentino" direction) and get off at "Pyramide".

If any former pilgrims are interested in working there as volunteer *hospitaleros* (wardens) please contact Mrs Lucia Martellucci, Via U. Balzani, 12, 00162 Roma. (0039.06.8632 2280 + 0039.328.1328150)

Memories of a pilgrimage to Rome from the South

Alberto Alberti

As time goes by, I cherish my memories more and more, especially those which made my life sweeter. Foremost among them are the memories of the *Via Francigena* from the south.



Over and over again I think of the little ceremony which our group of pilgrims of six nationalities performed at the beginning of each day's walk. We started with the prayer "Our Father..." Everybody around me was saying "Our Father..." in his own language, including those not religiously motivated. These words meant that as sons of the same father we were all brothers. How nice to begin the day's walk with brothers! Then we walked in complete silence for an half an hour.

I love to remember our gathering in a square in front of the Cistercian church in Sezze. It is 300 metres above the plain and it has a balcony view of the whole of "Pontinia" region. On the horizon the sea, some islands and, towering far away on the coast, the very steep Mount Circeo. I seemed to see the entire world. There on a wall there is a memorial tablet with the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi:***

“Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially
Sir brother Sun,
Who is the day through whom You give us light.
And He is beautiful and radiant with great splendour. Of You,
Most High, he bears likeness.”

“Esta es la mejor poesia en el mundo” said a Spanish pilgrim in our group in his vibrant language. It sounded like a definitive statement. The whole view was glittering under a bright sun.

But I also remember an episode in Sessa Aurunca. We were in the Augustinian convent, in the same room where Mozart spent a few days and composed the first movement of a symphony. We were listening to it from a simple CD. The walls of the room seemed to listen together with us.

Then a very different emotion. I was in a boat, which was tied to a rope that stretched from one bank of the river Garigliano to the other. We had reproduced the old way of crossing the river. A group of local people on the bank was watching us curiously. Their grandfathers had used that same method for centuries but it has now been completely forgotten. The current in the river was rather strong and so the water was dark and not at all reassuring. But all the pilgrims crossed the river safely and were happy to have done that.

Then we walked in complete silence to an ancient church near by, Santa Maria in Pensulis. There a large stone with a Templar cross was laid as a step in the church staircase. We were all wondering what tragedy the stone had seen, when it was removed from what must have been a magnificent local templar building.

Just imagine the view of a little Roman harbour at the tip of a little rocky peninsula covered with mediterranean vegetation. The green colour of the bushes, the white of the rocks and of the little pier, the intense blue of the sea under the azure of the sky - it was a pleasure for the eyes.

A very different impression was given by the Golden Chapel in the Chiesa dell' Annunziata in Gaeta. Its walls were all covered with a glittering golden decoration, precious engravings, golden statues of saints, costly stones with a brilliant light. Brocade on the few church benches. In the centre the seats of the King and of the Queen were covered with red velvet.

After this, as in contrast, I see myself walking around Fondi on a path crossing an immense orchard filled with orange and lemon trees. The air had the intense perfume of their blossom. It seemed as though I was in heaven. No tiredness, all preoccupations forgotten. The air made me feel that just little things can make life pleasant.

A different feeling when I was walking up the Monte Sant' Angelo towards Terracina, climbing 400 metres in just two kilometres and through thick vegetation. We pilgrims walked up there to avoid the busy main roads with heavy traffic. I was tired, but the view below of the Fondi lake, of the long sandy shores of the gulf of Sperlonga and the fresh air of the mountain made me enjoy those moments. I also knew that I would shortly be on the Roman Appian Way, still with its original twenty-three centuries old paving.

In Terracina it was fantastic. We were received by the local community in a park overlooking the town, and with many children present. A Danish pilgrim decided to tell them a fable by Hans Christian Andersen, who happened to live for a period in Terracina. With eyes fixed on the storyteller the children (and not only they) were enchanted for twenty minutes. A great joy for us.

Next we were on the saddle of another mountain, in Campo Soriano National Park. We were eating our lunch with a group of park rangers. They offered us all the local specialties, simple food (but how pleasant and tasty!), cheese, olives, home-baked bread, local wine, salami and, of course, home-made pasta. No wonder we ended up with each of us singing a song from our different countries!

