



Bulletin

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Santiago at Monte Santiaguino, Padrón
by Jonathan M Smith

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Editorial

The March 2018 issue of the Bulletin carried a short article by Professor Joseph Pickard of the University of Missouri at St Louis. In it he described how, after himself making the Camino, he wanted to gauge how others had experienced it. He approached the question as an academic: he decided to conduct a survey, and invited members of the Confraternity to contribute.

Under the title he had envisaged in that Bulletin piece, Pilgrimage, Spirituality and Personal Transformation, he has now produced a preliminary version of his report on the survey, though in truth to me for a preliminary version it looks pretty complete.

Joe Pickard intends, of course, to publish the report himself, but he has been kind enough to allow the Bulletin a sneak peek in advance of making his findings public. The first part of the report is inevitably concerned with basic data: how many people filled in the survey, where they came from (mainly the USA – hardly surprising, perhaps, given Professor Pickard’s own location), their age range, their religious affiliation (nearly a third identify as Roman Catholics, but slightly more than a third said they had no particular religious affiliation).

Most, indeed, nearly all, had walked the Camino: cycling seemed rather less popular than I would have expected, but then bringing a bike from, say, California, to Northern Spain might prove a bit of a challenge. An equally small group said they had both walked and ridden on a horse – even more of a challenge though, to judge from the television programme reviewed in the last issue, horses for hire appear to be available along the way.

Pickard’s analysis of the religious attitudes and practices of those who filled in the survey is particularly interesting, but too complicated to be summarised within the scope of an Editorial: readers will have to turn to the report itself when it is eventually made available.

It is, however, possible to reveal what a good number of those who have made the Camino will readily understand, that for many it was a life-changing experience, though there were some – not many apparently, but some – who felt disappointed by their pilgrimage, and there were others, it is not recorded how many, who were depressed on their return home:

“While the Camino is difficult, coming home is even harder”, remarked one of Professor Pickard’s respondents. And there was another comment which it might be good for all who are quasi-professionally involved in promoting the Camino to bear in mind: he or she advised those contemplating making the pilgrimage: “Not to listen to all the ‘rules’ spouted as to how to walk, carry, where to stay, etc. That was my most negative experience. People who assume they have all the answers as to how to be a pilgrim should be avoided”.

Those with ears to hear ...

Stop Press: Professor Pickard has provided a link to the survey: www.umsl.edu/~socialwk/files/pdfs/CVs/pilgrimage,-spirituality,-and-personal-transformation-pickard.pdf



Irish Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela

Sean J. Murphy

In addition to native pilgrimage sites such as Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick, the Irish were drawn to those abroad, including Santiago de Compostela. There is an ancient Irish legend that the sons of King Milesius of Spain, the “Milesians”, had been the first Gaelic invaders of Ireland. Added to this was another improbable claim that St James had preached in Ireland, no doubt a product of the popularity of the Compostela pilgrimage in that country.

While most continental pilgrims travelled to Santiago de Compostela by land, Irish and British pilgrims used sea routes as well. Ships bearing Irish pilgrims sailed from Dublin, Drogheda, Wexford, New Ross, Waterford, Galway and other Irish ports.

Although we have no detailed particulars of poorer pilgrims, the annals and other sources provide the names of some of the more prominent Anglo-Irish and Gaelic figures who undertook the pilgrimage, including Fulk Basset (or de Sandford), Archbishop of Dublin, in 1267. Demonstrating the seriousness of a commitment to pilgrimage, a papal mandate had to be secured in 1320 via the Archbishop of Dublin to absolve Edmund Butler, his wife and their son James, from their vow to visit Santiago de Compostela. In 1428 Hugh Maguire died on the night of his return from Spain to Kinsale, “after cleansing of his sins in the city of St James”.

In 1483 James Rice, Mayor of Waterford, was granted permission to go on the pilgrimage, “according to a vow made before he took office”. Women, too, were pilgrims and in 1445 it was noted that Margaret MacDermott “returned safe and sound” from St James’s but that Evelin O’Farrell, wife of Piers Dalton, had died in Spain. In 1507 James Barry Roe and a party of notables including Donnell O’Fiaich were lost at sea while returning from their pilgrimage in Spain.

There is an account of a pirate-style attack on a ship carrying Irish pilgrims in or about 1474. In 1477 Bartholomew Couper, a merchant of London, stated during legal proceedings that his ship the Mary London had transported 400 Irish

pilgrims from New Ross to Santiago.

Couper declared that when returning to the port of Waterford the ship was attacked by three other vessels containing pirates “to the number of 800”, which may have been an exaggeration. The surnames of the pirate captains, Flemyng, Foweler and Herrold, show that they were Anglo-Irish or English and not typical foreign sea-raiders, but the incident does show the dangers to which pilgrims were exposed.

As is well known, the most common souvenir of St James has been the scallop shell, which is plentiful on northern Spanish beaches. These shells were worn as hat or cloak badges or as bag decorations,

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and were often buried with pilgrims when they died. The discovery of scallop shells associated with burials as a result of archaeological excavations in recent times provides evidence of this practice in Ireland.

In 1986 at St Mary's Cathedral, Tuam, County Galway, a scallop shell was found in the area of the hip of a skeleton, indicating that it may have been attached to a bag. In 1992 a pewter scallop shell with a small figure of St James was found at Ardfert Cathedral, County Kerry, while in 1996 two burials featuring scallop shells were unearthed in Mullingar, County Westmeath.

Images of St James are also found in Ireland, carved on tombs and high crosses. The tomb of the above-mentioned James Rice, located in the Cathedral of the Blessed Trinity in Waterford, features images of the twelve apostles, including James the Greater. An effigy of St James, featuring a scallop shell on his hat and other pilgrim symbols, appears on the tomb of Pierce Fitz Oge Butler, who died about 1526, at Kilcooley Abbey, County Tipperary.

Reflecting the popularity of his cult and pilgrimage, there are a number of churches of medieval foundation dedicated to St James in Ireland, including those in James's Street, Dublin (near the Guinness brewery), Dingle, County Kerry, Drogheda, County Louth, and Ballyhack, County Wexford. St James's Church in Dublin was founded between 1189 and 1192 and was attached to the Abbey of St Thomas. Around the time of the feast day of St James, 25th July,

celebrations were held in the vicinity of Dublin's St James's Church, accompanied by a great fair, which lasted for a week.

The current 19th-century church building in James's Street was formerly a Protestant Church of Ireland place of worship and stands on the site of the old medieval St James's Church. Following meticulous restoration work commissioned by Dr Pearse and Mrs Deirdre Lyons, St James's Church now houses the Pearse Lyons Distillery.

A stained-glass window portraying the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, designed by Mrs Lyons, is at the west end of the restored church. Reflecting the divisions caused by the Reformation in the sixteenth century, a separate Roman Catholic Church dedicated to St James stands nearby in James's Street and is still in use for worship.

Dublin's medieval connection with St James's pilgrimage is well established, in that sometime between 1216 and 1228, Henry de Londres, Archbishop of Dublin, founded a hospice in the city's port to accommodate pilgrims about to set sail for Santiago de Compostela.

While we do not have documentation to confirm a connection with Dublin's St James's Church, some modern publications assert that pilgrims departed for Spain from St James's Gate in Dublin as far back as 1220. Yet it can reasonably be inferred that in Dublin as in other cities, pilgrims would have started their journey to Spain from the church dedicated to St James.

“pilgrims departed for Spain from St James's Gate in Dublin as far back as 1220”

Camino Life

Reflecting revived interest in the Camino de Santiago, a Pilgrim's Passport may be obtained from the Camino Information Centre in Dublin's Catholic St James's Church in James's Street. The Pilgrim's Passport may also be ordered from the Camino Society Ireland, but many intending pilgrims still like to start their journey to Spain with a personal visit to a church dedicated to St James in their own area.

Religious belief may have waned, yet St James's pilgrimage is once again in fashion, as representatives of many nationalities, including of course the Irish, throng the routes to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain.

Some useful links:

St James-themed articles by the author,
www.ucd.academia.edu/SeanMurphy

Camino Society Ireland,
www.caminosociety.com

Camino Information Centre,
www.stjamesparish.ie/camino-information-centre

Pearse Lyons Distillery at St James,
www.pearselyonsdistillery.com

Sean J. Murphy is a history graduate of University College, Dublin and works as a genealogical and historical lecturer, author and consultant. His interest in the Camino resulted from his involvement in restoration projects in Dublin's St James's Church and Graveyard.

