

Meaningful steps- Create your own Pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage is huge topic, and I have only scratched the surface in this class. I hope to encourage you to take this topic and find out how it would have suited your persona, in your chosen time and place. And to see how it could fit into your modern life, as an activity, either alone or in a group.

I started this project as a way to spend more time with myself- I had been working on many projects for other people, and was finding it quite stressful. Because I am better motivated by outside deadlines than by internal ones, I made it a “Challenge” for the “White Wolf Fian”, a Kingdom A and S group that supports long term projects. I had to create a set of class notes as a “deliverable” and this class has grown from them. I live in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and the examples of where I went are all from my local area. Look for similar things in your own area.

I enjoyed the Viking Hiking class given by Syr Stefan Ulfkelsson and Mistress Marsi of Hadley at Pennsic 2016. They are very inspirational speakers, and really make you feel as if anyone can do what they do- which is hike all over the hills in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and sleep in shelters and cook yummy meals, all while being very Viking. They have a Facebook group with a number of keen members who do things independently too.

But I am not really a Viking girl- I like England, around the time of the Luttrell Psalter (1330ish). So I needed my details to be different. And I needed a reason to walk- medieval people were often very busy just living their lives without wandering all over the landscape! But there are pilgrims in the Luttrell Psalter (Fols 32r and 75r), and that seemed like a good place to start.

And it is a good place to start for a great number of personas in the SCA- most major religions have a holy place or places, or some sort of relic that you are encouraged to visit in your lifetime. Traditions vary for each place and time and culture. I am going to discuss pilgrimage as it relates to a medieval Christian culture since that is the most appropriate for my persona, but I encourage you to research what would be best for your own.

So then: how would my woman from the Luttrell Psalter escape her circumscribed life of domestic duties and farm work? One of the only ways was to go on Pilgrimage. And even then, you had to get the Lord and the Priest to kind of sign off on it. The usual reasons driving a woman's pilgrimage were domestically focused, often centering around children and family. Some went to ask for a favour for themselves- if they were barren, and wanted to conceive, or perhaps they were disabled in some way, and wanted to be healed. Some went to ask for favour for someone else, a sick child or family member. Some went in thanksgiving for Gods help having been healed or rescued- from a hard labour, or a sickbed, weather their own or a family member's.

Other reasons to go on pilgrimage might be as a sort of apology to God- I am so sorry I did this thing- spare me the consequences and I will go on Pilgrimage! Others went on Pilgrimage as a Punishment- you have done a bad thing and your consequence is to go on a Pilgrimage to X place.

All people were both encouraged to go on pilgrimage for the right reasons- true faith and thanksgiving- and discouraged from going for more secular but more human reasons- a desire to travel and see new people and places.

All prospective pilgrims were supposed to settle their affairs before they left- make wills and pay off debts so that if the worst happened and they did not make it home, things could carry on at home.

All pilgrims were supposed to be blessed by their priest before they left, with special prayers over certain items like their staff and bag.

Pilgrimages could be short- to a local saint's shrine a few villages over- or longer, to a shrine in another county, or another country. There were hundreds of Churches and holy sites all with a patron saint, or a relic, or a miraculous statue all trying to attract pilgrims. All involved some travel, usually on foot, though the wealthy would often hire mules or horses. From England, going to the Holy land, Rome or Compostela meant crossing the channel by ship, and it was far from a luxury cruise.

Priests encouraged people to take very little with them, only a staff, and a small bag for a bowl and spoon and perhaps a little money. Pilgrims were supposed to depend on the charity of the people they met on the road to help them find food and a place to sleep, or money to buy these things. Monasteries and churches that existed- or were built- on pilgrim routes often helped pilgrims on their way with meals and lodging of various sorts- perhaps even the church floor. And Inns and taverns would happily take some coins for food and lodging from the better provisioned traveller.

There were some guidebooks of a sort for some of the larger pilgrimage routes, but these were almost certainly aimed at the wealthier, literate traveller. I suspect that local knowledge shared at lodgings or churches would have sufficed for my "Luttrell worker" persona.

So then I had the beginnings of a plan:

I would go for a pilgrimage, to some where and back again. Assuming I did want to come home to my family in a reasonable length of time, I would go some where relatively local, perhaps a 3-5 days out and the same back. This would Not have included Canterbury for a peasant on the Luttrell Estate, since they are about 165 miles apart! However, even at the pace I was going (and I suspect they were in far better shape than I am), there and back might only have taken a month, which would be quite achievable if the time could be spared.

However, my peasant might live somewhere else, and go to Canterbury in my 6-10 day window. So that was what I decided to aim for- I could easily get this much time off work, and it would be ambitious, but not crazy as a goal.

Planning the Walk

Preparation and Places to Walk

So then I went looking for local trails. And looking to learn about hiking since the Viking Hikers told us there were a number of trail craft things we should learn before we set off.

I found a class called "Learn to Hike" offered by the Rideau Trail club, offered locally for a modest fee that included a year membership to the club. It was quite interesting and I learned a great deal, and

also learned that my father had done a decent job of teaching me about being safe while walking and about how to read a map. Apparently this is quite hard for some people. We even went on a tiny "trial hike" around the NCC* paths near the Sportsplex where the class was held. The trails were so well marked you scarcely needed a map! The notes on clothes required to join a group hike however were quite a drag- Modern boots! Lots of technical clothes in polyester! I did ask after class if I would be allowed to come in costume and it was not particularly well received. I have still not gone on a club hike! However, it did open my eyes to the possibilities of the NCC trail system, so that was very helpful.

* The NCC is the National Capital Commission for Ottawa, the capital of Canada. They manage a variety of public spaces with different uses- various hiking and biking trails, parks and green spaces, as well as roadways and buildings. Many of the trails that I travelled were in the "Greenbelt"- a zone around the central core of Ottawa intended to manage growth and encourage density. This hasn't quite worked out as planned- I live in a large community outside the greenbelt- but it gives a nice resource of public land to explore.

The Rideau Trail goes from Kingston to Ottawa via Smiths falls. It is (obviously) quite long, but what it does not have is many places you can camp along the trail. They suggest car pools and B and Bs and some of them will apparently collect and deposit you at trailheads if you arrange it in advance. But it is really meant to be hiked in stages, from car to car. Which is very disappointing to the pilgrim who wishes to be law abiding.

I also thought it might be interesting to perhaps take advantage of our group's ties to Upper Canada Village (a local heritage park). Perhaps they would let a traveling pilgrim sleep in the hay above the cows, or on the church floor? There is a trail that goes thorough the village- "The Waterfront Trail"- that goes from the eastern border of Ontario all the way to Niagara. However, it spends quite a lot of it's time along highway 2 and similar roads, making it less appealing from a historical perspective. It might be very pleasant on a bike.

The TransCanada Trail also goes through Ottawa, mainly on decommissioned train lines. Which makes for well drained footing, but often very open surroundings, and the same dearth of places to (legally) rest one's head, or fill a water bottle.

So, I was left with the NCC Greenbelt pathways. So I thought what could be better- I shall walk across Ottawa! Hurrah! Alas. Unless you wish to walk straight though downtown (which I really did not), it is impossible to walk on the NCC/City pathways across/ around Ottawa. They just don't meet up, or don't even exist in quite a few places around the greenbelt, particularly on the south/east side. Grump!