A different scene in the Cistercian Abbey of Fossanova. The church's excellent acoustics allowed us to enter singing an ancient pilgrim song. But afterwards we heard a short introduction to the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas, who had died there. His philosophy is the basis of the doctrine of the Christian religion and he lived in the same period in which the church was built. The sequence of the arguments developed by Saint Thomas was matched by the sequence of the pillars of the Cistercian basilica.

More music in Sermoneta. Fabrizio Caroso was born there in the fifteenth century, a composer of dance music who worked in the Renaissance princely courts of Gonzaga and Este. The music was performed in the massive castle and it was so tender, in sharp contrast to the military aspect of the central courtyard.

In Cori I was impressed by an astronomy lesson. With a powerful telescope we could observe the planets and then hear about the infinite worlds scattered in the universe. It was a lesson to let us feel how small we are and how evanescent is our life.

Then we were on the banks of the romantic Giulianello lake, listening to the peasant songs of the villagers. The women made me remember my childhood, when those songs could be heard everyday, sung by the farmers at work. A memory in a memory.

Then I was on *the Via Appia Antica* leading to Rome. The way is called “Regina Viarum” or “Queen of all Roads.” Eighteen kilometres, with the original stone paving, flanked by ancient monuments and by long lines of cypress trees. The setting was solemn and we pilgrims were walking in silence. We arrived at the end at the little church called “Quo vadis.” I had to read the passage from the Apocryphal Gospel recounting the episode of Saint Peter running away from Rome and having the vision of Jesus Christ. Saint Peter asked: “Domine, quo vadis?” (My Lord, where are you going?) Christ answered and Peter returned to the town to meet his death. I sort of felt I did not deserve to repeat the words of our Lord. But they needed to be recalled in that place. In that little church during the thanksgiving Mass for the end of the pilgrimage I could observe with gratitude the fellow pilgrims who had walked with me: splendid people who have enriched my life with their qualities and character.

Thank you, *Via Francigena*.

***Some readers may be more familiar with a slightly different, more modern translation of the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi from the *Canticle of all Creatures*:

“All praise be yours, my Lord,
through all you have made,
and first my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day;
and through whom you give us light.
How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendour;
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.”

* * * * *

A Brief History of Volunteer *Hospitaleros* in Italy

Luigi Nacci

In the last twenty years many Italian pilgrims have walked the *Camino de Santiago*. Once they've finished it a number of them have felt the need/desire to give something back. They obtained information, organized themselves and returned to Spain to attend a volunteer *hospitalero*' training course. After that they have worked in a refugio for fifteen days, whenever they could and wherever they were needed.

All this occurred on an individual basis until, in 2010, an Italian volunteer took the trouble to contact the Spanish hospitalo trainers, look for a suitable place to hold such a course and to spread the word in the Italian pilgrim community. That was how the first course for Italian hospitaleros took place in Tuscany, in Monteriggione. There were immediately more applicants than there were places, however, and in 2011 there were two such courses, in Tuscany and in Piemonte, in San Miniato and Roppolo respectively.

In 2012 there will be two courses in Altopascio and the ColleVal d'Esla, both in Tuscany, run by Spanish trainers. Many former Italian pilgrims therefore enjoyed the same high quality of preparation as in the courses held in Spain but without the expense of a special journey for the purpose. Twelve Italian volunteers have now been trained to help the Spanish teachers so that the newcomers are now asking: "When are we going to start having refugios on the *Via Francigena* run by volunteer hospitaleros?" The group has requested local authorities, parishes and local associations to open dedicated pilgrim facilities.

There has been some good news in 2012: the chance to set up three, and possibly four refugios on the *Via Francigena*. And, of course, the doors will be open not just to Italian volunteers but to our Spanish "older brothers" as well.*** This is an important step, the first towards the internationalization of the model of non-commercial pilgrim accommodation that has been so successful along the *Camino de Santiago*. If believing that it is still an attractive Utopian ideal to be able to have human relations between human beings, it is even more astonishing to find a place where this takes place.

Good luck, then, to the *Via Francigena* with this first step and may we continue not just opening doors like this but asking pilgrims and hospitaleros to keep them that way.

(Trans. Alison Raju)

****Editor's note*: this article first appeared in the April 2012 issue (#56) of the *Boletín Informativo* published by the Federación Española de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino de Santiago, who run the training courses for Hospitaleros Volunterios working in refugios in Spain. By no means all these volunteers are Spanish though, so presumably the same would apply here and any ex-pilgrim with a good level of spoken Italian would be able to offer his/her services as well.