Four Roads to Santiago

Michael Murray

Introduction

The title of this article derives from that of a song, *Four Roads to Glenamaddy* recorded by the late Irish country and western legend, Tom McBride. The lyrics include the lines:

*Four dusty roads, winding to the town
of Glenamaddy*

*Four dusty roads, forever in the caverns
of my mind.*

From the comfort of my retirement, some 18 months from having completed the first of four very different walks to Santiago de Compostela, these words resonate with the joy of arrival and anticipated homecoming infused with the memory of steep climbs and relaxed conversations across substantial tracts of rural Galicia.

The itineraries comprised the *Camino Francés* from Sarria (118 km in April 2017), *Camino Inglés* from Ferrol (121 km in October 2017), *Camino Portugués* from Valença (124 km in March 2018) and the *Via de la Plata* from Ourense (108 km in August 2018).

This article examines some of the key attributes of each route and concludes by inviting a more critical appreciation of transformational outcomes derived from their celebrity heritage status.

The four Ways

The personality of each itinerary can be considered under four headings:

(i) *Route authenticity and way-marking*: the ubiquitous yellow arrow and scallop shell,

along with diverse artwork of directional stone-craft, provide reassurance that the Way being followed will get walkers to the end of that day's stage having regard to road safety, ease of passage and visual interest. In that regard, route authenticity should more correctly be interpreted as a zone of movement where the precise axis is subject to detailed reconfiguration.

This is most apparent along stretches of the *Camino Inglés* on which new stretches are being waymarked to make the journey shorter or to avoid steep ascents. A related consideration is the presence of route alternatives, most common on the *Via de la Plata* and *Camino Portugués*, and which require advance interpretation through the aid of pilgrim guidebooks.

On some occasions it is simply best to ignore signage in the vicinity of new roads or railways and rely on gut instinct. In short, the Camino de Santiago is constantly being remade by state and civil society.

However, the curious paradox here is that way-marking within Santiago de Compostela, with the exception of the *Camino Francés*, can be confusing or simply absent.

It is as if the city itself rather than the shrine of Saint James is being perceived by the curators of the Way as the destination.

(ii) *Iconography*: without question the most stunning ensemble of religious iconography is located along the *Camino Francés*, with its humble churches and soaring cathedrals animated by colourful retablos and images of Santiago Matamoros, Santiago Peregrino and Santiago Apóstol.

Camino Life

There is delight at being able to enter, rest and light a candle, but disappointment when the doors are locked and the pilgrim is obliged to move on. To a lesser degree the *Via de la Plata* and *Camino Portugués* command attention in this sphere, but arguably this comparison is unfair, given the antiquity and Cluniac provenance of the *Camino Francés*. In contrast, the *Camino Inglés* may be distilled at times into nothing more than a rather long walk.

(iii) *Availability of services*: the presence of bars, restaurants and accommodation is a function of the settlement pattern and the demand arising from contemporary Camino travellers. Not surprisingly, therefore, the crowded *Camino Francés* (33,381 official pilgrims in August 2018) abounds with established and new-build commercial enterprise, while those following the *Camino Portugués* (11,657 official pilgrims in August 2018), *Camino Inglés* (2,997 official pilgrims in August 2018) and *Via de la Plata* (1,568 official pilgrims in August 2018) must place greater weight on refreshment self-reliance and occasional taxi travel in order to avail themselves of hotel rather than albergue beds.

But what has become apparent on all routes is the sheer amount of formal advertising and repetitive paper graffiti that signal services' availability at some distance ahead. Unquestionably the Camino has breathed welcome new life into parts of rural Galicia, but some of its associated environmental impact would seem to have largely gone unnoticed.

(iv) *Approaches to Santiago de Compostela*: across Spain the slow transition from urban fringe to dense suburbia can frequently be a dreary experience. The routes leading into the medieval core of Santiago share some of that attribute, but they do vary, however, in regard to townscape quality.

The *Camino Inglés* takes walkers past a dusty paper-pulp plant, through an enormous industrial and business area and then finally through a series of municipal housing projects; the *Camino Portugués*, in contrast, heralds premature arrival at a new-build urbanización, following which there remains a winding and hilly countryside ramble before reaching the modern university and its environs. On the *Camino Francés*, the pinnacle overview from Mont de Gozo is marred by a brutalist sculpture and a functional pilgrim-accommodation village.

Medium distance views of the cathedral spires constantly remain elusive, with the exception of the approach along the *Via de la Plata*, which eventually leads pilgrims through the historic Arco de Mazarelos on the southern edge of the medieval city. The grand arrival in Praza do Obradoiro now sees walking pilgrims being required to enter the cathedral by a side entrance while the day-trip tourist throng patiently queues to ascend the front steps and briefly gaze at the recently restored Pórtico de Gloria.

Conclusion

A critical reading of the four Ways highlights a varied combination of reinvention, tedium and disappointment which sits alongside

“On some occasions it is simply best to ignore signage”

spectacle and simplicity in an admixture that often contrasts with the mellifluous commentaries of pilgrimage tourism and illustrated personal narrative. This begs the question: whither the four roads to Santiago?

Clearly there is no single Camino de Santiago and, not surprisingly, the multiple routes that traverse Galicia have many similarities but also many differences. These characteristics are dynamic over time. Based on the recent experience of walking these four roads to Santiago, this article concludes by examining how things are within a threefold categorisation.

First, it is clear that the *Camino Francés* displays signs of what may be labelled “post-mature distress”, as ever-increasing numbers of international visitors are attracted to this route, competing for beds and café seats! The significance of completing the last 100 km within Galicia to merit the award of a *compostela* intensifies that pressure, as it does on other routes which have not yet reached a similar tipping point. Perhaps it is appropriate that the Cathedral authorities should now review this obligation of political geography and accept that walking pilgrimages may commence many kilometres distant from Santiago de Compostela. Motive and arrival at the shrine of Saint James would still remain paramount within the context of required and proven distance along conventional itineraries.

Second, the *Camino Portugués* has become a well-recognised “mature” alternative to the *Camino Francés* and draws strength from its association with Pontevedra (the Santuario

de la Peregrina) and Padrón (the legendary landing-place of St James in Galicia). It is exceptionally well way-marked with regular indications of declining distance to Santiago de Compostela.

The fact that it may lag some 20 years behind the *Camino Francés* in terms of pressure and capacity is its singular charm, and yet it seems adequately serviced to meet current demands.

Third, it is suggested that the *Camino Inglés* and *Via de la Plata* may be regarded as “transitioning” pilgrimage routes. Both have historical roots, with the former linked to the medieval arrival ports of A Coruña and Ferrol and the latter to the Roman conquest of Iberia. They nonetheless remain quiet routes still to be discovered and, for those who walk, the common refrain is the sense of relative

isolation from other pilgrims. Public money is being expended to enhance the off-road experience in the case of the *Camino Inglés* and certainly surface improvements are required for a number of very steep paths on the *Via de la Plata*.

To conclude, it is unlikely that this categorisation will prove sequential and that the current situation on the *Camino Francés* will unfold for other routes over the longer term. However, it still remains useful to examine how “post-mature distress” may be better managed, to look at what may lie ahead for the “mature” Way, and to ask questions about what other Ways are “transitioning” towards. Perhaps it is timely to commence that conversation?

“The Camino Francés displays signs of what may be labelled “post-mature distress”

Living in Santiago was not my plan

John Rafferty

My plan was to retire to live in Seville. I had been going there during the summer for some years. I'm a church organist and I played regularly in the Church of San José in the Barrio Santa Cruz. Seville was everything I wanted and I looked forward to lazy days sipping chilled sherry under the orange trees. I had promised myself that when I had enough money to satisfy my needs, if not all of my wants, I'd change from doing the difficult executive jobs which had been my life for a long time to a quieter, more sedate existence. Remember that ambition as this story develops!

*My plan was to make the Big Change at the age of 50. The children were grown and I was secure. But there was just one last job to be done, one final challenge, and so the Big Change was delayed. One evening I went to dinner with friends. "Come and see what Jenny has been up to," said Graham, as he pointed to a map on the wall. There were pictures of Jenny walking along a line across the top of Spain. They explained over dinner that Jenny had walked the Camino to Santiago in stages. Jenny told me about meeting other pilgrims, blisters, *albergues*, the towns through which she passed and her arrival in Santiago. I'd vaguely heard of Santiago de Compostela, and I knew a little about St James, but I had never heard of the Camino.*

*That conversation sparked off hours of research on the internet and more hours of day-dreaming. But that final job was demanding and four years passed before the day-dreaming became a reality. I played for the great Feast of Mary, Mother of God in Seville on 1st January 2007 and the next day I set off to walk the *Via de la Plata* to Santiago. I looked back. "I'll return to live here," I thought, "this Camino is the bridge to that future."*



That journey on foot was about the most powerful experience of my life. I met no other pilgrims for three weeks. I spoke little Spanish and communicated with a phrase-book. My company along the way was a wave from a lone shepherd and an astonished welcome in some villages. Having spent my youth on the Scottish hills I had packed far too much – including a flask, powdered hot drinks and a short-wave radio! Inevitably, blisters appeared, despite my preparations and I started disposing of unnecessary gear. I'm aware now that I started to also deal with some of my other baggage: the resentments, the bitter memories, the aftermath of divorce, a job that went badly.