But there were enough trails on the west side of the Greenbelt that could be made to tie in with the trails around my house that I figured I could get a few days walk out and back if I planned carefully. So That is what I ended up doing.

Look for places that are near you- Federal, Provincial or city trail systems, or just use streets. You don't need to/may not be able to stick to only one type of trail, see what you can stick together. Google maps are your friend when planning. Consider your preferences for walking surface as well as over all safety.

I had already spoken to a number of people about the Pilgrimage and decided to ask Wilhelm and Cristabell; and Marie and Aurikr if they might host me at some undetermined time, for some undetermined time. They both graciously agreed to this odd request. I had no idea when I asked them if I would be wanting to sleep in the carport or in the house. But they both lived along the Green belt trails that more or less connected up to my house, so they seemed like a good fit – as well as being lovely people of course!

Maps and Fitness App.

I made a lot of maps in the year before I walked the pilgrimage. The NCC has PDF maps on their website, but they often printed quite small. To make a larger map, I would print out pages from Google Maps of the areas I was hiking in, and tape them together. Google shows you where many established trails are, but it doesn't mark all of them with the names and markings that the NCC does. Also it shows a number of unofficial trails, which are very handy to know about. I put all the data from the official map onto my homemade maps, and also added information gleaned on my practice walks – for instance where things flooded out after rain fall!

Find yourself a map walking program/app. I used Map My Walk, largely because it was the first one I stumbled on, was free, and reasonably easy to use. It is an app on my phone, and your results can be read on the phone or on their website- which is much easier to read from- and see the route you took on google maps.. During my practice walks, I would turn off the counter when I stopped for breaks- to step off the trail for a minute, or to use the washroom, or to have lunch. This can make a big difference to your readings. When I did my actual pilgrimage I did not turn it on and off all the time, and it often added 100-150 m to my distance, even when I just stepped off the path to sit on a stump. However, I was worried that I would forget to turn it back on again if I turned it off. Additionally, since the weather was quite cold I had my phone and charger stuck in a pair of mittens to keep them warm in my pouch. Getting it in and out was challenging, so I only switched off at lunch breaks. I had learned the the phone needed to be kept warm, lest it shut off and get no data recordings at all. Also, keeping it plugged into the charger pack helped a great deal-less power seemed to make for stranger readings.

Practice Hiking and distance

I honestly cannot remember why I decided that 10 miles a day was a useful goal to shoot for. I might have read it somewhere, or it might have just seemed like a round number. This is 16 km, and 8 k in the morning and 8 in the afternoon seemed like something I could manage. I like to walk, and often went on rambles for 4-8 k just for fun if the mood took me, but I rarely gave myself a whole day to walk- too many other things to do. But I figured I could practice and be able to do 16 k/day for the hike.

I knew that I wanted the pilgrimage to be something that took me somewhere. I find walking in circles – even long loops- fairly boring, and you get to have seen all the scenery after a bit. I found that on practice hikes I often preferred to go without the truck because taking the bus to one end of the trail meant you could catch the bus home from another end of the trail. It made you feel like you were going somewhere, and that made it exciting. I was fortunate that the local transit system realigned

my local route to go from my home in Beaverbrook all the way down to south Kanata without having to transfer. This made route planning much easier. All the bus routes that touched the NCC pathways were marked on the homemade maps too!

I tried to walk over as many parts of the “Shirley's Bay” and “Stony Swamp” NCC sectors as I could, gathering information on the types of paths and how they hooked in together. If there were paths that were not official I tried to walk these to get the data on my GPS app so that I could put them, and their distances, onto my homemade map. Some of the trails are nascent mountain bike trails, and are really not easy walking, so those would be marked as rough going, or left off all together.

As I got closer to my walk date- Fall of 2017- I started trying to walk the 16 km on my practice walks with more regularity. I tried different boots, insoles, socks combinations. I learned (or relearned) that when walking with Medieval boots, mud should be treated as ice, and ice should definitely be treated like ice- no long steps! Not all of my new clothes were finished in early fall, but it was so warm that year, I would not have been able to wear them- it was still above 20C/69F in late September and October.

I originally tried to keep to the 'Rideau Trail Association' standard of taking a short break every hour. I found that every 45 minutes worked better for me in the training walks. I brought a nylon blanket as a sit upon, and could fold it back into my bag quite quickly in training. However, once I was walking with my cloak, the bag was much harder to access, and getting the blanket in and out was a nuisance. On my actual pilgrimage I ended up sitting down for a minute or two almost any time I saw a likely looking stump or rock.

And I tried to plan where I would actually be walking. I knew I liked to be able to use a toilet (or equivalent) before I ate lunch, and preferably after too. So I planned around outhouses and other facilities (Hazeldean mall, Timmy's, and the Bell Arena) Although I had debated weather or not I should bring it with me, I did have lunch most days on the nylon blanket, and it formed a useful back panel for my bag and smoothed out some of the lumps. So it was worth it to bring I think.

I usually did not leave the forests in practice walks, but of course I would have to in order to get to my “monasteries” so they needed to be included in my various plans.

The Monasteries Idea

So as I was planning this trip I did concern myself with where I would sleep and how I would get additional supplies- particularly of water. I did not particularly want to get a modern hiking water purifier to carry with me. And as it became clear that I would be walking in the NCC paths, I realized that camping or sleeping rough would be both illegal and potentially unsafe. I did spend a few walks thinking about where I might be able to make a campsite (though I would not have made a fire!), back from the trail, but high enough not to be damp. I possibly could have managed it, but water would have been an issue, and as the weeks went on and I realized I would be walking in late fall, warmth would have been an issue as well. But before that, it would have been the threat of Ticks. Sunk either way!

So what to do? As I mentioned before I had lined up two houses as stopping places near to the trails. As I refined my routes and thought about how to get my daily 16 km, I realized I would be able to walk

for four days with the following plan:

First day- loop near my house, staying at my house

Second day- Transit from my house to Wilhelm and Cristabell 's

Third day- Loop around W+C's house

Fourth day-Transit from W+C to Marie and Auríkr's house as my destination of “Canterbury”

This would be like walking from Gravesend- a community south and east of London, downstream along the Thames River.

Day one- Gravesend to Rochester (8.9mi) to pick up the main path from London to Canterbury which was the old Roman road to Dover, mediievally called Watling street, now called the A2

Day two- Rochester to Sittingbourne (10.8 miles)

Day three- Sittingbourne to Faversham (7.6 mi)

Day four- Faversham to Canterbury (10.1 mi)

(Alternately, I spent the first four Days walking London to Rochester (itself a pilgrimage site), and then the second four days getting to Canterbury and am still there. I preferred to think I was coming home though)

I asked and received permission to stay with my friends for these days and to put some items in their houses for the purposes of resupplying my packed foods, and to give myself some Medieval foods to eat while staying in the monastery. I packed one clean tunic and pair of underpants at each monastery. I washed out the undies each night, and just re-wore the tunic. In this I was likely more fastidious than an actual Medieval pilgrim would be, but it was also less fastidious than I would normally be at an event- a new tunic every day please! I also brought bedding and pillows, since I didn't want to put my hosts to more trouble than absolutely necessary.

