

## **NEWSLETTER for Green Pilgrimage Network August 2012**

There have been so many exciting and extraordinary things happening with the Green Pilgrimage Network that we have scarcely had a moment to write a newsletter to tell you about them. Here then is the first part of an update, with another promised for September.

- 1. A new logo – and how pilgrim places are localising it already**
- 2. May meeting at St Albans for Scotland, Trondheim and ARC**
- 3. News from India – a new Hindu city member and major meetings in October and November**
- 4. Updates from our members including an astonishing story of rapid eco-development from Louguan and a city-wide initiative in Amritsar**
- 5. An updated leaflet – feel free to adapt**

### **1. A New Logo**



## **Green Pilgrimage Network**

The Green Pilgrimage Network has a new logo. The design, which shows a pilgrim walking on a road made of a leaf into a holy city landscape, was created by Michael Samuel at Green Maps, who has designed hundreds of wonderful icons to be used while mapping the environmental elements of landscapes and townscapes. When we sent it out to everyone last month we had only positive feedback, and it was finally agreed at our meeting in St Albans (see below).

You can download six different versions of the logo here (green or grey/black, with lettering in different places or not at all).

<http://www.arcworld.org/news.asp?pageID=543>

The Chinese GPN Daoist members are creating special calligraphy, and the team in Scotland has already used it on their notice boards. We hope that different green pilgrimage places will design and create their own lapel pins, cloth patches for

rucksacks and bags etc, in their own language and style. Please send us all photos of the logo in situ – in posters, patches, brochures, articles, noticeboards etc and we will upload the collection to Flickr.

Our friends in Scotland have created a lovely designs for wooden plaque using this logo, which we will tell you more about next time, with photos.



## 2. May 9-10 meeting at St Albans, UK

GPN Members from St Albans, Trondheim and Scotland met for an evening and a day in St Albans, UK, to discuss their progress, meet the St Albans mayor and town council and begin to plan the Trondheim meeting for GPN members at St Olav's Festival end July

2013. This was followed by a meeting of the Trondheim team at ARC's headquarters on an organic dairy farm just outside Bath.

## 3. India news



**TIRUPATI TO JOIN NETWORK:** The GPN was launched last year without an official Hindu member, but we are delighted to announce that Tirupati/Tirumali in South India is to be our first Hindu member. Tirupati has already made many inspiring

green initiatives about which no doubt we will hear more in the next months, but the community kitchens, cooking more than 50,000 kilos of rice as well as vegetables and lentils every day, are all solar powered, from dishes which move with the angle

of the sun. More news from the BBC is [here](#).

**HYDERABAD MEETING mid October: ICLEI, Southeast Asia**, led by Emani Kumar who attended the Assisi meeting last year, is running a City summit as part of the 11th COP and convention on Biological Diversity at Hyderabad in October 2012.

The theme is Cities for Life, and one of the three days – pencilled in as October 14th – is to be an opportunity for Indian cities with important pilgrimage shrines to debate what it is to be a green Indian Pilgrimage City, and possibly take first steps to creating an India GPN Chapter.

**RISHIKESH MEETING end November:** Our partners in the Bhumi project are to work with Hindu Guru Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji Maharaj (Muniji) to create a Hindu response to the ecological crisis. Muniji is a leader in the Clean Ganga Movement, including trash collection, solid waste management, sewage treatment, civic replanning, organic farming and campaigning against chemical effluent in order to clean this great holy river. At the end of November Muniji will host a meeting at his ashram for Hindu leaders who wish to join the GPN and also help protect India's vanishing wildlife and its habitat.

#### 4. UPDATES from our members

There are so many exciting updates we could fill more than three newsletters with them, so that is what we will do! Here are the first updates: next time we will hear from Trondheim, Scotland and others.