I found myself praying, really praying, for the first time in years. On a dark morning as the sun came up over the horizon on the long *meseta* I felt joy and freedom like never before. I was proving to myself I could do this. make this physical journey. I was venturing into a new land, coping with a language I didn't know. I was almost self-sufficient. In that moment I knew that if all of my anxieties came to pass – if I lost those who loved me, my home, my money, then I could pack a rucksack and survive with very little. That feeling has never left me.

My arrival in Santiago was emotional. I waited in a long line to go up the stairs at the Pilgrims' Office, full of anticipation, and although my treatment at the desk was cursory, I was overjoyed to receive my *compostela*. I went off to the Cathedral for Mass and I was deeply moved that the pilgrims had made it their own. Rucksacks

were piled against the walls. Pilgrims sat on the altar steps. The organ began and in the priests' procession I saw boots and bare legs beneath some of the albs. The *Botafumeiro* was wonderful. At that Mass I realised deep in my heart that Santiago was where I wanted to be. I believe that this set off the chain of events which followed.

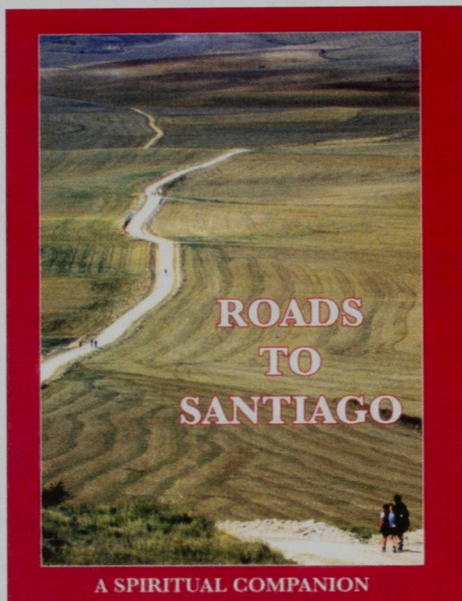
I knew I wanted to walk more and I decided on the *Camino Inglés*. Marion Marples of the CSJ supplied some walking notes and asked if I would update them. As I started work on that first guidebook I also started a blog. I had only ever written management reports in the past and this was an incredibly refreshing development. I'm secretly quite shy and so I adopted the pen name JohnnieWalker. Well, I'm Scottish and I like a dram! However, my idea was that the CSJ could produce a series of low-cost guidebooks written by pilgrims for pilgrims on a voluntary basis – anyone could be JohnnieWalker. However the name stuck.

I was playing the organ in a church in Clapham staffed by the Redemptorist Order. One of the priests there was appointed director of their publishing company. I explained to him that one of the questions in my mind during that first pilgrimage was how I could adequately explain the experience to people. I concluded that writing about the experience was only part of the answer. An explanation needed photographs of the wonderful scenery, and prose better than mine, to describe how powerful it was.

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Camino Life

He was very interested and agreed to publish a booklet in that style. It was the 25th anniversary year of the CSJ and so I asked 25 members from over these years to contribute a reflection, which I matched with a photograph and some prose, usually from scripture. The first *Spiritual Companion* for pilgrims was published and given to members as an anniversary gift.



The Spiritual Companion

Soon, more guidebook writing projects and Caminos followed and I eventually resigned from my full-time position. I started to spend more time in Santiago and became the first long-term volunteer at the Pilgrims' Office. One day, one of the staff, Danny, who has become my best friend here, explained that his family had an apartment which they didn't use. I went to see it. It had been the home of Danny's partner's grandmother who died. His partner's mother inherited it and, having totally refurbished it, she then died. Three bedrooms, two bathrooms with views of the spires of the Cathedral, it was like the *Mary Celeste*.

I started using it on my visits, but I could not deny that the arrows were all pointing in one direction, and so I rented out my property in London and some eight years ago I moved to Santiago to live for most of each year.

In total, I volunteered in the Pilgrims' Office for seven years, during which time I started the Amigos Welcome Service to improve the reception to the city for pilgrims, particularly English speakers. For the first three years this service was supported and funded by the English-speaking Pilgrim Associations, including the CSJ. The volunteering programme is now part of the mainstream activities of the Pilgrims' Office, funded by the Cathedral of Santiago. I also founded the Camino Chaplaincy, which recruited volunteer priests to provide daily Mass in English in the Cathedral of Santiago.

Such was the success of this ministry, the Cathedral now provides this service permanently through the offices of a priest appointed to the Cathedral staff. Just in the last year I've been delighted to initiate and help establish the Anglican Camino Chaplaincy. [Editor's note: There will be an article about the Anglican Chaplaincy in the next issue of The Bulletin]



John playing the organ

At one point I was playing the organ for two Masses in the morning and the two evening Masses in the Cathedral, and I realised that my life had become quite the opposite of what I had dreamed of in Seville. I retired from the Pilgrims' Office and these days I concentrate on writing and updating the CSJ guidebooks and walking more Caminos plus, in recent years, the Way of St Francis from Florence to Rome and the 88 Temple route on the Japanese Island of Shikoku. I also now play in the Jesuit Church of San Agustin in Santiago, which is very rewarding.

I love living here and, as you have read, there is plenty to do. Life isn't all writing, music-making and eating in the many excellent restaurants here. In the pilgrim season I have lots of visitors and there are always pilgrims needing help and assistance. That might be visiting an English-speaking pilgrim in hospital, helping find a stolen rucksack, taking a pilgrim to the dentist or even welcoming the four Irish pilgrims who rowed from Ireland! Each week brings something different.



The four Irish pilgrims who rowed to Galicia

“in the priests’ procession I saw boots and bare legs beneath some of the albs”

I think that Santiago is a city of two seasons. From around the middle of April the pilgrims start to trickle into town. By July and August the city is full of pilgrims. I've moved house and from time to time I can hear the pilgrims cheering in the Praza do Obradoiro. I now live on the route to Finisterre and every morning I wake to the familiar sound of walking poles click, clicking outside the window.

Pilgrims usually only stay in the city a day or two at most. When they are here they are still in the Camino routine and tend to go to bed reasonably early. However, Santiago is also a university city and as the pilgrim numbers reduce in October the students return, and I assure you they don't go to bed early! The city then takes on a different ambience. I'm lucky that I live in a very quiet area. Twice a week usually I go to the Abastos market where I have a regular butcher and fishmonger. I buy fresh vegetables from the ladies who have been up since dawn digging up produce in their fincas. My friend Maricarmen has too many hens and every week or two she hands in eggs. They have the most golden yolks I've ever seen.

It isn't all splendid though. The winter months in Santiago are cold, dark and very wet. It rains prodigiously. This is the time when I go walking usually in the South of Spain, where recently I've been exploring new routes in Andalucía. It is also the time when I benefit most from having a group of close friends. Gallegos are a diffident people and it takes them a while to trust foreigners, but when they do they are as open hearted as their fellow Celts, the Scots!

My plan was abandoned a long time ago for another Way, from which I get out much more than I put in.

The Col de Somport

Michael Walsh

They reappeared when my wife was doing some sorting out, two mimeographed leaflets, one stapled, the other not, one a guide to the Cathédrale Sainte Marie d'Oloron, the second an account of Notre Dame de la Pierre [Our Lady of the Rock] in nearby Sarrance. The flimsy yellow cathedral guide is stamped on the front cover with the unmistakable cockle shell of the Camino.

Oloron-Sainte-Marie was once two separate townships, Oloron being ruled by a vicomte, Sainte-Marie by a bishop, but they were united in the middle ages. It lies in the department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques (known up to 1969 as Basses-Pyrénées) in the foothills of the Pyrenees in the far South-West of France, in the administrative region – since 2015 – of Nouvelle-Aquitaine. The cockle shell is easily explained. From Oloron the road leads, via Sarrance, to the Col de Somport, originally a Roman road but in the early middle ages, before the countryside around Roncesvalles was purged of its bandits and made much safer, a well-used pass over the Pyrenees for French pilgrims on their way to Santiago. And it occasionally still is, as I discovered in 1996, when staying in Sarrance for a family holiday.

