

## The Pilgrims' Way

The prehistoric trackway, from Dover to Stonehenge,  
Used as a road for pilgrims, a sainthood to avenge.  
The death of Thomas Becket begot the sacred shrine;  
To visit as a traveller, an enterprise divine.

Winchester to Canterbury became the classic route,  
The chalky downland ridge; quite easy on the boot  
For thousands with their crosses raised;  
His devotion to be praised.

The Pilgrims' Way description?  
'Victorian inscription'  
O.S. map invention!  
Historical intention!

Today the 'North Downs Way' is here,  
A nation's trail for all to use.  
For ramblers, cyclists all to share,  
Some motorbikers to abuse.

We still have modern pilgrims too,  
Who march and sing with banners true,  
All the way to Canterbury,  
Step by step and very weary!

Three thousand years of history,  
The transport of our ancestry.  
Ideal for modern recreation,  
A public asset for our nation!

*Peter Bailey, May 2017*