

With TOPOFRANCIGENA B. Great St Bernard-Rome, the 4th milestone, the Via Francigena is creating Europe

LONDON-ROME on foot with only 450 grams of easy-to-understand information

**43** pocket-sized colour geo-cultural sketch-maps, edited by Adelaide Trezzini, comprising a route of **860** km complementing and improving the stages in the *Guide-Vademecum – Italy* of 2003. The TOPOFRANCIGENA sketch-maps also show sections of remaining Roman or medieval road, sites of cultural interest, main facilities, railway connections etc.

It's YOU, FRIENDS and PILGRIMS, for the most part non-Italian, who are reviving the VF. Thanks to the publications devised by you, such as the *Vademecum Guides* and the new TOPOFRANCIGENA in cartographic form illustrated with symbols in 3 languages with the maximum of exact instructions (road names and numbers etc), based on our long experience.

### **No Via Francigena pilgrim without the *Topofrancigena* !**

3 years of research have enabled us to identify and make use of ALL the suggestions of **ancient, walkable or cyclable** roadway, the product of local and national studies. To make them usable, we had to find link routes, and in this respect we have been able to take advantage of the knowledge of the provincial (Environment section) police forces, as was the case in Vercelli, Piacenza, Massa-Carrara, Firenze, Siena and Viterbo. Who better than they to guarantee the feasibility of a suggested historical section; we relied on them heavily to avoid, for example, the SS 9 in Emilia or an SS in Vercelli as much as possible. Other local and national associations also suggested routes.

The result is surprising: a RECOMMENDED VF route, at the same time varied, attractive and as much as possible authentic. We may say that some 15% of dangerous roads remain for the traveller, that we are confident that we can reduce this further with the cooperation of local and regional authorities whenever they next resurface the roads. At the moment, for the route into Rome we are looking for a (non lethal) Via Trionfale.....

The AIVF is working tirelessly to increase numbers making the pilgrimage along the VF; a big help in this will be the **5th milestone**, the

### **EUROPEAN Via Francigena WAYMARKING STANDARDS MANUAL**

(trademark registered 2001 with the Council of Europe) published in July under the patronage of the Region LAZIO.

This publication allows VF waymarking from Canterbury to Rome to be standardised.

- In France, thanks to local VF representatives **Pierre Blondeau, François Louviot** and **Bernard Desmoulins** in DOUBS and in MARNE, small VF stickers (6x6 cm) are already in place for about 400km. A meeting in Strasbourg with representatives of the FFRP (Fédération Française Randonnée Pédestre) on cultural routes was not very positive; there seems to be little interest in the VF on the part of those who govern long-distance footpaths, and hence the finance this might have provided for the AIVF....
- In ITALY, so that pilgrims have no hesitation using the alternative field paths suggested in the TOPOFRANCIGENA, VF stickers have been put up in Mortara, Robbio, Vercelli, Tromello, Camaione, Valdelsa and Siena /Tuscany, and Lazio.

### Some major events for the VF and for the AIVF have marked the last 12 months:

- November 2004- the AIVF presented a **regional VF project** to the Lazio Region.
- December 2004- on the occasion of the celebration of the **50th** anniversary of its Cultural Convention in WROCLAW-Poland, the Council of Europe, in the person of Director General Gabriella Battaini Dragoni, presented AIVF President Adelaide Trezzini with a certificate that recognises the VF "**Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe**". The merit for this award goes to you AMIS and Members of AIVF, for your support, and to YOU PILGRIMS who have revitalised the Via Francigena.

- First **statistics** calculated in December and based on the *VF Pilgrims Register in the Basilica of San Pietro*, furnished the following results: average age 40-59 years, 75% men, predominance of French and Swiss, followed by Italians, Canadians and Belgians. In total 250 pilgrims were registered; however, not all are aware of the existence of the *Testimonium* and the Register.

