

The 3rd Annual Pilgrimage for Africa raises £1370... so far

Timothy Read
May 22, 2013



On June 30th a team of 4 from WAITUK will team up with a group of 6 from WAIT Uganda in Nairobi to bring the message "You're worth waiting for and so am I." The team will spend 10 days giving their message of how to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS through the performing arts, breakdance, music, dance and theatre.

In order to raise funding for this project many people have been busy getting sponsors for the pilgrimage from Winchester to Dorking. A big thanks to all who donated or who were able to find sponsorship, and of course especially for all who walked some part of the way!

May 4th - 6th 2013: The 3rd Annual Pilgrimage for Africa.

Ashley Crosthwaite

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UGANDA WAIT performs & teaches at high schools across the country.

During 3 days there were a total of 56 walkers; the magnificent 7 on day 1, 23 miles; 33 on day 2, 13 miles; 16 on day 3, 12miles. Along the way we had so many great experiences with mother nature, including the 40 minute silent walking after picnic lunch each day. I thought some of the youth might struggle with that but it was the opposite; they extended this reflective time naturally! A few of the things they experienced were the song of the skylark, the different sounds the wind makes depending which trees are there, the abundance of insects, especially bees... there was much else besides but everyone had a good time. I did use a fair amount of Compeet on some sore feet, but there were no complaints from start to finish!

As of 22nd May, 2013 we raised £1370 and we still need about a further £3000-4000 for the joint project. (WAIT-UK & IRFF) A big thanks to all once again. I appeal to all our friends and family to please donate whatever you can manage for this vital project that is really about saving lives.

Day 1- Saturday

Thanks to Lance Gardiner and Simon Rosselli we could leave London at 5.30am and arrive in Winchester at 7. We started with a prayer in St. Swithun's cathedral and set off soon after along St. Swithun's way, part of the Pilgrims' way that runs from Winchester all the way to Canterbury. The morning's walk started with a light spring rain and was a little chilly as we meandered through the water meadows beside the river Itchen. We saw a lot of water birds and the smell of spring rain on the parched land was intoxicating.



We met some friendly horses and did a bit of tree climbing on the way and eventually reached our lunch destination, the village shop at Alresford.



Richard, Abi & Miranda.

In the afternoon it was very challenging for all, but the rain had stopped and the sun occasionally burst through the chill wind...



Climb every mountain, ford every stream.



Oh yes & we travelled through certain parts of the Andes along the way. No wonder these steers found our accents fascinating. We almost got lost a few times but each time Vitas' impeccable sense of direction set us on the right path; thanks man, just think we could still be out there.

The last few miles were tough and that's an understatement. We saw a tiger by the lake, swans and skylarks singing high above; finally reaching our destination around 7.30pm-Alton! Thanks to Markus and Tessa we had a refuge for the night and they even set up a movie theatre in the living room after some doctoring of sore feet.



The determined pilgrim after 20 miles. (Sarah Rosselli)



Day 2-Sunday 5th May

We met a large posse at Farnham station to continue our walk along the Pilgrims' Way. Altogether there were 33 who walked some part of the way! Uncle Simon came a few miles with Blue and Pepper and several intrepid adults came too, as well as 4 children under 10! Pedro and Ilmi finished the whole

journey!



We found 4B but they (the fairies) had gone fishing.



We had 33 portions of chips and 7 jugs of lemonade before setting off again. The 40 minutes silent walk after lunch was beautiful as we passed by a meadow where skylarks were singing as we went down the woodland trail. This time together brought us all close in heart with nature and with each other. As we approached Guildford I noticed 3 pilgrims were so far behind they were out of sight so I ran back to check (something Josh Thompson had been doing several times!) Imagine the relief when I caught up with them! Here they are:



The pilgrims uncle Marshall, auntie Hildegard, Sarah



St. Catherine's Abbey & Ilmi's cave

Coming into Guildford we nuzzled some horses, communed with the ducks and the river. Thanks to all who came that memorable day.



That night 11 of us slept at the YMCA and 5 more returned in the morning for an early start.

Day 3-Monday 6th May

16 pilgrims started out early in the morning for the 12 mile walk towards Dorking; we had to finish early for the next day was school, work etc. The 1st resting place was St. Martha's, a church where for centuries pilgrims would stop to pray so we decided to follow their lead... This 3rd day was hot and everything seemed to be in perfect harmony; I would like to finish with words and leave you all with a few images....



Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed reading about the 3rd Annual Pilgrimage. As you may not know IRFFUK is doing a number of projects in several African countries in the field of education, agriculture and health.

One of the important things WAIT Uganda does is the "Jiggers Service Project". In rural parts of East Africa there is still abject poverty. This work serves 2 main purposes; to relieve the suffering of the poorest people, especially the children, and secondly to encourage and show an example of volunteerism, or love in action. Basically a small team of IRFF & WAIT members go to rural schools and communities equipped with buckets, surgical gloves, disinfectant, needles, healing oil etc to remove parasites from the childrens' feet (sometimes adults too.) Often they will have to stay in the area for a few days until everyone has been treated. After treatment shoes are bought in the local market. Whenever possible a follow up meeting is arranged 4-8 weeks later to see how the patients are doing and to conduct a seminar on hygiene practices with teachers and parents, although lack of funding has often prevented some communities from being able to receive the volunteers a second time.

I appeal to you to please see your way to donate towards the upcoming WAITUK/WAIT Uganda/IRFF project in Kenya, see above. We still need to do a lot of work on this website, but let me emphasize that we are all working people, volunteers, and we have no paid staff, so whatever you donate 90% goes directly to the work (unlike many bigger charities where what actually reaches the people in need can be as low as 30%!) Finally let me draw your attention to Destiny Junior school and the child and teacher sponsorship program there; presently it is the only source of funding for the school so we are desperate to find more sponsors.

Thank you for your kind attention and for any support you are able to offer.

Ashley Crosthwaite, Projects Director, IRFFUK.

