

GPN Newsletter-1
February, 2012

Greetings! This is the first of a regular newsletter linking the cities and places and pilgrim routes that make up the Green Pilgrimage Network. You're on our list because you were either at Assisi or you've expressed interest in the network in the past.



We intend to send this out about four times a year: please use it to advertise your successes (and share some of your difficulties and solutions) in making your pilgrimage experience a more environmentally thoughtful one for local people and pilgrims alike. Each newsletter will include news from the cities, useful links and inspiring interviews with relevant organisations. We will also feature a different element of environmental

action by cities each time.

In this edition:

1. **News in Brief:** a new date for Trondheim; meeting of Indian cities; progress of the Green Hajj guides.
2. **Feature:** the BBC Radio 4 Sunday programme did a terrific feature on St Albans as a green pilgrimage city. Can your city pitch for a feature from your local or national radio stations?
3. **Interview:** The US-based [Green Maps](#) initiative shows how inspiring it can be to create a green map of your city or neighbourhood. And how affordable it can be.
4. **Listings:** find photos and reports from Assisi, and an inspiring free resource on green city stories from the prestigious *The Atlantic Magazine*
5. **Inspiration from our members:** an update from Luss in Scotland, which has been a busy ambassador for the network since Assisi, and from Naomi Tsur in Jerusalem with exciting news, including a solution for sewage in the sacred Kidron valley and a meeting in Jerusalem in March to which you are all welcomed.

1. NEWS

-- **TRONDHEIM 2013:** On our final day at Assisi, the Mayor of Trondheim, Rita Ottervik, along with the Director of the National Pilgrim Centre in Trondheim, Berit Lanke, issued an invitation to all founding members of the GPN to meet in Trondheim in July 2012 as part of their St Olav festival.

After discussions with them we have now decided to postpone that meeting to 27-29 July 2013, again taking place as part of the St Olav festival. This enables more people to prepare and take action, as well as allowing new members to join – particularly from India – and make this meeting more meaningful. Our friends in Trondheim are also proposing setting up a European chapter of the Network and plan to visit St Albans in England and Luss in Scotland and host a workshop in Trondheim this September for European partners including the sacred city of Etchmiadzin. More details later.



-- **HYDERABAD 2012:** -- **HYDERABAD 2012:** In the interim, we are working with our ICLEI colleagues who are proposing a significant green pilgrimage city meeting post COP 11 to The Convention on Biological Diversity scheduled for Hyderabad, India in October 2012. We anticipate that this will involve representatives of around 25 ICLEI city members – mostly Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Jain, Buddhist and Christian pilgrim cities in India. More details later

At Assisi many of you met with Emani Kumar, director of ICLEI South Asia, based in Delhi. Last month Emani had some very positive meetings with various organisations including WWF-India, the Ministry of Tourism, the Government of India, etc and they have shown keen interest to support this involvement. FYI, the Ministry of Tourism in the Government of India has its own 'Campaign Clean India' to reduce the environmental stress on tourist and religious places and promote better hygiene and sanitation conditions, which is in line with our efforts.

One exciting possibility is that a Hyderabad meeting could lead to an Indian chapter of the Network. This would include Eco-Sikh and the Hindu Bhumi project, etc.



-- **GREEN GUIDE FOR HAJJ:** *The Green Guide for Hajj* was launched at Assisi along with *Islam and Water-the Hajjar Story*. You can find both [here](#). The Hajjar Story has a delightful cartoon which can be seen on YouTube [here](#):

Since November *The Green Guide for Hajj* has been translated into Arabic and a Hausa version is under way for use by pilgrims in Nigeria. Fachruddin Mangunjaya of Conservation International in Indonesia, who attended Assisi, has just started a Bahasa translation targeted at the 220,000



Indonesian pilgrims who travel to Saudi Arabia for Hajj each year. Both guides are also being translated for use in Bangladesh as part of a programme, funded by ARC, to help women explore what Islam says about the use of water and water conservation.

-- **ARC WEBSITE:** We have created a [simple hub for GPN](#) on our website. Later of course, and depending on your inputs and preferences, and finding a small budget we might make a new website but for now this will be a good place for people to find details of the network. Please check your page and make sure it has all the right links and details. Let me know on victoriaf@arcworld.org if there is anything to add, or send any photos (we can use a maximum of four per page).

