



Well it has been some months since I last wrote one of these.

As what is rapidly becoming the pattern of our life ,we have spent the winter months chained to our computers working to update and improve the via Francigena guides.

We have had tremendous help from many sources and have finally completed the task of producing the second edition of our guides.

In addition to updated accommodation lists and a few extra city maps, the new books incorporate more route options in northern France including the ancient pathway of la Leulène and the newly marked pathways in the Pays de Lys Romane.

We have established good relations with the French Association of the via Francigena (AVFF) and look forward to reflecting the results of their planned program of way marking in future updates.

In Switzerland we have incorporated parts of the Swissmobility route 70 and identified other sections as route options.

The major changes though, have occurred in Italy where wonderful work has taken place to provide a sign-posted route with minimum use of busy roadways. This offers a tremendous improvement for walkers, horse-riders and mountain bikers. At the time of writing there are still some areas where the signposting is incomplete and where the route is continuing to be improved. Nonetheless we judge that for those travelling in 2009 the route offers major advantages.

By our calculations the route is now 2076 km for the full journey from Canterbury to Rome adding around 100 kms (or 3+ walking days) to the route described in our first edition. In edition 2 we have retained options to shorten the new route or allow riders to bypass hazards on the "official route".

We have had tremendous input from people that have made the journey in 2008 and wherever possible have adopted their recommendations.

There was a very mixed view of our personal blog - some extremely in favour of having another's experiences to share en route, others thinking it a waste of space and weight. Well after all the other changes we found ourselves with just too many pages and so I am afraid the blog has gone. We have however, done a lot of work on our web-site and have provided many links to the experiences of others, while Alberto Conte of ItinerAria has been kind enough to feature our blog on his excellent site.

We have tried hard to find ways to get the cost of the books down with Babette beating on the doors of printers on both sides of the channel, but it seems that if we need full colour and we think we

do, then we are getting the best available print costs for the number of books that we are able to forecast. However, we have restructured the books to break them into 3 parts:

	Canterbury to Besançon	Besançon to
Vercelli	Vercelli to Rome	

For further details go to: http://www.pilgrimagepublications.com/via_francigena1.htm

This means that each book is a little cheaper than previously and that you do not have a massive book to carry if you are only covering part of the route.

In line with our commitment to make updates available I will be emailing all of the people that have either purchased edition 1 from the web-site or registered their purchases with the details of how to obtain the updates.

Please continue to give us feed back and help to make the books better again in the next edition.

In addition, we have created a new section on our website - Pilgrim Resource - which aims to provide information and support to pilgrims in a variety of ways. Please have a look, tell us what you think and let us know how it too can be improved. http://www.pilgrimagepublications.com/pilgrim_resource.htm

Our heartfelt thanks go to so many of you who have provided feedback and update information.

As soon as we are confident that the print process for the new guides is well underway we are again packing our bags and moving our base from here in Brittany to Arles where we hope we will settle for the long term. As many of you will know Arles sits on the route from Santiago to Rome and once we have made a few modifications to our new home we will be welcoming both Rome and Santiago bound pilgrims to stay. You are of course all welcome.

Best wishes

Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard

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