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CPR Chairman's Report, March 3rd 2012

Joe Patterson

Thank you for coming here today. This is our fifth AGM and one that introduces much change..

Our membership continues to be well over the hundred of fully paid-up members. We have two corporate members, Canterbury City and Canterbury Cathedral and two honourable members: Alberto Alberti and Adelaide Trezzini of the AIVF.

We have had four Steering Group meetings during the past year and we are slowly pressing ahead with many new ideas..

Two members left the steering group (and the Confraternity) during the year but two other members have volunteered to take their place (see below.)

We have had a hard look at how we manage publications etc. For this we have set up a sub-group of Alison Raju, Howard Nelson and Yvonne Loftus, to be known (unsurprisingly...) as the CPR Publications Sub-Committee. They will examine and comment on the suitability of items to be published. This arose out a member's proposal that we should publish a book describing the story of their journey to Rome. Obviously members' accounts of their pilgrimages can still be printed in the *Newsletter*.

I agreed to become acting chairman in November last year and am willing to become the new chairman if elected today. Before that happens, however, I must pay tribute to the outgoing chairman, William Marques, who has lead the Confraternity for so many years with a great blend of wisdom and enthusiasm. I must also thank all those steering group members who have helped me over the last few months.

In no particular order:

- Yvonne Loftus for her energy and her control of the selling/posting of our own printed guides and other publications.
- Alison Payne, our very reluctant Treasurer, who has controlled our finances since day one.
- Alison Raju and Chris George for producing again and again really interesting *Newsletters*.
- Bronwyn Marques our Secretary, who takes our minutes and makes sense of our meandering discussions.
- Ann Milner our Webmaster, who manages to keep our web site operating, even when many miles away.
- William Marques, our former chairman, for his lead over the past few years.*

Following the resignation of former members of the Steering Group we now have two vacancies. Jim Brodie has volunteered, but at this time has no portfolio, and Robert White, who will take over from Alison Payne as Treasurer. He will also act as the liaison with the AIVF.

All these existing and proposed members were elected to the Committee as detailed.

On 21st May several members will be travelling to Kent to meet and walk with a group of pilgrims from the Abbey of Saint Maurice in Switzerland. Having walked from home along the *Via Francigena* to Rome over several years they we will walk with them, over two days, from Dover.

Once again thank you all for coming today.

* * * * *

New Dormifrancigena

The AIVF has just issued a new, 2012 edition of their accommodation guide to the Italian section of the *Via Francigena*; their *Dormifrancigena*, containing 232 addresses. This costs 5 euros for members of the AIVF, 7 euros for non-members, and can be ordered either from Robert White, 74 Yeldham Road, London W6 8JG, uk@francigena-international.org or from Adelaide Trezzini, info@francigena-international.org

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Reminiscences

Julia Griffiths

Arriving in *Piazza San Pietro* as the clock boomed mid-day. Suddenly it was all over. Finished.

I'd walked in El Domiti and done the odd *Via Ferrata*; given up on the *Sentieri della Chianti* with snow and escaped to Liguria and Cinque Terre; wandered around the Amalfi peninsula and followed the river Elsa to Radda-in-Chianti. Somewhere I had seen signs for the *Via Francigena*: where?

More planning, more map reading, guides and questions...

What do I remember?

May 2011 and stepping off the train on a dark night in Fornovo di Taro. The long uphill climb the next morning, lovely wild flowers in the meadow near Berceto.

Entering Tuscany, a welcome at “La Locanda degli Aceri” and good food. Sleepy Montelungo and stopping for coffee in Pontremoli. Villafranca, quite unlike anywhere else; lovely fresh water at the fountain below town. Walking through woodland to Formoli. Aulla, uninspiring. I met a Norwegian lady and found a train to Sarzana. Welcomed at the “Locanda de Limone.” A lovely town.

Getting a bit lost on the alternative route and trying to find the Roman remains at Luni. Large town, probably a port, closed. The amphitheatre behind massive iron gates. Then Massa: forget Massa. To the east the dazzling white marble Carrara mountains.

Walking into Pietrosanta with a German. Three Spaniards joined us at the Casa Diocesana La Roca. Had dinner together; no real common language beyond *vini bianchi*.

The long 23 miles into Lucca, one of my favourite cities. A day to explore and a day to visit Barga before returning home.