-- **150 MILLION AND RISING:** Before the Assisi meeting our team made a concerted effort to find out how many pilgrims there are every year – our conservative estimate was 100 million. Since then we have learned of some huge pilgrimages including Tirupati in India (of which more news in the next newsletter, we hope), with 10 million pilgrims a year, and the astonishingly huge Ayyappan Saranam with 30 million, and the Arba'een pilgrimage in Iraq with 10 million pilgrims

bringing our estimate to around 150 million (and rising). Here's the page where we give the numbers: <http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=500>.

Do you have any other sites to add? Preferably with numbers (and a source for those figures)

2. FEATURE: RADIO COVERAGE OF YOUR GREEN PILGRIMAGE PLANS

When BBC Radio 4 wanted something really special for the Christmas Day edition of its flagship Sunday programme, it decided to focus on the subject of pilgrimage: what it means to be a pilgrim today and, in particular, what it means to be a green pilgrim.

And so the 'Sunday' programme went to the cathedral city of St Albans, the oldest surviving place of Christian worship in Britain and one of the founder members of the Green Pilgrimage Network.

As well as making its buildings as sustainable as possible and encouraging local hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions to sign up as Green Pilgrimage Network participants, St Albans is introducing a new environmental trail for school groups and aims to build up a new network of pilgrim ways as well as footpaths and cycle ways.

The programme featured presenter Edward Stourton walking the pilgrims way with Arun Kataria from St Albans Diocese; it also included the Archbishop of Canterbury talking about what pilgrimage means today; and a report from the Holy Land on the modern day pilgrim. The programme was broadcast on December 25 but is available to listen again permanently on the BBC Radio 4 website. Click [here](#) to listen or [here](#) for more details.

Could your faith or city put together a proposal for your local media to do something equivalent?

3. INTERVIEW WITH WENDY BRAWER OF GREEN MAP

Twenty years ago New Yorker Wendy Brawer had the idea of creating a map of the sustainable places and businesses and initiatives in her neighbourhood. Today she runs an organisation called [Green Map® System](#), which helps individuals and groups all around the world make (both printed and virtual) maps of their cities using 170 specially designed icons to show the things that are important in their area. And by doing so, they find they are helping change the world. ARC interviewed Wendy by SKYPE:

Q: HOW DOES IT WORK?

A: There are several ways to begin to create a Green Map, though now that we have created an easy way to make interactive Open Green Maps, many people start on the internet with our Google Map-based platform, and then later decide whether to progress to a paper map, or make a mural, or make it available as a download or a widget. In any format, Green Maps tend to elevate resources for quality living, help people share fresh perspectives that motivate action and can often bridge cultural divides, helping communities of all kinds inclusively make progress towards a sustainable future.



Q: WHAT IS OPEN GREEN MAP?



A: OpenGreenMap.org is a resource for collecting data about your area, and publishing it instantly on the internet and mobile phone apps, using Green Map Icons to highlight natural, cultural and green living resources. Each site is designed to share images, videos, descriptions and PDFs sent in by members of the public. These low-cost 'social maps' can be created instead of, or additional to, a printed map.

Q: WHO MAKES THESE MAPS?



A: Since we make adaptable tools, sometimes individuals create a map, although more often it is groups – school classes, university students, NGOs, government employees, women's groups, church groups, faith organisations or many others. You don't have to all be in the same room to work together on a map, though it helps to have a vision of what you want your map to be. Sometimes Green Maps are made by a closed group, other times the process is opened to the whole community via workshops, radio, internet, or even through street murals or posters, to encourage people to suggest more sites.

The full interview, (which includes details of costings ranging from US\$13 to several hundred dollars a year, depending on the size of organisation and the country,) can be read [here](#).

4. LISTINGS

* Most people at Assisi will have received real copies of some of the photos taken of them at Assisi . Many others are in digital form on our FLICKR site, and you are welcome to download them and use them in whatever publications you want. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/53990852@N05/> We ask only that you credit ARC and our photographer at Assisi Katia Marsh.

* I've recently signed up to the Atlantic Cities newsletter, run by *The Atlantic Magazine*. Every day (you might prefer the once a week option) I read really inspiring stories about cities around the world struggling with and solving key issues, many of which are, inevitably, about the environment people are living in. Here's the site <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/> and if you go to the bottom of the page you can sign up for the newsletter.