##### a) LOUGUAN



There was huge excitement when Alison Hilliard and Martin Palmer from ARC made their first visit to the Green Pilgrimage city of Louguan in Central China. Just 18 months of building and a \$1.5 billion investment from individuals and the Chinese government has seen an amazing transformation. The whole complex, situated at the birthplace of Daoism, is being billed as an inspirational model

for sustainable living- where people can live in harmony with nature in an ideal garden-like small city.

- **Building:** Modern low-rise sustainable housing has been built in tree-lined streets using natural gas and solar power heating.

- **Organic:** In 46 hectares of development, there is also an agriculture expo centre where organic farming, sustainable land management techniques and new farming methods are taught. Many of the rehoused new residents of the city are being taught new ways to farm, for example, roses and lavender or how to grow kiwi seeds imported from Singapore, which grow faster and don't damage the land. Natural fertilisers are used- with leaves and branches being ground into powder for fertilisers to increase the output of the land in a sustainable way.
- **Three Sticks** There were signs of pilgrimage at many of the temples – the trees strewn with red ribbons and prayer requests and many of the bunches of incense being burnt were in three sticks according to the Daoist 8 Year Environment Plan.
- **Teachings** The teaching of Daoism on living in harmony with nature is evident with traditional ceremonies associated with the seasons to reconnect urban dwellers with the rhythms of the year.
- **Replication and Inspiration** Our municipal guides told us that they would like to see the success of Louguan's development replicated in other cities in China. Read more [here](#).

#### b) AMRITSAR

On June 30<sup>th</sup> Amritsar brought together some 200 Sikh religious bodies, city administrators, environmentalists, educationalists and business leaders committing to make "Eco Amritsar".

Guru Ram Dass, the 4th Sikh Guru, founded Amritsar in 1577 and it is now the 29th largest city in India. It is a site of major religious tourism attracting 100,000 pilgrims daily to visit the Golden Temple, which is installing solar panels. The SGPC, which runs the management of the Golden Temple, has announced it will also commit to organic farming in the lands associated with Gurdwaras in Amritsar district.

The city administration has also pledged to enforce rainwater harvesting in all government buildings and institutions and a plan is being devised for collaborative effort by the city and Sikh holy man Baba Sewa Singh for tree plantation across the city to be run under the DC of Amritsar. Khalsa College with a large 300 acre complex pledged to focus on plantations, water and energy audits and to involve students to explore educational projects and internships.

#### c) JERUSALEM

Naomi Tsur from Jerusalem led a session on the Green Pilgrimage Network at the ICLEI World Congress in Brazil. We look forward to hearing from Naomi next time about how it went.

#### d) ST ALBANS

The Cathedral is considering putting solar panels on the cathedral buildings (dependent on permissions) and, dependent on lottery funding, is planning sustainable energy for its new annexe building. Other initiatives include:



- Rebranding the Cathedral café to advertise local food and cut down wastage
  - Holding a potato planting in Holy Week, before Easter
  - Reworking the traveler/pilgrim information on the website, including a carbon calculation, and an appeal to contribute to the green fund (which so far has paid for the swift boxes and garden)
  - Introducing recycling, which has been more of a journey than they had expected
  - Boosting the activities of the Cathedral environment group including adding a pinboard.
- As we reported last time they were taking advantage of scaffolding to install swift boxes following Jerusalem's example. Now they are and expanding the education programme to make a model of the Western Wall from recycled cardboard, together with drawings of its swifts. Link <http://www.arcworld.org/news.asp?pageID=535> for the story.
  - Linking more closely with the council for food and transport
  - Including talk about green pilgrimage to the cathedral tours and children's treasure trail. "We want it to be positive rather than a burden."
  - Supporting other churches in the city including St Peter's which has a two-acre churchyard where parishioners are working with Christian ecological group A Rocha for ecological restoration, adding an orchard, recycling, building a new formal garden, a story-teller seat and a story-teller circle. They intent to take guided walks and spread the message... The mindset of creation care is difficult

## 5. INSPIRING IDEA



Here is a simple, but inspiring idea from a Sikh volunteer in Haryana, Northern India. Gurpreet Singh noticed that the government nurseries sell seedlings for around Rs10 (about 20 US cents) each, but that by the time these seedlings reach the villages they cost five or ten times this amount and are not easily affordable. He and his cousin borrowed a van, and set up tree stalls selling seedlings for mangos, lemons, guava and papaya trees at cost price (including his own petrol price) in 30 villages that are around 40 km from the government nursery. Link [here](#) for the story. Please send us any great ideas, large or small that you might have come across.

