

The Association Internationale Via Francigena is already 10 years old!*Omnes viae romam perducunt* -All roads lead to Rome

It is to you, FRIENDS of the VF, the supporters, the soul and *raison d'être* of the AIVF, that the founder Adelaide Trezzini, wishes to present the **1997-2007 REPORT !**

1998-2001 A partnership with the **IEIC** (European Institute for Cultural Routes-LUX) existed, but because of lack of cooperation had no future.

1999-2007 the AIVF constantly encouraged and guided by its Pilgrims-FRIENDS, published eleven VF booklets (postcards, Guide-Vademecums-Dormifrancigena, Topofrancigena, Manual for rules for European VF signposting) and produced three VF items (brooch with St Peter's keys, pennant and embroidered badge)

1998-2007 the web site francigena provides information in three 3 languages, and since 2004 in five.

2001 the Association has received the **Patronage** of the Holy See, in Italy of the Ministry of Culture, in France by the Ministry for Culture and Communication, in Switzerland the Ministry for Home Affairs

- ? the AIVF has received the award **Sancti Benedicti** of the **International Rotary**
- ? the Council of Europe accepted the **European VF logo**
- ? the first **Testimonium** has been given to the Canadians Hughette and Serge, in the Sacristy of St-Peter's Basilica in Rome (in 2007, 700 pilgrims are already listed in the **Register of VF Pilgrims**)

2002 in order to achieve the VF's European historical dimension, Adelaide Trezzini researched and published the **Guide-Vademecum London -Grand St-Bernard** and the VF from England to Rome is possible again! And the pioneer-pilgrims can begin their adventure with the help of our guide.

2003 the **accademic scientific comittee** is created.

2004 AIVF received the special award "**Major cultural route of the Council of Europe**" for the VF during the celebration for the 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe.

2007 the AIVF has **850 members in 15 countries in 4** continents

the work of AIVF has and still stimulates the restoration of historical sites and monuments, such as the Abbey of Mormant in Haute-Marne-F, the church of St-Lazarus in Rome, the Badia of Pozzeveri close to Lucca, S. Maria di Forocassio in the Latium.

To answer your frequent concerns,

we do our utmost, using all our human and financial resources to improve the VF.

We appreciate the continuous help from institutions, eg. provincial (Environment section) police forces of Siena, Piacenza and Vercelli, some communities and a few local associations. It is regretted that individual selfishness operates to the detriment of the VF.

Our problems go back to 2001, when ALL trekking associations from Aosta to Rome were invited by AIVF to a meeting in Milan, with very little positive outcome. We continue to beg for cooperation when we prepare each new edition of our VF publications, but still receive no feedback.

Obtaining information for the publication of *Topofrancigena B. 2007* was extremely difficult.

Dear Pilgrims, do not ask us why, we cannot understand ourselves this lack of cooperation; it is absolutely depressing!

However, take heart at **our latest successes in France and Italy**, where you can discover the new stages, still closer to the historical route, and both shorter and safer:

- ? in the Pas-de-Calais thanks to the information and cooperation of our partner, the Association **Pays de la Leulène** we have chosen a magnificent historical route of English pilgrims in the Middle Ages between **Guînes and Wisques**, on the border of Flanders with views to the sea, and on its highest point the ruins of the gothic St Louis chapel. Unfortunately, the General Council of the Pas-de-Calais has decided on its own route, which is tortuous and twice as long.

Pilgrims will choose for themselves.....

- ? In the departement of **Haute-Marne**, after Maranville, the walker will reach directly the ancient Roman way at **Blessonville**, stage of Sigeric, and Abbey of Mormant with good accommodation, which was completely lacking in Châteauvillain. **'Necessity is the mother of invention.**

Before reprinting *Topofrancigena A*, we gave priority to **Dormifrancigena from Canterbury to Gd St-Bernard**. Thanks to the complete listing of ALL possible accommodation and the distance between each, you will have no problem, dear pilgrims, knowing where to stay overnight on the 1900 km walking way!

DORMIFRANCIGENA is unique for its contents and presentation

There were still very big problems with the Via Francigena in Italy

with too many dangerous SS (A roads).

- ? Many communities between Aosta and Pont St-Martin, are working to improve the pilgrim way using the *RU* (ancient mountain watering canalizations) and Vineyard paths. Congratulations!
- ? Between Ivrea and Santhia, we chose the quite ancient route Ivrea-Vercelli.
- ? From Piacenza, we suggest to walk straight to the Chiaravalle Abbey with possible accommodation and the walk through the countryside to Fidenza. A good way to avoid the SS Emilia.
- ? The best success is around Rome. To avoid the SS Cassia bis-highway, the worst part of the entire Italian VF for pilgrims, Adelaide Trezzini spent several months researching with local communities and speaking to landowners. The result being again a route closer to the historical one and both shorter, safer and magnificent. **Nothing is ever impossible.**

What a joy for AIVF to offer to all FRIENDS and PILGRIMS VF, the 2nd edition of **TOPOFRANCIGENA B**, with a historical -pedestrian way made up of **924km**, of which only **15 to 20km** are on national roads!

But take care. Please be sure to follow ONLY the Topofrancigena maps, as you'll find 15 different VF signposts, often wrong and on all kinds of routes!

DO NOT GO WRONG !

Our **publications** are now the most reliable and useful for pilgrims of all nationalities, who wish to walk the VF. You'll find them recommended by Tourist Offices.

The **2nd edition of the GuidesVademecum A +B is scheduled** soon.

We will endeavour to maintain this high standard with your valuable help and information.

We continue to receive more interest, from **Holland** and **Germany**, and obviously we need more support.

What new in the cultural domain?

The President's *Coup de foudre*, when she noticed the **Keys of St Peter** beside the symbol of the *Shell of St James on a broken statue of St Pilgrim*.

So germinated in her the wish to sponsor the restoration, which might become, if God wants, a religious, cultural and touristic event, the first one wanted and promoted by AIVF.

Other important news, a **modern Via Francigena website** in 1-2 months, to facilitate all communication regarding membership, products, routes and all updates
Information will be given as usual by post on request.

Our dedicated volunteers and coordinators are eager to continue helping VF pilgrims, **Virginie Brouillard, Hubert Moulin, Joe Patterson and Gert Wich**, our new coordinator in Holland.. They welcome positive feedback.

Our great thanks go to the **families**, who offer **accommodation** to our FRIENDS-Pilgrims, often enriching experiences for all concerned. Please note that the WELCOME List is updated regularly.

A Prayer for Errol and Pamela Stapleton-NZ. Errol left for Heaven 15 days before departure.

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