What to bring and how to bring it

Contemporary sermons to pilgrims tell them to bring very little and to depend on the charity of the people that they meet (and people were exhorted to help pilgrims whenever possible). However, we also have accounts of particularly rich or noble pilgrims bringing quite a lot of things with them on Pilgrimage, and certainly if you were travelling on horseback, or by ship, you might have more opportunities to bring more than you could carry yourself.

In instructions for Pilgrims to the Holy land written in 1481 by the Cavalier Santo Brasca he suggests that you bring ”two bags-one full of patience (to sustain him in the fatigues and boredom of the journey) and another bag containing 200 Venetian ducats (to sustain the way of life of one who is accustomed 'to live delicately at home'”)” (Chapter 3 of Pilgrimages -the Great Adventure of Middle Ages by John Ure)

I looked at different sources (Manuscripts, statues, etc) to see how medieval people carried things with them. I also looked for women's accessories- hats, belts, pouches and containers. What I did not see was anything like a modern backpack. There were occasional baskets that might have been carried like a back pack, but they were very much used for farming/harvesting. And even then, most of them used a strap across the chest from bicep to bicep (parallel to the ground) instead of two straps, one over each shoulder perpendicular to the ground. Travellers and merchants carrying loads were often shown

with these across the chest straps. There was one picture of a woman carrying a smaller person like this. It is unclear if the carried person is meant to be a child, or an adult who is unable to walk. Perhaps someone with a flatter chest would like to try this method out, I decided to keep looking.

There were a number of images that showed Pilgrims, and they often carried quite a small bag, just over one shoulder (though the straps looked long enough to wear it cross body), and sometimes a belt pouch. There were some larger bags, particularly in the Smithfield Decretals, that are worn cross body.

Which all helped me to realize that the lovely big Basket man basket I had bought at Pennsic would be completely unsuitable for the look I was going for. Which was both good and bad I think- bad because I could have put everything in one spot and carried it more ergonomically- good because it would have weighed a tonne and would have grown unlovable quite quickly. It also would have looked ridiculous under the cloak. I think if I was going on another walk where I wanted to take a tiny tent to sleep by the trail, and therefore extra water/provisions, I might take the basket.

Main bag:

Since I wanted to be able to carry spare pair of boots with me between monasteries, I needed a bag that would accommodate my largest boots- my modern hikers. I measured them and made a prototype from cotton twill. I wanted to have partitions in the bag to keep things organized, so I used two pieces of fabric (as if it was to be a fabric and lining) but did not sew them together at the top. This gave me three large sections to organize things within.

I made the final version from a heavy Fustian (Linen in one direction, Cotton in the other) that I obtained at Pennsic. I have read that pilgrims would make their bags from leather if they could for durability. But Leather was expensive (then and now) and I thought that more modest pilgrims might have made do with heavier fabrics. I did think about using wool, which I could then waterproof, but I didn't know if it would hold it's shape as well as a linen or cotton. I decided to use a bit of wax on the base and the flap of the Fustian bag to keep water out. But since I was wearing the bag under my cloak, I don't even think this was truly necessary.

I was glad I had brought my sewing kit with me, since the bag's strap seemed to stretch as I continued to wear it. I took numerous pleats in the strap to shorten it.

Most of my gear went into this bag, subdivided by the slots and in various pouches and bags. I used Waxed linen to wrap my food and contained it in waxed linen bags. Waxed linen was used in period to seal jars and for various other purposes. While we have no definitive proof that it was used as food wrap, it seems like a sensible solution.

Front pouch/ Belt

Many pictures in the Luttrell Psalter (and it's contemporaries) show men and women wearing belt pouches of various kinds. The one I used was one that my husband had bought many years ago and rarely wore. It was similar in shape to a number of the pouches in the manuscripts, so I used that. It typically held things that I needed while walking- phone and charger, glasses, house key, kleenex.

I found that having one of my waxed bags of nuts was handy to have on my belt to make snacking easier. I often tucked my mittens or Hat into my belt when I was not wearing them.

Liquids

I had a costrel (pottery water flask) worn across my body, suspended from a woven band. It weighed 1.25Kg empty and 2.75Kg full. So capacity was roughly 1-1.5 liters. I carried about a liter of “small beer” in my other flask in my bag, so this gave me the roughly 2 L of liquid that one is “supposed” to drink while taking exercise. Unsurprisingly I drank more on warmer days than colder ones. Any thing I didn't drink while walking I drank on arrival at the Monastery. Pottery was used for many things at this place/time, and even though it was potentially breakable, I could get attractive, comfortable to carry containers with the capacity I wanted and prices I was willing to pay. A win all around.

I present the contents of my bag, formatted to save space.

Sewing kit table Total weight for bag and contents 350g

Item	Comments	Weight grams	Used/ Not used
Bag itself	A gift from Constance, my apprentice, Hand woven	80	U
Halls	Half pack, In case I needed them, which I did not	19	N
Whistle	For emergencies, which I thankfully did not have	11	N
Wax	For thread	11	U
Thimble		5	U
Cuticle nippers	Used to remove skin. Particularly deroofed blisters	28	U
Thread clippers	2 pairs, intended to only bring one, but things happen	29 (for both)	U
Bag of pins	Spare annular broaches (didn't use), spare fibula (didn't use), viking toiletry set (used ear scoop and tooth pick (as an awl))	42	U/N
3 spare ties	2 narrow linen bands, 1 wider cotton band. Used to tie my cloak to my bag on day 2. Wider one used to lure Pippa cat out from under futon	17	U
3 needle cases	1 for needles, 1 for sewing pins, (both used) 1 for dress/veil pins.- Only used once- I an amazed I didn't lose more pins!	46	U
Linen thread on spool	For sewing on hiking dress- seam finishing	7	U
4 thread winders with thread/yarn	I really only used one of these and should have removed the others. But they normally live in this bag, and they might have been useful (Used and total)	11 and 30	U/N
Comb	I used a modern brush at the monasteries, but I think a medieval woman would carry a comb, so I did.	22	N

Main Bag: Total about 7Kg/15.5 lb (including the little bags)