Or rather, something of a communal holiday: apart from my family of four, there were a couple of dozen friends and neighbours, all of us staying in a particularly beautiful former monastery set beside a bridge over the River Aspe. Since 1851 the monastery has been the residence of the Betharram Fathers, more correctly The Society of Priests of the Sacred Heart of Betharram, a small religious order founded in 1832 by the Basque priest St Michael Garicoïts.

Originally, however, the monastery had been built for the Canons of Premontré, generally known as Premonstratensians, though more recently they have been called Norbertines after their founder, the 11th-century St Norbert of Xanten. The present building dates from the early 17th century, replacing a medieval one destroyed during the French Wars of religion. The Norbertines had arrived to take charge of the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Rock.

No self-respecting route along the journey to Santiago can be without a shrine or two to lure passing pilgrims, and that of the Somport pass is no exception. The story is that a peasant of Bedous, a village near Sarrance, noticed that one of his cattle, a bull, was growing fatter than the rest of the herd. One day he followed the bull and saw it leave its pasture, swim the Aspe, then go down on its knees before a statue of the Virgin which was half-submerged in a spring. The bishop of Oloron was brought to witness the scene, and he collected the statue and set it up in his cathedral. The next day it had mysteriously disappeared, only to reappear once more in its original place. This was taken as a sign that Our Lady wanted her shrine to be in Sarrance rather than at Oloron, and Sarrance did indeed become a popular place of pilgrimage. The spring water – now dried up – was reputed to have had miraculous powers, and the stone on which the statue had rested was chipped away, though apparently without growing any smaller, to be swallowed by women seeking an easy and safe childbirth. The legend also has it that the statue was at one point thrown into the Aspe, only for it to swim back to its former location, perhaps a

folk memory of Huguenot, or even Cathar, activity in the area. A statue of the Virgin, not medieval, though its plinth is, now stands in the church at Sarrance, and is still venerated, though pilgrimages have declined.

Students of medieval religion will recognise the story as a fairly common type, but that does not mean it was not believed by the people of the valley of the Aspe. And beyond. The shrine was visited, it seems, by kings of Navarre and of Aragon in the 14th century and, on one occasion in the 15th, by Louis XI of France.

Pope Eugene IV (1431-1447) granted a special indulgence to anyone who visited the shrine on the 15th of August, the Feast of the Assumption.

Though it was a considerable trek from Oloron itself to the monastery at Sarrance, staffed at the time of our visit by a single priest, from the monastery to the top of the pass was quite an easy, and rather attractive, walk. Nothing very obvious, at least at that time, marked the boundary between France and Spain, and during a ramble through the countryside one moved constantly from one country to the other, as determined by those with the requisite map-reading skills. At the top of the pass was what I would now think of as a refugio, in which some of the more intrepid members of our party spent one night after a particularly long walk. It was, I presume, a refuge in the strict sense of the term, providing basic accommodation for anyone crossing the pass at night and caught in a blizzard.

We were in Sarrance for nearly three weeks – the monastery had been booked for a month and people came and went – but in all that time we saw only two pilgrims on their way

to Santiago de Compostela. The priest wasn't very welcoming. He clearly thought of them as scroungers and only grudgingly provided a room and access to a kitchen. He was obviously delighted when early next morning they set off along the road to the top of the pass. He was somehow obliged, or so we gathered, to give them free board and lodging.

He was even less welcoming, despite receiving payment for them from the local commune, to a bus load of Macedonians who arrived to take part in Oloron's biennial music and

dance festival. Those of us from England, on the other hand, were pleased to see these new faces. They were a distraction: there wasn't much to do in Sarrance apart from swim in the Aspe and admire the scenery from the side of the hill behind

the monastery. We enjoyed hearing, and watching, them practice. During the day, that is. Their music and general chatter was much less welcome at night. Despite the income they had brought to the monastery the priest, or so we gathered, as well as ourselves was overjoyed when they boarded their bus and departed for the festival down the road.

It was only a couple of years later that I made my own pilgrimage to Santiago, starting, because of time constraints, in Pamplona. I set off with two others, both of whom had been with me during that holiday in Sarrance. Perhaps the idea of walking the Camino had been inspired by the hapless pilgrims who had spent the night with us in the monastery. Our welcome, however, wherever we stopped for the night, always proved to be more generous than that which had been meted out by the priest on the Col de Somport.

Michael Walsh is the editor of the Bulletin

“Their music and general chatter was much less welcome at night”

It's the Badge that Counts – a Shaggy Pilgrim Story

Mike and Sue Boon

But then our Galician official looked me straight in the eye and said, “You will go back and to the Pilgrim Office tomorrow morning, won’t you?” And in the silence that followed she transmitted the most subliminal message: “Give me the right answer and you’ll deserve your shortcut to paradise”.

A couple of years ago we reported on our walk on the Japanese Kumano Kodo – a Buddhist/Shinto pilgrimage route, and the only other long-distance walk with UNESCO World Heritage status. On completing that trek, we arrived at the equivalent of Santiago’s Pilgrims’ Reception Office, at the Hongu Taisha shrine. Their friendly welcome turned to joyous Japanese excitement when we told them that we’d also walked the Camino de Santiago. This, they happily announced, entitled us to a Dual Pilgrim badge. A badge is a badge, and their enthusiasm was infectious.

However, in addition to our suitably stamped Kumano Kodo pilgrim passport, they requested evidence that we’d walked the Camino: our *credencial*, complete with *sellos*, or our *compostela*. Not surprisingly, we had neither document with us, but we reassured them that we’d walked the *Camino Francés* and the *Camino del Norte*. “Sorry, no *credencial*, no *compostela*, no badge,” we were told, as Japanese bureaucracy was delivered with the happiest of smiles.

Oh well, it’s the journey that counts. And it is. We really didn’t mind not getting the badges – the walk was reward enough.

That was 2015, and three years later we had itchy feet again. The Camino Inglés was our choice. Sue suggested taking our Kumano Kodo pilgrim passports, the reverse of which is designed for *sellos* on the road to Santiago. Brilliant idea! We’d finally get our Dual Pilgrim badges in Santiago.

**“Japanese
bureaucracy was
delivered with the
happiest of smiles”**

The walk from Ferrol to the Praza do Obradoiro was completed, and our Kumano Kodo pilgrim passports were duly stamped to show we’d done it. We headed to the Pilgrim’s Reception Office only to find a two-hour queue for *compostelas*. As third-time pilgrims we lacked the anaesthetic benefits induced by the euphoria of the first arrival in Santiago. Or to put it another way, we were too knackered to stand in line for ten minutes, let alone two hours. Oh well, it’s the journey that counts.

Then an angel approached us and, with a gentle Irish lilt, offered help. We explained the situation. She accepted our predicament as a challenge and went off on a mission to help us. Returning moments later she explained that all will be well, and the adjacent Santiago Tourist Office was the place for our badges. She invited us upstairs for a cup of tea afterwards.

We walked a few paces to the Tourist Office, free of queues – because it was closed. We guessed that they were late back from a siesta and decided to take up the offer of refreshment. Our angel turned out to be a nun, and part of the wonderful Amigos Welcome Service. A Belgian sister joined us and, whilst providing for our spiritual needs with tea and sympathy, they confessed that the Santiago posting was not the toughest of gigs. But they unintentionally made us feel that our quixotic pursuit of badges was now of great spiritual importance to the world. Later we found the Tourist Office open, and still queue-less. The gates of heaven beckoned.

They had never even heard of Dual Pilgrims. After a phone call they redirected us to the Galician Tourism Office, about fifteen minutes' weary walk away.

The journey continued, as they do, and we found ourselves queueing. We approached the counter, our difficulties tempering our steely determination. An official welcomed us. She was delighted to learn that we were Dual Pilgrims, ready to claim our official reward. She knew all about it and was just the person to help. All we needed was to produce our Japanese pilgrim passports... and our *compostelas*! We told her we'd already walked 30 km that day and had no intention of returning to the massive queue at the Pilgrims' Reception Office just to fulfil some official process dreamt up by an international pilgrim regulatory commission.