* * *

September/October 2011 and back in Lucca. The CAI [Club Alpino Italiano] have checked and updated the *Via Francigena* signs through Tuscany. Excellent. Altopascio and a welcome in the library and the market is in full swing. Pontecaproni and the hostel on the medieval bridge built by the Medicis. Leaving early and walking by the canals in the morning mist. Crossing the river Arno, a definite staging point. San Miniato, a town I would like to explore another day.

Deviating via Castelfiorentina to Certaldo; the latter, reached by a funicular railway, retains a strong medieval feel. Down a pilgrim path and a long uphill walk to San Gimignano. Crowded with day trippers. I found a bus to Colle de Val d'Elsa and a room at the convent. The kind sisters and the lovely homemade pizza. Through silent woods to Sienna. No birds.

Crossing the rolling Tuscan hills to Quinciana and meeting two Americans from North Carolina. The Convento di San Apollinare. Dining with M., a piano

The helpful priest at San Quirico d'Orcia and his English bulldog, Iago.

Missing the lane out of Radicofani and having a lovely woodland walk. Coming to Lake Bolsena with five Italians. A day off to visit Orvieto. Walking on to Montefiascone, with the dome of the cathedral said to rival that of Florence. No. And the 14th century Papal fortress, La Rocca. A final day to Viterbo.

March 2012 and back to Viterbo; a lovely town and time to explore within the great walls. Vetrella and through lovely woods full of “English” spring flowers. Capranica and then Sutri. Some filming in the *piazza* in the evening (probably advertising). Visiting the amphitheatre and the necropolis in the morning. May blossom in abundance.

Is this Italy? The thunder, the lightening and very heavy rain as I climbed the hill to Campagnano di Roma; the kind lady who gave me a plastic bag to keep my head dry.

La Storta, not very inspiring, and the final eleven miles into Rome. Traffic, noise, crowds, more noise, pollution after the clear fresh air of the country lanes and woods.

Memories, all sorts, linger. Most of all the many kindnesses of the Italian people in so many places will not be forgotten.

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*** Obtaining the *Testimonium***

We have received this information from the AIVF, who have been cooperating with the Vatican since 2001 regarding the reception and welcome they accord to pilgrims arriving there.

VICARIATO VATICANO • Accoglienza dei Pellegrini Romei [*Reception of Pilgrims*]

Regole per ricevere il *Testimonium Peregrinationis ad Limina Petri* [*How to obtain the Testimonium*]

A) per i pellegrini a piedi, preferibilmente percorrendo la Via Francigena almeno da Acquapendente passando per Bolsena, Montefiascone, Viterbo, Vetralla, Sutri, La Storta.

[Pilgrims having walked, at least from Acquapendente, through Bolsena, Montefiascone, Viterbo, Vetralla, Sutri and La Storta to Rome (140 Km)]

B) per i pellegrini venuti in bicicletta almeno da Lucca, 400 Km

*[Pilgrims having **cycled**, at least from Lucca to Rome, 400 Km]*

Essi, per ricevere il Testimonium, possono recarsi *[You may obtain your Testimonium]:*

1) all'Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, in Piazza Pio XII, n. 9, appena fuori dal Colonnato della Basilica di San Pietro, dal lunedì al venerdì dalle ore 9 alle ore 18, sabato e domenica dalle ore 9 alle ore 16, recando le proprie Credenziali timbrate. Info tel. 0669896384.

[1) by presenting your stamped credential at the "Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi", in Pio XII Square n° 9, just outside St. Peter's Square. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9 am - 6 pm, Saturday / Sunday 9 am - 4 pm.

2) agli Uffici della Canonica di San Pietro. In questo secondo caso potrete ricevere il Testimonium, recandovi all'Ingresso Petriano, in Piazza S.Uffizio, nei giorni di Lunedì, Martedì, Giovedì, Venerdì e Sabato, dalle ore 9,30 alle ore 12,30 e chiedendo di essere accolti nel Palazzo della Canonica per ricevere il Testimonium. Info: Sig. Patrizio Menna Valerio tel.0669883731.

[2) by presenting you stamped credential at the "Palazzo della Canonica", tel. 0669883731. To get there enter Vatican City through the gate called "Ingresso del Petriano" in the "Piazza del Sant'Uffizio" and ask to be guided to the Palazzo della Canonica for the Testimonium. Opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 9.30 - 12.30 am.