Item	Comments	Weight grams	Used/ Not used	Food/ Not food
Bag itself	I made this slightly larger (1-2”) than the test bag, which was good for carrying boots, but I think led to issues with the sit upon	600	Used !	N
Bag of Chocolate almonds	Got slightly melty in bag	146	N	F
Bag of Walnuts	Only on way home from C	80-50	U	F
Bag for meat and Cheese		36	U	
Bag with meat and cheese and wax wraps	Contents fluctuated over trip. 366g on arrival home	500-300	U	F
Bag for vegetables		30	U	
Bag with Vegetables	Contents fluctuated. 475G on arrival home	500-300		
Spare Cork	In case I lost one	6	N	
Green scarf	I lost the original smaller one on the first day. I cut this (unlanolised) before I left	78	N	
Tan scarf	Lanolised, cut from waste cloak fabric. This turned out to be too short to go around my neck once I had my head rail on. I could have used it as a placket for the cloak, but I did not need it	45	N	
Knife and Sheath	I could have tied these to my belt, but I was worried about losing them.	81	U	
Bowl	Was quite handy as cutting board and bowl	138	U	
Reliquary bag	I had this from a largesse making idea, I had never used it before. It was just perfect.	13	U	
Rosary	Gift from Lucie, brought there and back again. Used in that I had promised to bring it, but not prayed on.	12	U	
Pilgrim Tokens from Judy On the way home only	A lovely surprise gift! A “gold” coin from Rochester, a “pewter” coin from Canterbury, and a St Thomas pin	49		
Bread bag	A fair bit larger than necessary	69	U	
Bread in bread bag	Fluctuated over trip 750G on arrival home.	750-300	U	F
Medical and Utility	See itemized table below. Some used more than	422	U	N

bag	others, but all helpful to feel safe			
Bag of maps	Another large Zip bag. Maps of the areas walked and preselected routes	225	U	N
Beer Jug with cork	Full / Empty The cork for this and the cork for the costrel occasionally got confused. This one needed the "Friexnet" cork or it dribbled	2 Kg/ 1Kg	U	F
Nylon sit upon	My constant companion on cloak less training walks became a bit more awkward to repack when wearing the cloak. Eventually ended up only using it for lunches when I would have a prolonged sit, and wanted to get out of my bag anyway. It was always useful to give shape to the bag itself, and smooth the back of it against my body	375	U	
Sewing kit	Bag and contents itemized below	350	U	N
Medical/Utility bag	Bag and Contents itemized below	422	U	N

Medical and Utility bag. Packed in large zip lock bag. I could have/should have made a waxed linen bag for this. However, the few times I did use it the contents it was nice to be able to see where things were. Also in the day the beer leaked (day 2) I was glad things were safe in plastic. Total Bag 422 grams (table next page)

Item	Comments	Weight in Grams	Used/ Not used
Polysporin spray		17	N
Lancets	For piercing blisters	1	N
Case with Hydrocolloid bandages	Brought them in the case so they wouldn't get squished, but the case weighed more than they did!	10+7= 17	U
Moleskin	Used a small piece but it didn't stay on well	10	U
Bag of bandaids	Various sizes and types	15	U
Bag of clean	Alcohol wipes (used 1), Iodine wipes, q tips, small gauze	23	U
Spare bag and tummy meds	Immodium and Diovol for acid	19	N
Wet wipes	Cottonelle personal wipes	50	U
Flashlight		72	N
Purell	Fluctuated, this weight is quite full- refills at Monastery	29	U
Antiperspirant	Used for thigh rub control in mid walk	39	U
Lanolin	Laniso nipple cream. Used as chap stick, and face rub.	60-46	U

	My tears beaded on my skin and didn't freeze and chap my face. Same for nose drips. Reapplied after eating. Only issue- won't come out of the tube when very cold- put it in my bra at lunch		
Spare towel	Linen wimple- about 6"x 28". Had a spare in the bag and one tied to the bag every day. Thousands of uses!	61	U

What did Helen Eat

Breakfast:

Bottle (710ml) Coke Zero. You drink coffee, don't judge!
 2 slices bread with Soft (Brie or Camembert) cheese on them
 some yogurt
 an apple or Veggies from my bag as the mood took me

Prep to go out:

Fill water costrel.

Beer (500ml) into Blue jug, and Ginger ale (about 300ml) to fill and leave some head room. I would try to pour this and leave it open to lose bubbles for 30-60 minutes. Sometimes I forgot. Those days I would literally pop the cork as I was walking. Most days there was no spillage.

I was using "Rolling Rock" beer, largely because it went well with the ginger ale that I was cutting it with. I wanted to reduce the alcohol by volume to closer to 2-3%, which was more like a "small beer" that was a peasant's daily ration. This worked pretty well most days (except for popping!) and it made a pleasant drink as a "pick me up". If you know a local Brewer, you might see if they would be interested in making a batch of small beer for you to try.

Refill bags as needed- Veggies, apples, meat, cheese bread.

Lunch:

Bread: Commercially made bread from "The Piggy Market", via Rainbow foods. I got two types: Sour Dough Rye (which I think would have been a good analogue for the heavier peasant breads). And Sourdough white, which was also quite dense, and traveled well. I had tried to order 4 loaves of just Rye ahead of time, but that fell through. In the end I got 2 loaves of the Sourdough Rye and two loaves of plain Sourdough. I split each loaf in half and froze half of each for each monastery. I had intended to make my own rustic bread, but time got away from me. You could make some to bring on your own walk.

I planned to eat a loaf every 2 days, about half what a medieval person would. It didn't really work out that way. I ate 2 big slices for breakfast everyday, but lunch was only if I felt like it, and sometimes I wanted Veggies instead. I had some with a few of the dinners, but they were quite large as well, and I often didn't need the extra food. I think if I had had less cheese and sausage I would have eaten more bread. But I am used to the protein and it is what my body seemed to want. I think medieval people had fewer choices!

Cheese (Manchego (sheep milk); Jarlsberg (Cow); Beemster (cow)). These cheeses were chosen using the criteria listed in Menagier de Paris (note 58):

Not white like Helen

Nor weeping, like Magdalen

Not like Argus, but rather all blind

And also Heavy as an ox,

It stands up to the thumb's pressure,

And it should have a scaly rind.

Eyeless, and tearless, and not white,

Crusted, firm and heavy.

They all traveled well, and did not mind not being refrigerated.

Sausage: Commercially made “shelf stable” sausages (Summer sausage, “gypsy salami” and Landjager). These all traveled well in the waxed linen wraps and bag I made for them. I was amazed at how much of the scent stayed in the bag (less so by the end of the trip though!) If you know someone who likes to experiment with medieval sausages, perhaps you can (help) get some made.

I had more of all these things at my Monasteries and could resupply every two days. However, I was not going though anywhere near the amount that I bought. Over the whole walk I ate about 600-700G of sausage, and about the same of cheese. More on some days than others. Sometimes I would have some cheese or sausage at supper too, but usually not.

Fruit and Vegetables: Apples (Russet- one of the oldest varieties still available, and Honey crisp because I like them). The russets traveled better than the larger Honey crisps. Radishes because they are period and I like them. Coloured carrots, small ones so I didn't have to cut them. All these traveled in a waxed linen bag, and were also not refrigerated. This was less of a success. The carrots in particular lost moisture to the surrounding air through the bag and became softer after a few days. I had to be thoughtful about how long things stayed there and when I resupplied. I kept the refills in the monastery fridge. I wonder if we only ever see references to cooked carrots because uncooked ones were not as crispy crunchy as we can have them from the fridge.

I brought a lot of vegetables to resupply with as well, but again, bought too much. I ate an apple every other day or so, and had a few radishes and carrots everyday. I sometimes had them for breakfast and dinner as well. I tried to eat them if my body seemed to want them. Some days that meant lots, some, very little.

Snacks on trail- Things from lunch bag, or more often nuts (walnuts mainly since they are the most appropriate for me) from a bag hanging from my belt.

On arrival at Monastery:

I would finish what was left in the beer and water bottles and stretch out my legs. Snacks from bag if I felt like it, but I usually didn't. On the day it rained (day 7) and a few others I was very happy to have a warm cup of tea with my hosts as I stretched. Later, around 6-7pm, which was very late to have an evening meal if you were a real medieval person, but about the right time for my modern tummy, I would have dinner.