We showed her both sides of our pilgrim passports, one covered in beautiful Japanese stamps and the other with *sellos* from Ferrol to our *albergue* in Santiago. We were exhausted, this was our third Camino, and we had *compostelas* back home in England, surely she could give us our little

badges? She explained that no matter how many *compostelas* we had back in England, we needed to return to the Pilgrim Office to collect new ones for her inspection. "The authorities are very strict about this, and your papers are not in order."

Sisyphus and Kafka chinked their glasses of nectar and marvelled at how Japanese and Spanish bureaucracy had linked arms across continents. We knew we were beaten. We'd board our flights very early the next day, badgeless and muttering, "Oh well, it's the journey that counts".

But then our Galician official looked me straight in the eye and said, "You *will* go back and to the Pilgrim Office tomorrow morning, won't you?" And in the silence that followed she transmitted the most subliminal message: "Give me the right answer and you'll deserve your shortcut to paradise". "Oh of course", we replied. "First thing. All the bulls in Spain wouldn't stop us!"



The Dual Pilgrim Badges were ours. Sue stifled hysterical laughter as we stuffed them into our pockets, pulling herself together just in time to be photographed for that pantheon of pilgrims, the Dual Pilgrim website: dual-pilgrim.spiritual-pilgrimages.com

Bear Tales: Fact or Fiction?

Stacey Wittig

Asturias is home to the largest population of native brown bears in Western Europe. Although more than 250 brown bears wander the Asturian forests, I saw not a single one while walking the Camino Primitivo last year.

I did, however, see “signs” of bear on family coat of arms, in names such as Senda del Oso/Bear Path, and in the local lore. One such bear tale has become so legendary that it is carved into the stonework of a monastery in Cornellana, Asturias. The Monasterio de San Salvador lies near a strategic crossroads of the Camino Primitivo and the old Roman road called Camín Real de la Mesa.



Monastery of San Salvador, Asturias

The monastery was founded in 1024 by the widow of Ordoño el Ciego (Ordoño the Blind), Cristina Bermúdez, who lived there until her death. She was the daughter of Bermudo II, King of León, and that made her a princess. The story goes that, as a toddler, Princess Cristina wandered away from her nanny and was lost in the dark forest that surrounds the remote Asturian village of Cornellana. Since this is a bear tale and you already know that the lost infant lives, you can imagine the rest of the story.



Bear with human circa 1024

When the child is found days later, she is suckling on a mama bear which seems to have rescued the princess from certain death... or at least starvation. The story does not explain why the princess, whose father ruled from Santiago de Compostela, over 160 miles away, would be in Asturias.

The legend goes on to say that the princess was so thankful to the animal that, in later life, she built the monastery and decorated it with bear motifs. If you look closely, you can find six bears depicted in stone relief throughout the monastery and adjoining church. However, the buildings have been renovated and resurfaced throughout the centuries. There is only one bear that experts believe is an architectural element which has survived since the founding of the monastery in Cristina's time.

The bear is on top of a stone archway called the Puerta de la Osa or Gate of the She-Bear. That bear looks mean and nasty and hovers over a stiff human figure that hardly looks like a child. It certainly doesn't represent the fairy tale-like rescue of a princess by a benevolent bear.

But by 1678 (654 years later), the story seems to have changed. During renovation of the façade of the church that year, another bear image was installed in a crest mounted on the square clock tower. The shield depicts a kindly bear full of milk licking the face of a smiling, chubby little girl.



Shield with bear circa 1678

The other four stone bears, added to the monastery during an 18th-century modernisation, look like replicas of the original bear found on the Puerta de la Osa.

So, I ask the question: does the original image (nasty bear and stiff, seemingly deceased, human) depict the unlikely legend that a bear suckled Infanta Cristina? Or instead, did the legend originate from this very stone carving? In medieval times, churches and monasteries were decorated with figures of the devil or grotesque forms meant to warn viewers against corrupt living. Is the image of the devilish bear on the Puerta de la Osa just such a warning? Was this primitive message reinterpreted as religious practices changed over the centuries into a fable about the goodness of nature and the foundress of the monastery?

Or perhaps the legend is not so “unlikely” after all. I’ve always heard that within any legend there is an element of truth. So I asked an expert, Sean Farley Ph.D., wildlife physiologist at the Alaska Department of

Fish and Game, what he thought about the possibility of bears taking in human infants to nurse. I learned from a press release that Dr Farley “actually milked bears, measured milk production and milk intake by nursing bears”. He seemed to be my “go-to guy” as an expert witness in this case of legend versus truth.

According to Dr Farley, the notion of wild animals raising human young is quite old. “From Romulus and Remus to Mowgli to Tarzan there are many supposed cases in fictional literature. All manner of non-human primates, wolves, pumas, bears, dogs, and who knows what else, are identified in the popular press as representing species that have raised human children”, he told me. “Short term, say for a few days, the milk produced would provide lipids, proteins, and water needed to sustain a small child. However, if the presumed adoptive bear was not in hibernation mode and denning, it might be roaming long distances while foraging. Young humans would have a difficult time remaining with a travelling bear.”

He noted that bears are known to care for the young of other bears. “We do not understand what behavioural cues are triggered to elicit this action, but some adult black bears are known to gain cubs mysteriously while out of the den. I have seen dens with bears of several ages, including two adults and three cubs. While the cry of a black bear cub in distress is nothing like the sound made by a young child, maybe similarities in size could trigger maternal behaviour. Regardless, I think it is unlikely a bear would care for a young child,” concluded Dr. Farley.

What do you think? Does the image chronicle a true story, or did it spawn the legend?

“Unstoppable Stacey” Wittig writes about travel and the Camino de Santiago from her home near Flagstaff, Arizona. Read more at www.unstoppablestacey.com

The Chapel at Mouzos

Roy Uprichard

In September 2017, I visited friends in the O Salnés region of Galicia, after walking the Camino Portugués. Alfonso and Debee Cherene had begun working with the villagers of Mouzos, on the Spiritual Variant, opening the Chapel of San Pedro to pilgrims. On the last day of my visit we drove there.

Close now to places I remember, a glimpse of willows, the Puente Santa Maria. A year, gone in a flash, like the swallows skimming the road ahead. Soon they'll leave, towing the dreams of summer south.

Time speeding up even as it counts down. Summer shortening, gone like the bluebirds. They know what we don't, and need – the rhythm of back and forth, birthing new hope. Something novel to slow the sand-glass flow.

Again, the Celtic quandary of souls riven by a love of home and the need to wander. Trying to stretch out time by splicing in fresh footage.

Sometimes it feels as if we've been cast out into the night and asked to find our way home again, with only star fields to guide us, or whispered prayers borne on the wind, flayed from the lips of poets with anguished hearts, or the words of wild men wandering in coarse clothing, fed on honey cake and desert silence, leaving a crumb here and there.

But as we drive into Pontearnelas there's a gap in the clouds and a trick of the light. Slanted sunbeams falling on three pilgrims tip-tapping their way across a

sigh of cobblestone bridge. For a moment, everything slows and merges into one, as if this place passes through them, rather than they through it.

Is that the difference between tourist and pilgrim? Not skimming over the surface but immersed so deeply in a landscape that some of it lodges and never falls away? Is that how a name on a map becomes a place in the heart?

**“With each visit,
I discover more
treasures”**

I tell Alfonso, “This place, the whole of O Salnés, it's like a babushka doll. With each visit, I discover more treasures hidden within”.

A straggled line of people on the road ahead, called by their own primal instincts, backpacks and scallop shells flapping, venturing out east of Eden, course set for a field of stars – to catch one falling, perhaps.

As we pass, I hear John O'Donohue saying, “Listen to the new silence brought with them”. These fragile hearts made restless by the fault in our gene pool, our stars or echoes of eternity layered in. Alfonso points ahead. “Look at that”, he says.

Sudden shapes everywhere, as swallows and martins burst out, shot from God knows where, weaving, flashing past on final feeding runs before their long migration.

“We're almost there,” Alfonso says.

Just after Pontearnelas the road winds uphill to Mouzos and the Chapel of San Pedro.

A man slowly rises from the porch, leaning heavily on his stick. He blinks as I shake

his hand: Don José. Another man, younger, joins him, his son Jaime.

“Before we had a stamp,” Alfonso explains, “Don José would plant his stick in ink and stamp the pilgrims’ passports.” José nods; his stick is now decommissioned by a scallop shell stamp.

Shading the porch is a camellia tree, with its symbolism of the Divine, the promise of spring, the passing of winter. A plaque on the wall records that the chapel was built in 1978, the year of the new constitution, of new democratic beginnings – the coming of spring again to Spain. The start of the pacto del olvido – of forgetting wrongs. I tell him that camellia also celebrates faithfulness, longevity. He nods.