- 20 January, the VF was presented at the AGM of the Confraternity of St James held in London, and **Joe Patterson**, our British coordinator, recorded a great success: 12 new pilgrims-AMIS in 6 months!

- **Klaas van der Poehl**, our coordinator in the Netherlands, held several presentations on the VF, amongst others at the Dante Alighieri (Association for Italian culture) sections, and created a VF stand at a Tourism and Walking trade fair.

The AIVF and its pilgrims are very grateful to **Joe** and **Klaas**, as well as to **Virginie Brouillard** and **Hubert Moulin**, for their admirable work in providing their compatriots with information on the VF.

**8 April**, the AIVF President was invited to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg to share with other interested countries the Association's experience, including problems, with creating a European Cultural Route: "*The VF, its birth, development and functioning, and its implications for local and regional authorities*" (English/French text on the AIVF's website).

This last June, an Austrian TV station sent a couple of pilgrims from Aosta to Rome, with the task of interviewing our President and making on their return a documentary filmed along sections of the VF, following the route suggested in the *TOPOFRANCIGENA*. We await a viewing of this.

The AIVF has great pleasure in reporting the ever growing numbers of those making the **Full Francigena** pilgrimage (from Canterbury): who has arrived, who is en route, who has still to depart:

- **Andrew** and **Carole Welch**-GB were able to raise funds for mentally and physically handicapped children in Plymouth hospital. **Raymond Turner**, (70 years) on a solo trip, experienced two incidents on the Swiss section: a poisoning and an unprogrammed crossing of the river Dranse near Martigny. **Edward Gordon**-Australia arrived safe and sound in Rome on 12.7. His companion **Jean-François Martiny** had to terminate his journey in Piemonte for health reasons. For **Marcos Bulcão**-Brasil, who left Canterbury on 4.6, **Trevor Garrett**-IRL, 5.6, and for **Maurice** and **Alice Inconti**-CA, 12.6, on the other hand, thanks to God, all is going well. **Alison Raju**-GB has set off on the VF with a special task, that of preparing an English guide to the VF with descriptions, based on our *Vademecum + Topofrancigena*. **Ed Madden** and **Chris George**-GB left a few days ago. **William Marques** and **Claudine McLean** are ready to "weigh anchor" for their *Full Francigena* at the end of the month.

- Unfortunately, **Roger Javin**, who left from Reims, had to finish at Vercelli because of the excessive temperatures at the end of June. He hopes to resume shortly, so as not to leave incomplete such a great experience, and will have the further advantage of having the *Topofrancigena-Italia* at his disposal. Others are en route from the Netherlands.

- Ever more numerous are pilgrims from Germany: **Christophe Schaden** leaves from Cologne 1.8; **Christian Legner** plans Canterbury-Rome in 2 years time; **Peter** and **Edith Staudenmeyer** will cross the Gotthard and join the VF at Pavia.

- Other pilgrims joined the VF near La Spezia or Aulla, coming from the French coast (voie Aurélienne) or from Arles (Via Domitia), following little frequented roads.

**Michael King** and his wife will cover the route in stages from 2004 to 2006. **Norman Spears**-USA and friends are getting ready to depart by bicycle for Rome on 7.9 with the intention of studying the Romanesque churches along the VF.

The list of diaries and e-mails on our website will grow to the joy of neophytes.

Whenever possible, the President, Adelaide Trezzini, is happy to welcome pilgrims-FRIENDS and listen to experiences and suggestions on their arrival in Rome.

Again following a request, we will start a **CONTACTS** paragraph:

\* for Sept. 2005 / May 2006 Marc Bourgeois is looking for a companion on the VF leaving the Vaucluse-F or from Aosta. Contact +33 490 74 10 64 [christelle.bourgeois@laposte.net](mailto:christelle.bourgeois@laposte.net)

With your support, the AIVF will help you to

GET TO KNOW BETTER THE EUROPE OF YESTERDAY TO UNDERSTAND BETTER THE EUROPE OF TODAY