Dinner

I prepared three dishes in advance and froze them in, as it turned out, slightly over large portions, usually 2-3 cups. 2 cups would likely have been sufficient and then I would have eaten more of the bread. I suppose I could also have chosen not to eat it all, but I didn't want to store an uneaten portion, and when would I get back to it anyway?

I chose my dishes to be seasonal, and reasonably frugal as befitting a monastery. At any rate the choices were these:

Pea soup and Pork hocks. Made with a modern recipe for a crock pot, but there is absolutely nothing modern in the recipe, and I have seen similar ones (though without carrots) in the literature. I suspect if you only had one or two carrots, they would have gone into the same pot with the rest.

Fava Beans with Onions and Garlic- Cooked in the crockpot from dried beans. (“Benes Yfried” Forme of Cury 189, as redacted in Pleyn Delit Vol 2 #41) Very yummy!

Poached fish with Leeks- Medieval recipe for creamed leeks (“Blaunchyd Porray” Liber Cure Cocorum, as redacted my Pleyn Delit, Vol 2 # 34) a different one for poached fish (method from Pleyn Delit Vol 2, #61, which is to say, basic poaching), frozen in one container. Super yummy. This I did eat with bread since it was less 'stodgy' than the bean dishes.

Sometimes I would have another beer at dinner, or some vegetables. Ross and I shared a bottle of very special fortified Cider one evening. I put small cheese bits on the fava beans once. Once or twice I had “dessert” of yogurt from the breakfast menu.

Canterbury was a bit different. I had planned to have the above foods on the walk day, and had brought a modern mac and cheese casserole to eat on my rest day. Partly because it was easy, and partly because I thought I would want a break. But I didn't! And also, Marie had collected a wonderful tray of goodies for me to sample on my arrival. There was pork Lonzano from Tinker James, and some home smoked Ham from John S. She had made a different pea soup recipe from Marina- I need to get the recipe!- and given me a lovely chunk of Brie and a bun! So I ate wonderfully when I was there, and did get a break from the normal foods, but it was medieval too. So thoughtful of her!

What did Helen Wear

Footwear

My original intention was to teach myself how to make the boots I wore. However this turned out to be rather more of an adventure than I was anticipating, so instead I purchased a pair of boots from Armlann, my favourite shoe maker. (exact model: <http://www.armlann.com/1415.htm>) I have purchased a number of pairs of shoes from him and know that they wear well. They are not strict reproduction boots-they are not turn shoes made on a last- and they have a welt that has a number of layers of leather to make a sole that lasts a long time and is repairable. The ones that fit me (he only brings so many pairs) also had a thin layer of rubber glued to the base. This has increased their durability, though you can see that they are already showing signs of wear. I estimate I have worn

them for well over 100, possibly closer to 200 km.

I have had issues with Plantar Fasciatis over the years and I usually wear my Armlann shoes with modern insoles. I experimented with different types of modern insoles to find the right combination of arch support and heel cushioning. I also tried experimenting a bit with my gait, trying not to hit my heel quite so hard on the ground as I walked. This had mixed success, particularly when I was tired. In the end, I set off with two types of insoles stacked in my boots. One foot continued to be troublesome and I ended up removing one of the insoles from that boot only and that did the trick. I guess my feet are different from one another!

I alternated these close to period boots with modern Hiking boots, by Keen. These also got additional insoles to improve heel cushioning. I wore the modern hiking boots on days when I would be walking on a lot of paved roads. The soles are more durable against this hard surface, and they cushioned my feet better than the Armlann boots. In this way I managed to be merely extremely sore at the end of the days, not actually injured..

Socks

I have been wearing seamed hose/socks for many years in the SCA without much difficulty. I have a pattern that works quite well, and a number of pairs of socks made in past years that have been to Pennsic many times. I had even gone for short training walks with them, so I had assumed that these would be fine for my walk and had not planned time to make a new pair(s). I found that this was a mistake. I had not realized how much my feet would swell during a very long walk, and how the little bits of extra fabric in the toe of my socks would crumple up under my toes and involve themselves with my insoles when walking for several hours.

A few weeks before my hike was to start I went on a practice run with my medieval socks and boots. I had not gotten into the habit of obsessively checking my feet for blisters and hotspots. After an hour my feet were feeling a little sore and I rearranged my socks on my feet. At lunch (after walking 8 k) I took my boots off to cool off- it was a warm day- and made a note that the socks seemed to be holding my toes together a fair amount. Being foolish, I didn't take my socks off to look at my feet. After lunch I popped the boots back on, and thought my feet felt quite sore. After a kilometer the boots were off again, and I could feel the enormous blister through the sock. Of course I am now at least a K from any kind of pickup point, and I had really wanted to get some miles in, so I made the bad decision to soldier on. I managed another 3 km to the next subdivision, where I called my husband to come pick me up.

On arrival at home I found a 1.5" diameter blister under the ball of my foot. It was incredibly painful and right where I push off when I walk. I put a Hydro-colloidal blister bandage on it, and hoped for the best. After reading up a bit more on blisters, and sports medicine involving them, I possibly should have lanced it and then bandaged it instead. I did include in my travelling med bag things to lance and bandage a blister, in case I should need to do that on my walk. I could not do training walks for over a week due to pain.

But back to socks. At only a few weeks out from my hike, I decided that I would not try to experiment with a new pair of medieval hose, just in case I should suffer another blister like this one without sufficient time to recover. I would like to work on this more in the future.

When I am not wearing my hand sewn socks, I often wear long cotton socks from “Hero's Haven” (<http://socksamerica.com/>). These are 100% cotton tube socks that reach my knee, which keeps my legs warm, and generally keep my feet happy. They have a number of different products and have recently improved their line with cushioned soles. Alas, I didn't have many pairs of those, just the regular knit ones. So I resolved to wear these for my hike.

However, my hike was scheduled for November, and I was concerned that my feet would be cold. So I purchased some additional “Darn Tough” brand wool hiking socks. These were only “crew” length- I have large legs and longer ones are too tight on my calves, so I was a bit worried about my legs being cold, but cold toes are far worse. So I packed these too.

In the end, the first two days were very cold, so I wore the wool socks. On day three it was warm enough to wear the cotton socks, but I put the wool ones in my bag, just in case. By the fourth kilometer, my feet were in revolution-Too much texture in these cotton socks!- bring back the smooth tightly knitted wool socks! Or else! I complied, and wore wool socks for the rest of the walk. On later cold days I cut the toes off one of my old pairs of cotton socks and turned them into leg warmers, which worked very well.

Other Underclothes

I wore a modern bra throughout. At 42 H, I am not willing to go without support during exercise.