## 6. An updated leaflet

We have uploaded a new leaflet in English for the network, incorporating the logo and the latest updates. You can upload it from our projects page, page <http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=521> or if you would like a copy of the original word file, email [victoriaf@arcworld.org](mailto:victoriaf@arcworld.org) and I'll send it on. Please feel free to adapt it for your own use and needs and language. If you send us the pdf of your own final leaflet then we will upload it to our website with a link to yours, so we can be a library for different versions.

In 2001, more than 60 million Hindu pilgrims attended the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayag, Allahabad. This was the largest human gathering in recorded history. Every year more than 150 million people become pilgrims, whether for hours, days, weeks or even months. Each person is undergoing this journey to experience something sacred. It is as if whole cities are on the move, waiting to be transformed.



Imagine what could be achieved if pilgrims and pilgrim cities were to become models of care and respect for the environment, reflecting the deep values of the world's faith traditions.

Imagine the good that could be done for people and places on pilgrimage routes, and cities and sacred places at the end of the journeys.

Imagine a network of Green Pilgrim Cities and Sacred Sites, inspiring environmental care along the great pilgrimage routes, and encouraging all pilgrims to leave a 'positive footprint'.

**WHAT IS A POSITIVE FOOTPRINT?**

A positive footprint requires pilgrims to leave every place more beautiful than it was when they arrived. That can involve taking away your own litter AND other people's: not buying bottled water; choosing tourist agencies with a sustainable ethos; eating food that is local, organic and free-range; going to hotels with strong environmental policies; buying only sustainably sourced souvenirs; walking or cycling or taking public transport rather than driving.

On a more ambitious level it can involve: supporting programmes to improve the city environment and biodiversity; sharing ideas and inspiration with other pilgrims and city residents; returning home with a sense of awe and wonder at the natural environment; and breathing life into that feeling by becoming active in protecting your home town.

See [www.arcworld.org](http://www.arcworld.org) for more details.  
Email: [arcworld@arcworld.org](mailto:arcworld@arcworld.org)



**GREEN PILGRIMAGE NETWORK**

A new global network of green pilgrim cities and sacred sites of all faiths



**ICL-LEI**  
Conservation  
Sustainability

**ARC**  
ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION

Members include: World Council of Churches, World Council of Indigenists, World Council of Religious Leaders, World Council of Scientists, World Council of Theologians, World Council of Women, World Council of Youth, World Council of Zoroastrians, World Council of Scientists, World Council of Theologians, World Council of Women, World Council of Youth, World Council of Zoroastrians.

Photos: Praying hands, Wondrousome Pilgrim pack, Victoria Finlay Pilgrim shoes, Neil Cummings Brethouses, See 'Harpie'

This paper is from FSC-certified woodlands.

## 7. NEXT TIME

- As well as more news from the cities there will also be more news about Hyderabad, Rishikesh and Trondheim meetings.
- A Bahasa-Indonesia language version of the Green Hajj Guide was launched in Jakarta this summer, supported by ARC and with Norwegian Government funding. Next time we hope to send you a report from Husna Ahmad, author of the original, who attended for the Green Pilgrimage Network.
- Martin Palmer and Victoria Finlay will visit Luss in Scotland in late August, and we'll be sending you an update from our visit and from our Scottish partners.

If you know anybody else who would like to receive this, then please do let us know and we will add them to our distribution list.

All the newsletters are now archived on the ARC website, at <http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=559>