Nel caso non vi sia stato possibile entrare nello Stato della Città del Vaticano nel giorno del vostro arrivo, potrete ricevere il vostro "Testimonium" per Posta, inviando la vostra richiesta al seguente indirizzo:

Fabbrica di San Pietro, 00120 Città del Vaticano e corredando la vostra richiesta con i seguenti documenti:

- 1) Fotocopia della Carta d'Identità o del Passaporto.
- 2) Fotocopia dei timbri ricevuti durante il pellegrinaggio.
- 3) Vostro indirizzo completo.
- 4) Vostra data di nascita.
- 5) Luogo dell'inizio del vostro Pellegrinaggio.
- 6) Data di partenza e data di arrivo.
- 7) Pellegrinaggio eseguito a piedi o in bicicletta?
- 8) La motivazione del Vostro Pellegrinaggio è stata, la Fede, la cultura, o altro?
- 9) L'organizzazione che vi ha sostenuto durante il Pellegrinaggio è stata forse la "Association Internationale Via Francigena", associazioni di San Giacomo, Associazione europea delle Vie Francigene, o altra ancora?

As a rough guide articles should be somewhere between 1000 and 1500 words, according to the subject matter, but we can be flexible. 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, however, 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 documents are acceptable (.doc files, but not .docx please, wherever possible). If you send pictures, though, please do not integrate them into the text but send them as separate files (indicating where you want them to be placed).

Material for the April issue of the *Newsletter* should normally reach the editor by early March, by early July for the August number and by the end of November the December. If you are preparing a lengthy item it will help, if you know ahead of time, to alert us to this in advance.

We look forward to an avalanche of contributions!

Alison Raju
alisonraju@btopenworld.c

Chris George
Torridon73@aol.com

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Book Reviews

Abbey of the SS. Salvatore at Mont Amiata: Guide and Historical Notes

Don Roberto Corvoni, *Abbey of the SS. Salvatore at Monte Amiata Guide and Historical Notes*, Abbey of SS Salvatore at Monte Amiata: Edizioni d'Arte Marconi #97, originally published 1992 reprinted 2006, 96 pp,

This guide was published to celebrate the 950th anniversary of the Consecration of the Upper Church of the Abbey, which took place in 1985. It is A5 in format and contains numerous coloured photographs and maps. The different chapters cover the local geography, the history of the Abbey and descriptions of its architecture, paintings and treasures and the *Via Francigena*.

The whole guide will be of interest to all those who choose to take the route close to Monte Amiata, passing the Abbey, and who would like to understand more about its contents and history. However, the most interesting chapter for pilgrims wishing to visit the Abbey is that on the *Via Francigena*. It describes the

route between Siena and Bolsena as having Etruscan *roots* but being based on the Roman road, the *Via Cassia*. It describes the *Via Francigena* as being a creation of the Longobards, who also founded the Abbey. The section of the route between the Val d'Orcia and the Val di Paglia was controlled by the Abbey, which provided hostels and hospitals on the route.

The guide describes how the main route of *the Via Francigena*, for which earliest documentary record is found in the Abbey's archive dated 4th May 876, changed from passing close to the Abbey to passing through Radicofani. This change is noted in the journals of twelfth-century Icelandic bishop, Nikulas of Munkathvera, and also in those of King Philippe Auguste of France. However the old route was still in use until the end of the 16th century.

Probably the most important treasure of the Abbey described in the guide is the complete Bible in the Latin Vulgate version, and is considered to be the most accurate copy of St. Jerome's text. It was produced in the double monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria and was written between the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth.*** One of the three copies, now the only one which survives, was taken by Abbot Ceofrid, who had commissioned it as a gift for Pope Gregory II but he died on the road and it never arrived in Rome. Records show that in the ninth century it came into the possession of the Abbey where it remained until 1785, when it was acquired by the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence. A full-size facsimile copy was returned to the Abbey in December 2000.

If you are visiting the Abbey this guide is well worth having but it is not available online and can only be bought when you arrive there. A copy is held in the CPR library.

William Marques

***See Chris George's article: The *Codex Amiatinus*, CPR *Newsletter* #4 (August 2008), pp. 15-16.

Guide book to the Italian section of the *Via Francigena*

Adélaïde Trezzini, Yvette Terrien and Céline Heckmann,

La Via Francigena: le Chemin de Sigéric en Italie, Le Père Editions 2012, 197pp., ISBN 978-2-915156-35-5. Sketch maps, colour photographs.