Over time Jaime expanded the chapel even as the village population declined, the tradition of family farming ebbing: the lot of rural communities everywhere, this loss of a special connection to the land.

“Then three years ago,” Alfonso tells me, “Don José, Jaime and others lobbied for the Camino to go through the village. The mayor later told me it was the only issue they ever sought a meeting on.”

And it brought new life. Few in Mouzos have travelled widely, but now the world walks by their front doors, along laneways, and through farmyards and small vineyards. Now there are greetings, drinks, fruit shared. And for Jaime, appreciation of the work of his hands.

I sit awhile, savouring the atmosphere, thinking of the many for whom this section has been the highlight of their Camino Portugués. Their comments in the Visitors’ Book, messages of

gratitude for “hospitality”, “love”, “peace”, and “welcomes like shining stars”.

A pine-clad ceiling. White walls. White carnations on a simple altar. And underneath, a holy nativity family. The shepherds have been and gone, the wise men yet to set out, journeying from afar. Her head tilted, Mary gazes on the child, lost in wonder. Joseph leans on his staff, perhaps wondering at hope arriving as a vulnerable babe, entrusted to the poor and obscure, the least the first to hear – creating a whole new set of haves and have-nots. Or perhaps he’s thinking, “What the heck do I do now?”

I ask the same question.

Outside, laughter breaks the spell. More pilgrims pass by, written into the Camino’s story, even as it

rewrites ours, telling us who we still could be. They walk on to Santiago, but never really arrive. None of us does.

* * *

I don’t want to go, but I have a flight late afternoon.

One more stop on the way. With Manolo.

“He has some wine to give us,” Alfonso says.

I reach out to shake Manolo’s red-stained hand.

“Take as much as you want. I have to make a fresh batch.”

We sample it. We sample again – just to make sure.

“Smooth, full-bodied,” I say.

“Yes, but not as strong as Albariño. You should stop driving, put your feet up and enjoy a bottle.”

“But if I do that I may miss my flight.”

He smiles and says, “Then you must come back”.

“now the world walks by their front doors”

Refugio Gaucelmo, one Musical Monday in July 2018

Paul Murray

As a fluent Spanish speaker, member of the Rabanal Committee, annual helper at the March working party, and five times a volunteer *hospitalero*, I love returning to the village to interact with both the locals and our pilgrims.

The switch from working behind the scenes in advance of our 1st April opening to the daily tasks of cleaning Gaucelmo and caring for our pilgrims is one that is certainly more demanding, in that the stint is over twice as long with the daily commitment from 6.00 in the morning to 10.30 at night. However, the rewards, so manifest particularly at tea-time in the garden, the salón, or on the patio, the farewell hugs after breakfast, and the incredible messages of support written in our Visitors' Book, make our duties always so memorable.

This summer, I had the immense privilege of volunteering with Gilbert from Belgium and Jenny from Australia. It was Jenny's third time, but Gilbert's 14th in succession. What a record of dedication! It was my fourth time volunteering with my good friend. Our trio's teamwork and trust in each other to deal with a whole myriad of tasks and situations were, for me, the most satisfying aspect of our time together this summer.

The physical manifestation of this was in no greater evidence than when the faulty smoke alarm on the top landing went off

on two successive nights just as everyone was settling down to sleep. My height made me the obvious choice for temporarily disconnecting it as Gilbert and Jenny ably supported the ladder and my wobbly lower limbs!

The daily arrival of the *panadero* (baker's man) before 9.00, heralded, as in all Spanish villages, by his van tooting its horn, is joined every Monday in Rabanal by that of Pedro, the man who delivers hygiene products from the back of his white van. Anything he does not have he always brings later in the day and

he never fails to add a free gift to the order, usually in the form of some complimentary paper napkins.

On this particular Monday, we were honoured with the presence of Luis Gutiérrez Perrino, the current chair of the National Federation of the Friends of the Camino, along with his wife and sister-in-law. I had met them earlier that morning at El Pilar, where I had gone to invite a 75-year-old French female pilgrim, who had been walking from Le Puy, to afternoon tea. The party popped in to Gaucelmo to apologise for having to miss our invitation to tea but were delighted to be offered a quick tour.

I was very impressed with Luis's down-to-earth manner and wished him well in his decision to stand for re-election to the chair next year.

“Farewell hugs after breakfast”

It was a very special group of pilgrims who registered later that Monday morning when the magical moment came to open the front door. We restrict the entry of groups to a maximum of seven members, as they tend not to integrate with other pilgrims and often have their own agenda. Most of those who stayed were not part of a homogenous group but that was to change, as you will read later.

A love of music and singing was one of the many things that united them. A Dutch pilgrim played some superb classical Spanish tunes on Gaucelmo's resident guitar on the patio after tea. This was seamlessly followed in the quiet hour from 6.00 before our pilgrims went to 7.00 *visperas* (vespers) by a small group of us singing an impromptu version of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*, thanks to the lyrics from their many iPhones. These were truly special moments of shared experiences. There was one final musical interlude after 9.30 *completas* (compline) in Santa María when we gathered at 10.00 in the *salón*, half an hour before lights out. Sladjan from Croatia on the guitar and Beatrice from Italy on her own ukulele treated us to some wonderful singing and I brought up the rear with an Emmy-Lou Harris song I have learnt by listening to a version by the Irish folk singer, Cara Dillon, called *Bright Morning Star*.

Most of the pilgrims had left the following morning, after their hearty bread and jam breakfast in our kitchen, by the time Jenny told Gilbert and me that Sarah from England had somewhere misplaced the stone which she was carrying from her home in memory

of her father who had passed away in May. Like thousands of others before her, her intention was to place it at the foot of the *Cruz de Ferro* at the top of the mountain that morning. Her distress and the empathy from her friends were tangible.

Jenny, in the manner I had come to expect from her, offered her a packet of wild flower seeds. My contribution added to the weight of her rucksack in the form of a small bottle of holy water from Iniskeel Island, off the coast of Donegal in Ireland. It was given to all participants in a pilgrimage there a few weeks before.

“We restrict the entry of groups to a maximum of seven members”

It was with a heavy heart that we bade farewell to this little cluster of pilgrims.

A couple of weeks after the three of us went our separate ways to return to our own countries, there was a comment on the Gaucelmo Facebook page in response to the photograph of our guitar-playing Dutch pilgrim on the patio. It read “This was one of the most amazing nights of my trip. I remember so much about that powerful night and morning. With the beautiful music and friendship with the *peregrinos* and the *hospitaleros*...Most of all I remember Jenny and the men [hospitaleros] saying we really needed to finish as a group in Santiago.

At that point we laughed as we were all on different schedules. Guess what... we did finish in Santiago together, Italy, Spain, Sweden, England and America. It was beautiful. We even met up with Beatrice from Italy in the church service...remember her beautiful singing voice and her hurt foot? Well she made it too.”

Praying the Camino

Tim Stapenhurst

It all started as a fund-raising joke...

Our church was built for Irish migrants who had arrived to work at the mills on the River Don in Aberdeen in the 1840s. Some 170 years later we still welcome migrants, though now mainly from Poland, Africa and India. We needed to raise nearly £300,000 to pay for the recent renovations: new roof, new floor, new windows, new heating system, dealing with wet rot and dry rot – the list went on and on. At a fund-raising meeting someone suggested (jokingly I hope!) that “Tim could walk a sponsored Camino”.



Oviedo Cathedral

I was amused when someone at the meeting told me about the fund-raising idea, but there was no way that I was going to cheapen the Camino and all that it means to me – and to other pilgrims – by walking for money: the Camino is a pilgrimage, not a money-making event!

However, a seed was planted: whilst I would not take people’s money, could I take their prayers? After mulling the idea over for a few weeks, I made plans...

My next Camino was to be the Primitivo, 323 km from Oviedo to Santiago, and I had set the date. I had a suitable small notebook, and invited friends and people at church to write either their prayers or just the prayer intention (“that my son will get off drugs”, “that Louise will pass her exams”, or “for the intentions of...”) in it.

People could put their name to the prayer or not, as they wished: most did, but one or two did not. I emailed friends who lived too far away to write in the book, inviting them to send me their prayers or requests and wrote them in the book myself.

As the pages became filled with prayers I started praying through each of them every day. In that sense my Camino had started many weeks before I had even set foot in Spain. Whilst at home it was easy enough to find time every day to pray through the sixty or so prayers, on the Camino it was to prove a little more difficult...