I wore conjecturally period “underpants” throughout the walk. I made these in imitation of the ones that THL Constance of Caldrithig wears and teaches about (in Ealdormere). They are a hemmed rectangle of linen cloth, with a short casing sewn into two of the opposing sides. Though the casing I put a cord, and to make them easier to put on, a piece of elastic. The cord and elastic draws them up into a pair of sideless underpants, that hang down between the legs and prevent chaffing. These are Excellent! I made three pairs, and washed them out so I could wear them again (ending up wearing each pair twice between machine washes) I found that wearing my modern cotton undies under them was inconvenient as you have to really pull everything down and off in order to use the toilet. Wearing them alone, I could just pull them to one side and hold them up with my skirts and then use the toilet. This way I did not have to fight with the drawstring when fully dressed and in close quarters. Additionally, linen breathes and dries faster than cotton. When it is hot, the linen pants stay drier without the cotton panties underneath.

Note, that after all these walks (100+ Km for each pair), the fabric is beginning to pill where it is rubbing together. I pull the pills off after washing, but eventually they will wear out. I could change the casings to the opposite sides, or perhaps source a higher quality linen that might have fewer breakages.

My “pattern” is this: a square with finished dimensions of 36” (I make a serger Roll hem on mine). On two opposing sides I make a 1” wide casing, about 6” long, in the center. I threaded mine with an elastic, and with a length of twill tape about 2 yards long.

To make some to fit you: Measure your crotch depth: from back waist, between legs and up to front waist (or under your belly if you find that you want moisture collection/skin separation there). Add two

inches for casings.

Measure from your vulva down your thigh to past where you chafe, and double it.

Make a rectangle of linen to these dimensions and roll hem it with a serger or machine or by hand. Fold over your casings and stitch only the center 4-6" or so. Thread casings with elastic and/or twill tape or cord.

Under tunic and tunic

Part of this project proposal included making a new tunic pattern for myself that would have a tighter fit thought the shoulder and armhole so that it would look more appropriate for the "Luttrell Psalter" (1330) timed demos that we do in the summer. This is just at the time of the big change from roomier tunics in the earlier middle ages to the more fitted "cotehardie" or "gothic fitted dress" (GFD). The noble family is wearing tightly fitted clothes in the new style, and the peasants wear looser ones, but without too much bagginess under the arms. I deemed my tunics too baggy in the area, and I resolved to find a pattern with a better fit.

I tried a number of different methods, based on extant tunics: the Bocksten Man gown; the Kragelund tunic; the Moselund tunic, and of course my beloved "Greenland" gowns. For more information on them, look at the links in the Bibliography. Each of the patterns had different ways of addressing the armhole area. I made mockups of each of them and did fittings, since my body shape is dramatically different than the original wearers of these clothes. Some of them could not be made to fit comfortably in the bodice area and I did not even attempt sleeves. Two of the mock ups made it to sleeves, Moselund and the Greenland variation. Of these, the best fit was the Greenland #41 dress, the same shape that I wore for years, but now made larger, and looser than before.

I made a pullover version of this tunic in Linen for Pennsic 2017, and found it comfortable. In the fall, I made a wool version to wear for the hike. I used a relatively light weight wool that had been washed in the machine a few times to "full" the cloth. In the planning stages I didn't think that I would be out much below the freezing point, so I didn't want this layer too thick, knowing I would also have a cloak. I made the neckline similar to a tunic neckline- rounder and closer to my neck than a typical GFD- for warmth and because this is intended to be a lower class and transitional garment.

I had found on my practice hikes that my upper body could get quite warm due to the tunics and the headrail draped in that area. So I decided that the wool tunic should have buttons so that I could open it for ventilation. Because I was going to wear bags across my body, I did not want to use metal buttons since they would be pressed into my body. So I made cloth buttons. There is a link to a tutorial in the bibliography, I did mine a little differently, but not by much. Because I was in a hurry and because I was not making a super tight dress, I elected to make fewer buttons of a larger size than are sometimes found on buttoned dresses, but they worked well. This dress buttons to about the hip line, was was common for GFDs.

For making these clothes I used my usual mixture of machine and hand stitches: Machining on the interior, basic construction seams; and hand stitches on things that would be seen when the garment was worn like hems, facings, and buttons.

Cloak

Pilgrims (overwhelmingly male) are often depicted wearing a large over garment, sometimes a cloak sometimes a roomier tunic over their cloths. Women of status are often depicted at this time wearing cloaks, and I thought it would shed the rain well, so I decided to make a half circle cloak. I am not sure that I would not have been better served with a waterproofed over tunic in the end, since the cloak did blow around a bit. If I had been walking with a stick it would have got in the way a fair amount unless I wore it open on one shoulder, which would have introduced the elements.

There are some extant half circle cloaks (Bocksten man, and the Sknurmantel; See bibliography), and there are ecclesiastical examples as well. I used a medium weight machine fulled wool that I had left over from another project. I dyed it to make it brown instead of grey in the hopes that it would stay cleaner looking on the hike.

I did not make a cut out for my neck, and, since I intended to wear it with a center front opening, I decided to embroider the back neck. This was done in haste and without research, but with visions of modern clerical costume. Instead of the Cross that I had seen so many times in church, I put a Laurel wreath to represent the SCA. I put my four lozenges in the center of it to represent myself. On the front edge, I put a repeating sequence of stitches so that it would be easier to match the edges of the cloak up when inserting pins. Further research indicates that cloaks were not likely decorated in this way, I should have left it plain.

I made an extra strip of the same cloth and used a pair of annular broaches to fasten it more or less over my collar bones. This held the cloak slightly open and was quite comfortable when the temperatures were around zero as I had planned. When it was colder, and when it was raining, I found I could twist the strip of cloth to draw the edges of the cloak together, and put the loop in the center of the twist around the top button of my tunic. This held the edges close together under my chin. I could then add additional broaches as needed to hold the front edges together.

Belt

I used a piece of card weaving I had started ages ago. It was all cotton, and may have been an attempt at making a long apprentice belt. However, it had gotten long enough to be a belt used with a buckle, so I put one on and used that. It was there to hold up a pouch and manage my hems if necessary- which it wasn't. I also ended up tying a snack pouch to it, and tucking my mittens (and sometimes my hat) into it since it was easier than putting them in my bag.

Headrail

I wore my hair in braids that were braided from the temple to get the right head shape. I then used a linen headrail over them. The size I use is about 25"x 80". I pin it into the braids and wrap it around my head. I found that pinning the tail end up to a braid kept it out of the way. I don't normally do this, but there were so many straps around my shoulders and neck that adding the extra random fabric got very irritating. I carried extra pins in case I lost one.

Hat.

I made this open hood type hat from a well washed piece of wool. It had been serged before I washed it and the serging had prevented the edges from shrinking as much as the interior of the piece. I used this longer edge as the bottom edge of the hat to give it a little flair without having to insert gores. The shape is based on those seen in the Luttrell Psalter and other contemporary manuscripts. I pinned this to my braids and headrail to keep it from blowing away. It was waterproofed at the same time as the dress and cloak. Because the fabric is so thick it took the longest to dry completely, but because it was wool, it was warm even when wet.

Naalbound mittens

These were my very first naalbinding project, started after I took a “naalbinding for Lefties” class at Pennsic. I used quite a thick wool so they worked up fairly quickly which was great. However it made them very warm and very stiff to wear, particularly after they were waterproofed. I had to keep removing them because they were too hot. Naalbinding is not particularly appropriate for my Luttrell psalter persona, so if I was to do another hike I might make a pair of mittens from fabric, or perhaps fur.