5.INSPIRATION FROM OUR MEMBERS



LUSS, SCOTLAND:

Rev Dane Sherrard has sent in plenty of news from Scotland:

"Yes, we have been busy spreading the story of our adventures as Assisi. We had lunch with Michael Russell, the Scottish Education Minister, not long after we came back and I spent time with Jackie Baillie, our own Member of the Scottish

Parliament, telling her about all that had gone on. I'm going through with her to the Scottish Parliament in February. She has arranged for me to address the parliament (very briefly) although

I'm not sure quite when that is going to be -- it is a five minute slot on a Thursday morning. The Convener of the National Park has told me that I am being invited to address the National Park Board but that too hasn't yet been finalised.

We are conducting two workshops at the Annual Gathering of Eco Congregation Scotland in April. Stewart Stevenson, the Minister for Climate Change, is delivering the keynote address so we shall be sure that he learns all about what is going on. (He has also received an invitation from the Provost to visit Luss and has indicated that he will accept that invitation.

We are also accepting lots of invitations to speak to groups about being a Green Pilgrimage City. I addressed the meeting of Scottish Tourist Guides recently and found that they were fascinated and enthused. They are key partners in helping us to spread the word.

We have also got a website www.scottishpilgrimage.com which will be up and running quite soon.

Even more exciting, I think, is that we are arranging a community conference to consider all the ways we need to adapt as a community to become truly a Green Pilgrimage place. There is a huge amount of enthusiasm from the church, for the council and from the community and everyone, school, businesses, church and individuals are keen to take this forward.

Thank you for starting us on this fabulous adventure! Kindest regards, Dane

Points of Inspiration:

- **Can you speak in your local parliament?**
- **Have you looked at appropriate faith eco gatherings and made sure the speakers are upto date with the greening of your pilgrim places**
- **Have you got a website? Have you publicised it on social media? In this newsletter?**
- **Can you arrange a similar community conference to consider how your community can adapt to become a Green Pilgrimage place? Who could you get involved?**

JERUSALEM



Naomi Tsur, Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and Green Pilgrimage Network Ambassador, writes:

Greetings to the GPN from Jerusalem, which expects to find itself snowed under by the weekend... I would like to share with all the members and supporters of the GPN just a couple of the wonderful things that are happening in our holy city .

Our major infrastructure initiative is the restoration of the Kidron/Wadi Nar Basin, which has served Jews, Christians and Muslims as an inspirational route of ascent to the Old City, with dozens of important sites along the way. In mid March, an Israeli-Palestinian delegation will be presenting a joint solution for treatment of the 15 million cubic meters of sewage, Palestinian and Israeli, that flows down the Kidron Basin annually into the Dead Sea. The occasion will be the 6th World Water Forum, to be held in the city of Marseille in the South of France.

Before we leave for Marseille, we will be holding an international seminar on the concept of the Urban Biosphere (URBIS), together with ICLEI and the CBD. This idea has developed over the last

decade, and was given an official boost at the Nagoya Biodiversity COP, when the URBIS Declaration was signed.

We are all aware that ours is no ordinary urban biosphere, but one that is holy to three world religions. If this workshop is of interest to other members of the GPN, who may want to attend as observers, please contact me and we will welcome you. The final event of our URBIS workshop will be a festive ceremony by the Western Wall, where we will officially welcome the swifts that have already begun to arrive at their traditional nesting places, which include the Western Wall and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

I was recently in Rome, where I was invited in my capacity of GPN Ambassador to speak in honour of the donation made by UNITALSI to build accessible toilets close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Israel Airline, ElAl, has also just entered into a commitment to hold dedicated flights for pilgrims with special needs. This will be done in cooperation with UNITALSI, a Christian organization that has devoted itself for the last hundred years to catering to the needs of disabled Christian Pilgrims. Warm regards to fellow pilgrims and to the ARC team, to whom we are all truly grateful for doing what they do...

Points of Inspiration:

- **Are you organising events to which you could invite fellow members of the GPN?**
- **Are there species special to your place which you could celebrate, as Jerusalem is celebrating its migratory swifts?**
- **As you improve wheelchair accessibility and address other needs of disabled pilgrims, can you also carry the green message with you?**

6. NEXT TIME

Next time we hope to have started a document of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the network. Please send us any questions or answers you would like to see included.

Thank you to everyone for these exciting developments.
More news to come!

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