The main purpose of walking a Camino is, for me at least, an opportunity to be available to God, to travel the interior Camino, to grow and develop spiritually. For pilgrims this usually includes being open and available to other pilgrims, as well as seeking time for prayer and reflection. So often I have heard what God has wanted to say to me through the words and actions of other pilgrims and similarly, as I sometimes discover, that I have been a messenger for them. So, shy and introvert as I am, I always value opportunities to walk, share a *café con leche* or a meal with my fellow pilgrims.



Path near Alto de la Marta

When walking Caminos I have always treasured the quiet and stillness of the early morning. Not only is this the time when I am most likely to be walking alone and so have the privacy to pray out loud, it is also

a wonderful time to pray and reflect. I made full use of it, gradually praying my way through the prayers. When I stopped for a breakfast – *café con leche*, *tortilla* or *tostada* – (of which there were often two stops during the morning!), or lunch, I would sit munching, sipping and praying. Should I be lucky enough to find an open church I would sit inside until I felt the urge to walk on.

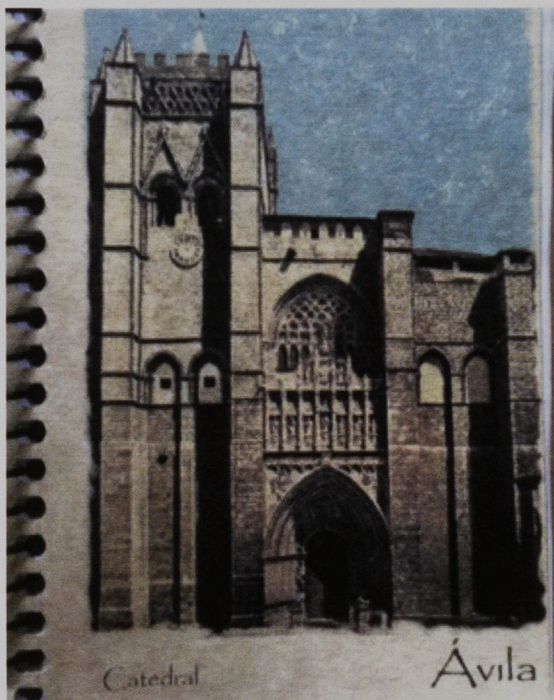
It is not possible to focus on prayer all the time: walking through villages or towns, looking for the route, and a wandering mind are just some of the many distractions. When I met other pilgrims I would often put the book away and we would walk together. But I also had another task.

I kept a daily diary on Facebook. Every day I looked for suitable photos and an internet connection so that people back at home could share the Camino experience with me. But the most difficult days were the wet days. When the rain was too persistent or the mud too slippery, I would have to stow the book deep in a dry bag in my mochila until later.

Often, I would finish the prayers before lunch, but some days I arrived at the albergue without having even started them and would seek out time alone, going for a walk, finding an open church if I could and lighting a candle for those for whom I prayed, or, when all else failed, lying on my bunk. The bunk option was risky... more than once I woke up to find the book open on my chest and would start praying again until I fell asleep. Through it all, whatever happened, whatever the weather, whether walking alone or with fellow pilgrims, every day I prayed through all the prayers.

Camino Life

I became paranoid about losing them. I had made promises to so many people. What if I lost the book? How could I tell people that I had lost their precious prayers? There were only a few occasions when I could not immediately find it – I had maybe been interrupted and put the book in a trouser pocket, or, if the weather were bad, in a dry bag in my rucksack. When I realised that the book was not in its usual pocket I would frantically search, heart thumping faster than is good for my age, until with much relief I found it.



Prayer book

After two weeks of walking – and many more weeks of praying through the book – the day came when I arrived in Santiago. My first stop, after dropping off my rucksack, was the cathedral and for one long, leisurely final session of prayer. The next day I went

to the English 10 am Mass in the chapel of our Lady of Solitude in the Cathedral. After several months of caring for the book the time had come to hand it over. My job done, it would be a huge relief to hand over these precious prayers safely and leave them in the chapel, where they would stay beside the altar until the end of the walking season in November. As I took the prayer book out of my shirt breast pocket where I had safely kept them for so long for the last time, the tears welled up and flowed.

I had not realised how much I had grown to love the prayers and how much I cared for the people for whom I had prayed. I had not realised how the prayers had become a part of my daily life and how, day by day, little by little, they had changed me. It was an unexpectedly painful wrench to let them go. But like all Caminos this one had come to an end and it was time to close the chapter.

Well... not quite. I felt there was one thing more I wanted to do. The people that I had prayed for had come with me on this Camino – in spirit if not in flesh. Many of them had been praying for me as I had been praying for them, and I wanted a way for them to remember that someone cared enough about them to pray for them.

When I got home I organised a Camino evening to share the Camino, the walking, the life of a pilgrim, the hardships and joys and the prayer. I gave everyone for whom I had prayed a small metal camino shell. I hoped that it will be a reminder to them of their pilgrimage alongside me.

Yes, it is funny how it all started as a fund-raising joke... and ended as a spirit-changing Camino.

The Road to Emmaus: pilgrimage as a way of life

Helen Willson

*Jim Forest Orbis Books (NY), 2007
978-1-57075-731-0, \$16.00*

Jim Forest is an American Christian (now a member of the Orthodox church) raised in a Communist family during the McCarthy era, a radical writer and peace activist. He is committed to traditional forms of worship and deeply regrets the loss of the beauty and intensity of the liturgy, post Vatican II. To quote from his online biography (<https://incommunion.org/2004/10/14/getting-from-there-to-here/>) he speaks of the importance of “bridges linking body and soul”.

It is the linking of body and soul that is firmly at the centre of this book – how pilgrimage, whether a journey to a specific pilgrimage place or the personal journeys that we all undertake, whatever our circumstances – touches and involves us and gives us the chance to find something beyond ourselves. For Forest, as a seeker and a committed Christian, the epiphany of the “beyond” is explicitly God; for others it may be a revelation of their own spiritual beliefs or hopes. His book offers a reflection on pilgrimage and life, in all their aspects. Forest analyses various topics including illness, relics, walking, maps, praying and saints. The quotations which start each chapter are worth lingering over – I particularly liked “We’re all pilgrims on the same journey, but some pilgrims have better road maps”.

In this context, Forest considers that too much concentration on the physical “place” of pilgrimage may be counterproductive and asserts that a mindful way of living can – any day, anywhere – provide that gateway to

the something beyond. His chapters on “thin places” and “dark places” are intriguing and many readers may have experienced that sense of “the other” – a “beyond oneself” – in liminal spaces. He bases this book on his extensive travels and contact with many people, some of whom were or are well-known and respected religious colleagues, philosophers and workers. He was much inspired by Dorothy Day, the founder of the New York Catholic Worker community and her presence and influence permeate the book – perhaps excessively? He goes a bit “off piste” at times, but nevertheless the richness of his knowledge and experiences make for fascinating reading.

Given that this is explicitly Christian narrative, I should not have been surprised by the author’s tacit assumption that every reader is able to share his belief. But even if one is coming to this work as a nonbeliever, Forest’s wisdom and humanity invite one to enter fully into whatever of the spiritual life one is able to embrace, and the book offers so much in terms of history and iconography, and is so well written, that one is drawn into his narrative and moved to question one’s own ethical and moral stance.

He defines the disciples’ walk to Emmaus as the first Christian pilgrimage. Every pilgrimage therefore, contains the hope of an encounter with Christ through strangers and chance meetings.

The book is enhanced by an extensive section of notes and references and some black and white photograph illustrations.

The subtitle “pilgrimage as a way of life” sums up the aim and achievement of this book. It will aid the pilgrim to consider, and be mindful of, the significance of her or his journey, whatever or to wherever it may be.

Book Reviews

Long Rider to Rome: 1400 miles by Pilgrim Horse from Canterbury

Marion Marples

*Mefo Phillips, 2018, 303pp, Signal Books,
9781909930674*

In 2002 Mefo Phillips and her sister Susie Gray rode their striking spotted Appaloosa horses to Santiago. Mefo's jaunty account *Horseshoes and Holy Water: on the hoof from Canterbury to Santiago de Compostela* was published in 2005. In 2006, although she claims to be an unbelieving pilgrim, Mefo felt called to follow the road to Rome, this time in the company of just her long-suffering husband Peter, who drives their ancient horsebox "Bessie". Throughout, Peter is striving to find a good round of golf as well as locating suitable overnight spots to set up camp and finding suitable grazing for *Leo*, Mefo's other love and equine pilgrim companion.