The pinch hitters:

Older wool tunic, Husband's wool hood, Pants (smooth on the outside, fleece on the inside) from Talbots.

When I started out, the weather was unseasonably cold with lots of wind chill (down to -20C/-4F). I decided that adding layers would allow me to go out and do the walk, instead of doing what a real pilgrim might have done- said “no way” and stayed inside! I put on wool socks, and some modern thermal pants. Then my linen tunic, and then a hand stitched thick wool tunic (the same fabric as my cloak actually), and then my new wool hiking dress. I put on my headrail, then a wool hood of my husband's since the skirt of the hood would tuck in under my cloak and keep out the drafts. Then my cloak and hat and mitts. It was a lot of clothes, and was very warm when inside, but once I got out and walking it was fantastic. I wore all of this for the first two days. By the end of the second day it was getting warmer, and I had to take my cloak off and tie it to my bag. For the rest of the walk I didn't need the extra clothes, though I did elect to carry the wool hood with me, just in case.

The Joys of Lanolin

So I am going to wax rhapsodic over something that may initially sound gross. Indeed, it comes up regularly in those “5 gross things....” lists all over the internet! But you know, people have been using this for hundreds of years, so lets talk about Lanolin!

Lanolin (from [Latin *lāna*](#) ‘wool’, and [oleum](#) ‘oil’), also called **wool wax** or **wool grease**, is a wax secreted by the [sebaceous glands](#) of [wool-bearing animals](#). Lanolin used by humans comes from [domestic sheep breeds](#) that are raised specifically for their wool. (from Wikipedia, 2018)

So yeah, it is sheep 'body oil'. And yeah, when you first get it out of the wool, it can be pretty gross.

There is a video in the links below of Ruth Goodman getting lanolin from some sheep fleeces. She looks to have rinsed the fleece, and then added it into a large pot of water that she then brings to a boil. After it “boils” for an unspecified time- and it might not be very long, one would not want to agitate the fleece and felt it- the whole pot is allowed to cool. The next morning she skims the lanolin off the top of the dirty water, the same way you might take the fat/grease from a cooled pot of meat stock. Yummy!

How clean the lanolin would be would be dependant on how clean the fleece was when you put it in, and sheep are not super clean creatures. To purify it, you could strain it to get the larger bits of vegetable matter out of it, but after that, I admit to not being sure. I have looked for information on how medieval people might have further processed the lanolin but have so far come up empty. In the modern world, various kinds of centrifuge systems, and chemical processes can be employed to get varying degrees of purity.

So now you have clean fleece, ready to be spun and dyed and made into clothes. And lanolin to be used for what? Well you can apply it back to the fabric you have dyed and finished to make it waterproof. You can use lanolin alone or in combination with other things to make creams and salves for medicinal or cosmetic purposes. You can mix it with other products to make leather care creams (skin is skin right?). And, though I don't know if they used it for this in medieval times, it is now also used as an industrial lubricant and rust inhibitor.

So what did I use it for? I waterproofed my hiking dress and my cloak with it. Any wool fabrics that you can purchase now would have had all the lanolin removed at some point in the processing. Dyes do not adhere well to wool with lanolin, and it prevents the fibres from becoming “fluffy” for fulling. So since I wanted to be water proof, or at least water repellent, I needed to get that lanolin back into my clothes.

I elected to waterproof the cloak and the wool over dress in an effort to keep myself dry. A medieval person might have made these clothes from wool that had been spun and woven “in the grease”, which is to say that the fleece would have been washed to remove the dirt, but not using soap, which would remove the lanolin that provides natural waterproofing. However, in order to dye the cloth, the lanolin must be removed for most dye stuffs to stick to the wool. And if the cloth was fulling, the lanolin would be removed in this process. So I suspect that outerwear would have needed occasional re-lanolinizing to improve it's performance.

So I looked for “recipes” for lanolizing cloth and found this one:

<https://bushcraftuk.com/community/index.php?threads/anyone-used-a-lanolin-spray-for-waterproofing-wool.106539/#post-1299963>

Here is Toddy's method. It doesn't make wool waterproof but the effect is similar to proofing cotton with Nikwax wash-in. It sheds some water and is a little less absorbent initially. I feel it also resists dirt better and dries quicker.

If you prefer to use real lanolin to reproof wool then the method is to make up a soapy water solution with about 4-5 litres of luke warm water and either 2 tablespoons of soap flakes or pure soap rubbed up into a good lather. Take out a little in a cleaned jam jar and add a level tablespoonful of the pure lanolin. Heat in ten second bursts in the microwave until the lanolin has melted. Pour this back into the soapy water. The water should go very milky looking. Soak your just washed and still damp swanni or jumper or bush shirt or cloak in this mixture for at least an hour though longer is more effective. Move it around pretty frequently or add more lukewarm water. Finally squeeze out excess water and hang to dry.

Lanolin last cost me £6 for 500g from the local chemist. That's a lot of waterproofing

So I tried it in a large “Roughtote”. I soaked my dress, cloak, hat and mitts. It was very long and very tedious. And amazingly IN effective! The fabric seemed to absorb more water than it did originally (I had kept samples of course!)

Fortunately I had also kept my large tote full of soapy, lanolin-y water. I hoped that adding a much greater quantity of Lanolin to this water would make the difference. I think I tripled the amount of Lanolin called for in the recipe- I didn't have time to try this again before my walk, and wanted to be sure it worked! The water was extremely milky, and I put all the things in again and stirred for two hours. I laid everything out in the laundry room to dry on towels. And got the dehumidifier going. The next day I changed the towels under things, and flipped them over. The day after, everything but the Hat and mitts were dry. And it was raining. So I put everything-including the wet hat- on and went for a walk. And glorious day- I stayed dry! Or dry enough anyway. I was humid from sweating under all the wool! My linen under tunic hems were quite damp and I resolved to re hem them all by another inch or two. Success!

So here is a usable 'recipe' for Lanolizing things:

To add to clothing: 4-5 liters of lukewarm water. 1 TBSP soap flakes or some pure soap rubbed into a lather. Mix. Remove some of the water to a microwave safe container and add to it 1.5-2 TBSP of lanolin to it. Stir. Microwave in short bursts and stir in between until the lanolin has melted and there are no lumps. Add back to the main soapy water mixture. It will go milky looking. Wet the garment you want to waterproof and add it to the bath. Allow it to soak, stirring occasionally, for 1-2 hours. Remove and press out excess soapy/lanolin water. Lay garment on a towel to dry. If you have a dehumidifier, use it. Turn garments as necessary.

Last bit of Planning: Planning for your return

Although we do know that pilgrims, especially those going long distances, were encouraged to get their

affairs in order in case they should die on their travels, I have not found many details about pilgrims returning. Surely some did indeed die, or perhaps chose not to return. In some places those people who had returned from pilgrimages to Jerusalem were celebrated and had special social privileges accorded to them. We know that some people became almost professional pilgrims, undertaking journeys on behalf of those unable to make the trip personally. But little is written about how the pilgrims themselves feel about their return home – most “guide books” end at the Pilgrimage destination.

