

A PILGRIM ADVENTURE

Many of you will have heard of the non-profit organisation called Pilgrim Adventures that started up in Downend many years ago sending 'Pilgrims' to remote 'Celtic' centres for short breaks.

The firm is about to change its name to JOURNEYING but Bernard and I have just returned from an ADVENTURE to the remotest inhabited island in Great Britain, Fair Isle, halfway between Orkney and Shetland. It took two days to get there and the last bit by the Mail boat 'The Good Shepherd' couldn't happen because the seas were too rough. A combination of scheduled and a chartered six-seater plane eventually got all thirteen of us there.

Fair Isle is a gentle emerald jewel of an isle whose 60 inhabitants never lock doors, welcome visitors and encourage you to walk everywhere. They have been recycling for centuries, use wind power and everyone seems to have three or four jobs (the post office lady was also the fire crew at the airstrip).

Our group must have taken up most of the B & B accommodation on the island and we were in the lighthouse keepers' cottages, a fish store and a tiny cottage sleeping four. Once on the isle, after a few days, it didn't seem to matter if we never got off.

The 'Fair Isle knitting' is still going strong and when cruise ships call they open up their hall and everyone mans it with tea and scones and displays of arts and crafts.

Once on the island we soon settled into the rhythm of daily worship, companionship, and teams for self-catering, interspersed by lots of fresh air, Puffin watching and doing nothing in a beautiful place. We were each invited to lead the evening worship on something that had inspired us that day.

We would recommend this type of holiday/retreat/pilgrimage to refresh and renew mind and body with people of all faiths who enjoy the simple Celtic rhythms of prayer, thanks and praise in beautiful places.

Certainly an ADVENTURE this year, a JOURNEY next year? Try it!

w.w.w.pilgrim-adventure.org.uk. Next years' brochure out Nov '09. For more informal information contact us through Mark.

Bernard & Anthea Merrick.