Le Père Editions, a French publisher with a reliable reputation and who have already produced guides to the four main pilgrim routes in France leading to Santiago de Compostela, to the *Camino Francés* in Spain and to the *Camino Portugués*, have now released in a co-edition with the AIVF, a guide (in French) to the Italian section of the *Via Francigena*.

It is not, however, and as the reader might well be expecting, a guide to a waymarked *cammino* all the way from the Great Saint-Bernard Pass to Rome but one to the *historic* route (taken and described by Sigeric and his companions in 990AD), a route which by no means always coincides with the *Via Francigena* signing that the pilgrim encounters along the way.

This guide contains detailed route descriptions for the (historic) route, information on where to sleep (which has all been checked out) and brief details (presumably in the interests of conciseness) on what to see and visit along the way. However, this guide falls down very seriously in one very important practical area for the pilgrim for as well as walking and sleeping he/she also needs – to eat! There is no information whatsoever on the existence of shops for food, bars, restaurants, farmacias, banks, medical facilities and so on, all of which the pilgrim needs, and as the population size of places passed through is rarely given this does not help either.

Maps are a problem in Italy as there appear to be no maps that cover the entire country at a scale of either 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 comparable to those of the Ordnance Survey maps in Britain or the excellent IGN maps in France. This guide therefore provides sketch maps, indicating both the route described and the “official” (i.e. AE-VF) route, but no scale is given, few road numbers are marked and while rivers are indicated in blue, railway lines are indistinguishable from roads. These are not, either, maps that you can actually **walk** from, when waymarking is absent or route descriptions are not detailed enough. The guide does, however, provide good, detailed street plans of large towns such as Vercelli, Piacenza, Lucca, Sienna and Rome, which are extremely helpful.

This guide, in general, comes across as a purely trekking/hiking rather than a **pilgrim** guide. We are given the “nuts and bolts” of how to walk and where to sleep but there is no information, for example, about church services or about the *Via Francigena* being anything more than a hike along a historic route, as opposed to it also being an opportunity to take time out and think about things such as which direction to take in the next “chapter” of our lives (and as happens on the *Camino de Santiago*).

This guide book will lead you safely and reliably from A to B if it is the historic (not the waymarked) route that you want to take (though the two do sometimes coincide) but it concentrates on the physical, at the expense of the spiritual, ~~aspects of the journey~~ for most pilgrims (as opposed to pure hikers), a once-in-a-

Alison Raju

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Secretary's Notebook

Bronwyn Marques

Membership We currently have 144 fully paid-up members, from the following countries: Australia 24, Belgium 2, Canada 8, Cyprus 1, Denmark 2, Finland 2, France 3, Ireland 6, Italy 1, New Zealand 3, Norway 3, Poland 1, South Africa 1, Spain 1, Sweden 1, UK 64, USA 21.

(Lapsed Members: 22, 212 unpaid for 2012)

Pilgrim passports We have sent out 49 credentials (pilgrim passports) already this year, compared to 62 in the whole of 2011, 57 in 2010 and 32 in 2009.

CPR Library This is situated at the CSJ (Confraternity of St. James) offices at 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY and details of the items held can be found via our website. The office is open every Thursday from 11am to 3pm and at other times by arrangement (

CPR Photo Gallery The CPR Photo Gallery is available via our website. It has been significantly enlarged and now covers the entire *Via Francigena* and Rome. We would encourage all those with photos of good enough quality are encouraged to make them available to other members via the website. More information in the Gallery section of the website.

New website for the Association Randonneurs et Pelerins 51 (RP51)

This association, "51" because that is the post-code of the *département* of the Marne (in France) where they are located, formerly operated via www.randonneurs-pelerins.fr However, as from April 2012, they now have a new website: www.randonneurs-pelerins.com

Please note that as from this date all their email addresses have likewise changed. (For a complete list of these changes go to the website and click on

"Contacts.") For example,

- president@randonneurs-pelerins.fr now replaces president@randonneurs-pelerins.com
- secretaire@randonneurs-pelerins.fr replaces secretaire@randonneurs-pelerins.com
- chemins@randonneurs-pelerins.fr likewise replaces chemins@randonneurs-pelerins.com

Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome

Founded November 2006

www.pilgrimstorome.org.uk

Chairman Joe Patterson pilgrim2001@uwclub.net

Membership William Marques

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