I had given my return very little thought, other than a desire to write down all the things that happened before my notoriously poor memory turned it into a bowl of mush. My husband, though tolerant of my adventure, had no desire to join me, and was counting the days down until my return (and using “Map my iPhone” to check my progress). My first night at home was supposed to be another “monastery stop”, and I had planned to do another 10 miles the next day. But the weather was against me, and we had a huge snowstorm, so I was done a day early. But my head was still on the trail, and on my project. My husband's head was full of delight at my early return to him. This caused some friction.....

The biggest struggle in this project was not really the project at all. It was coming home so focussed on writing down my trip reports, and sorting my pictures, and finishing the project stuff. I had not prepared my husband for this, because I didn't realize how strongly I would feel about doing this. I had spent a week focused just on doing the things that I wanted and needed to do, and being praised in comments on my Facebook posts for being “strong and independent”. But my husband had not been part of that- he hadn't been reading my journals since he doesn't really read FB at all. And all of this came as a total and quite unwelcome surprise.

Additionally, I had not considered what even this relatively short walk might have been doing to me chemically- Regular exercisers may well be aware of the mood enhancing chemicals (serotonin, endorphins etc) that occur when walking, but I had not considered them. I stopped walking entirely as the snow built up outside the window, and stayed all winter. Work was same old, same old, and friction continued with my husband.

I finally Googled “Coming back from a Through Hike”, and found that there were articles about this. Which helped me feel less alone and strange about this, but it was a very hard winter. Things have improved as we get more distance from the trip, and we are both settling into the routines of summer

Please consider the mental and physical effects of going on a (long) walk, and being separated from the people who are staying at home waiting for you. If you know that you will want to do some journaling on your return, try to make a plan for that, and make sure everyone knows that is part of the plan. Perhaps line up a massage, or other pampering treatment. And maybe even an appointment with a councilor or trusted friend to really talk through your experience, and your readjustment to regular life.

Trip report.

I have a separate file of photos and information circulating the class, and it is available on line as well. Here is a summary of my experiences in the monasteries:

I planned to sing some church songs with Marie and Auríkr when I arrived at “Canterbury”- She runs the local choir group, and he is a strong member - but I had other wise planned very little to do at my monasteries besides eating and sleeping. It is so uncommon to go to stay overnight with someone who lives in your own city, and I rarely go to out of town events and crash with people. And I didn't know how tired I would be and what would be going on in their own weekly schedules.

What I got was a very warm welcome into these lovely people's homes. Wilhelm and Cristabell have three active children (10, 5 and 3 at the time) who were utterly charming. They generously gave up one of their playrooms to me and my belongings (I folded the futon up every day so they could get in for things). I was included at the table at mealtimes. It was not a silent refectory table, but a hive of activity with the 'novices' eager to tell me about their day or the ballet lessons or scouting they were off to do after supper. As it was nearing Christmas there were sing alongs too: “Must be Santa!” was one of the features. It was a lovely lively change from my solitary days on the trail. Wilhelm and I shared a lovely bottle of cider one night, and a number of cups of tea to warm up after my walks.

Arriving at Marie and Auríkr's was an entirely different proposition. It was a very long grey walk on a windswept hydro corridor and I was so very very tired when I arrived there. I used their key to let myself in quietly. I was so happy to be there that I cried. I got myself together a bit and it turned out Auríkr was actually home and stringing the outdoor christmas lights. It was good to have a hug and a few more tears. They had arranged with some local foodies to make a medieval meal for me to enjoy on my arrival. Marina gave a lovely recipe for Pea soup that Marie cooked for me. John S, and Tinker James made some lovely cured pork products for me. And there was my favourite brie cheese and a bun. I had brought food too of course, but it was so nice to have this as a surprise (I found about about it the night before)

Judith the far traveller arrived- she had called at some point as I was walking and I had not heard the ring. She came with gifts for me. Tokens from her trips to the real Rochester and the real Canterbury! More tears. I had also packed some pilgrims tokens in the things I was storing – ones that I had bought from Billy and Charlie at Pennsic. I put one of those on my hat- I didn't want to risk the ones Judith had brought me, I put them in a pouch in my bag.

It was very overwhelming to realize that I had made it this far- and that I would have to do it all again in reverse after a days rest in Canterbury! But I had decided to stay a day in Canterbury to rest my feet and body after my long walk. Everyone else went to work and it was just silence- except for the marvellously curated collection of Medieval church music that Marie had arranged to shuffle play all day. I ate, updated my FB group with what had been going on, and just relaxed. And didn't walk very much at all- that was the best part!

What did I learn from all this?

- I learned it was possible. It was an effort, but not as bad as I thought it would be .
- I learned I had great and supportive friends.
- I learned that I like to sing, and that it keeps me going when I am tired.
- I learned that the project is not over when the walk is: If you do this, schedule some time to decompress and reintegrate into your home life.

Date/day	Temps	Weather	Wore	distance
Day one. November 10	Start: -10C/14F, feels like -20C/-4F, HIGH of -6C/21F, feels like -13	Grey, but nothing falling	EVERYTHING!	12.2km/ 7.6 mi
Day 2- November 11	Start: -5C/23F feels like -12C/10F Midday: -1 °C/30F feels like-10 °C/14F	Light occasional flurries, but pleasant	EVERYTHING!	AM 8.4 + PM 7.21 Total 15.61km/9.7 mi
Day 3- November 12	Midday: 3.9 °C /39F	No precip, but many puddles- melting!	Planned costume, with wool socks	AM 6.4 + PM 8.34 =14.74km/9.1mi
Day 4 November 13	Midday: 1.2 °C / 34F feels like -1.1/30F °C	Chilly and damp- 70% humidity	Planned costume with wool socks	AM 7.44 + PM 8.56 km= 16 km/10 mi
Day 5- November 14	Rest Day, I don't care!		Mundanes	0
Day 6 -November 15	Midday: 5 °C /41F feels like 2C/35F	Quite pleasant, some sun even!	Planned costume with wool socks	AM 8.85+ PM 6.99= 15.84km/9.8 mi
Day 7 November 16	Midday: 6 °C /42F feels like 3C/37F	Drizzle all day (3.2mm acc), with Hail/slush for a short time in the afternoon.	Planned costume with wool socks	AM: 8.4+ PM: 7.85 km= 16.25km/10.1mi
Day 8 November 17	Start temp -7C/19F, feels like -12C/10F Midday: -0.5 °C / 31F Feels like -2C/ 28F	Pleasant but windy	Planned costume with wool socks	AM 8.00+ PM 8.25= 16.25km/10.1mi
Day 9- November 18	Cold	Rain and snow	Mundanes	Did not walk due to storm conditions and exhaustion.

I walked 106.89KM on my pilgrimage, for a total of 66.42 miles. If I had done my full 16 each day, I would have had 112Km/69.6mi. So I was pretty close to my daily goal most days- I "lost" the most mileage that first, terribly cold, day since I just didn't feel I could go any further than 12.2k.
1 km=.62 miles

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Facebook groups

Steven Payne: An adventurous man who has done some really interesting pilgrimages in England
<https://www.facebook.com/14thcenturypilgrimsprogress/>

Viking Hiking Facebook group- Great articles in the files section!
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/841792859219976/>

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