Every day brings highs and lows, with good rides in beautiful scenery followed by genuinely scary experiences on busy roads, narrow bridges and with unfriendly farmers. But being on a pilgrimage, Mefo learns that there will always be a surprise turn of events to redeem even the worst situation. Much to her surprise she finds that St James frequently appears to help in her hour of need. Sometimes Susie's voice spurs her on.

She creates her own routes based on the Association Via Francigena's *Topo Guide* but always varied by the need for horse-friendly routes and essential grazing. In particular, she works out an alternative route from France to Italy via the Mont Cenis pass, to avoid Switzerland. "Bessie" breaks

down and needs repair but ex-pat locals help and provide advice. When she has to cover one dangerous stretch in the horsebox she repeats the missing section by bike for satisfaction.

The journey to Rome took 109 days in total, so the account does necessarily become a little repetitive. Mefo names most of the places she passes through, in case anyone else wants to repeat the experience. But she is a feisty companion and her lively prose rolls along.

Along with her constant conversation with the unflappable Leo, Mefo reflects on her pilgrim experience as well as thinking about her writer mother, who had recently died after living with Alzheimer's disease. When she is home she finds a wartime letter from her mother to her father, still abroad with the army, longing to ride across Europe. In her pilgrimage, Mefo had fulfilled her mother's dream.

A Musical Pilgrimage

John Read

It was back in 2000 that I started my pilgrimage with my friend Tim. I set off from Caen on my trusty Dawes Galaxy bike and pedalled down to Poitiers where we met up. We eventually arrived at Saintes. This took two weeks, all the time Tim could afford to be away from his business. The next year we cycled from Perigeux to Roncesvalles and then, in 2002, left from Biarritz and finally arrived at Santiago.

As many of you who are reading this will, I am sure, agree, the pilgrimage is a life-changing experience. On the way we met the social anthropologist Dr Nancy Frey who, with her husband José, runs a pilgrim holiday firm. (Those of you who were at the 2017 AGM may recall the fascinating talk Nancy gave about the changes in pilgrimage experience brought about by the use of iPhones.)

Nancy warned me that the going back was in spiritual terms more difficult than the outward journey. And so it proved to be. I yearned for the simplicity of life on the Camino, the beautiful, if occasionally austere, scenery, the companionship and the feeling of physical fitness which cycling 50 or so miles a day brings. I was invited by William Griffiths and Marion Marples to talk to prospective pilgrims and I gave several more talks to churches and schools. I enjoyed these chances to share my experiences, but felt the need to write a piece of music which would convey something of the emotional and spiritual journey Tim and I had taken.

My years as a director of music at my local church pointed me in the direction of writing a piece for choir and organ, whose

words, melodies and harmonies would bring together a number of elements – the physical and spiritual journeys with their joys and hardships, the landscape, the multinational nature of the pilgrims, the antiquity of the pilgrimage, through the use of Latin, and above all the companionship, the caring for others and being cared for by strangers.

My search for the words took a long time. I consulted William Griffiths and Mary Remnant and was extremely grateful for their advice. I spent many hours trawling through poetry before I eventually fell back on the Psalms in the translation by Coverdale, with its grandeur and concision, which I had known from my church work. To this I added part of the prologue from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, the well-known Dum Pater familias, a 16th-century French folksong and the Catholic hymn Ubi caritas which, in its Taizé version, I had heard at the Pilgrim Mass in the cathedral in Santiago and to which I added the plainsong version as a solo. I also used the psalm tone Tonus peregrinus which means the wandering or pilgrim tone, which in the Anglican church we often sing to the words of the Nunc dimittis ("Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace") with which I was to end the cantata.

Armed with the words, I then had to add the music. To do this, I took myself off to the Ardèche in France for ten weeks in 2008 so that I could concentrate on the task, improve my French and exercise to improve the mobility of a foot whose heel I had broken the year before. The musical task was not an easy one. I had little formal training in musical composition and had to get to grips with the Sibelius score-writing software which, to say the least, I found unsympathetic. Each day I sat down at the keyboards to write the music, and each evening I went to the local

Members Pages

McDonald's to use their free wi-fi to send the day's work to my long-suffering wife Jane, who stored it securely.

Anyone who has written music knows that the process doesn't stop there. The music and words have to be carefully edited and the score-markings, showing tempo and volume, have to be added so that the choir, soloists and accompanists – by this time these included a four-part choir, an organist, a flautist and a percussionist, together with soprano and baritone soloists – will know how the piece should be interpreted.

I decided that each movement of the cantata should be accompanied by an appropriate photograph of the relevant stage of the journey, with an explanatory narration before each movement. This all had to be prepared and the score printed. Then I rehearsed my own choir and we gave the first performance in St Mary's church, Fairford. This went well, and there followed performances with Frensham Heights School, Joe Skivington's choir in Worcester Cathedral, Nick Hart's Canoryon Lowen in St Neot and two performances by the CSJ Choir at the London AGM and St James's in Reading. Some of you reading this article will have taken part in those last two performances, which I personally found moving.

In view of the popularity of the work I decided it might be worthwhile to record a DVD which could be made available to CSJ members. This proved more difficult than I had expected. My own church was unavailable and the chamber choir I sang with had too crowded a schedule to fit in work on the piece. I was therefore very fortunate in being able to engage the excellent Gloucester Chamber- Cantores, soloists Sophie Ayre and David Barrington,

organist John Wright, flautist Simon Mumford, Charles Giddings on percussion and my fellow pilgrim Tim Mowat as narrator. All Hallows, South Cerney was made available by kind permission of the Rev. Jennifer McKenzie.

On a cold October day in 2017 we all assembled at All Hallows and I worked through my checklist until I came to the item "Turn on the organ". I opened the organ case and found to my surprise it was already on. With a sinking feeling I tried a few stops and found that three notes sounded without me touching any of the keys. We came very close to cancelling the recording. I phoned every organ tuner I knew in Gloucestershire but no one was available to rescue us. In the end it was John Wright, our organist, who climbed on the top of the organ and pulled out the three offending pipes which, fortunately, were not used in the recording.

Under John Holloway's direction, Cantores, the soloists and accompanists gave the sensitive and dramatic interpretation I was looking for, and all seemed satisfactory. It was only when we started recording the quiet solos in the first movement that I noticed the ticking of the church clock! This proved something of a headache for our recording engineer Steve Swinden, but eventually the tick was removed and after three edits we had a recording with which we were all satisfied. I then worked with Dylan Houghton of DreamTeamTV to add the photographs and Mike Henley to design the accompanying booklet.

The DVD is now available to CSJ members at the cost price of £3.00 plus postage and packaging. I am hoping it will be available at our AGM next year, but if you would like a copy before then please email me at **robertjohnread@me.com**

General Information

Freddy Bowen, General Manager

This time of year often lends itself to reflection. Evaluating the last 12 months and what we have achieved in that time. For the CSJ, we have another year of providing advice, support and care to camino pilgrims under our belt. Another set of updated and refreshed guide books, another programme of events, another season at Rabanal and Miraz, a renovated office and even a new company brand.

We have reflected with our members, too, at both our Returned Pilgrims Day, this year held at St James Garlickhythe; as well as our Returned Hospitaleros Day, where we garnered feedback from this year's wardens to inform our training for next year. We also thanked them for their all hard work and commitment with a 3-course lunch.

There was also opportunity to think about the evolving impact of the camino at our annual Constance Storrs lecture, this year held at Southwark Cathedral. Professor Giana Eckhardt and Dr Katharina Husemann gave us fascinating insight into their findings on the different types of "deceleration" on the camino and the correlation with its renewed popularity in recent times.

Annual General Meeting

2018 has been a positive and progressive year for the CSJ, and we are determined to make 2019 even more so. Starting with our Annual General Meeting on Saturday 26th January. The AGM is a fantastic way of meeting like-minded people, many of whom have dedicated their whole lives to the camino in one form or another. All day there are stalls, refreshments and people to talk to.

This year, new members are invited to join the trustees first thing, for a more personal welcome to the Confraternity. We would love to meet you and hear from you about what we can do to make sure you get the most out of your membership with us.

The trustees will speak about the various aspects of activity the CSJ has undertaken this year with reports on our communications, pilgrim statistics and the accounts amongst many others.

We have the pleasure this year of welcoming Professor George Greenia as our keynote speaker. Professor Greenia is the founder of the William and Mary Institute for Pilgrimage Studies in Williamsburg, Virginia and is a world authority on the Camino de Santiago. In 2007, he was both recognised as the Distinguished Editor of the year by the Council of Editors of Learned Journals, was knighted by order of the king of Spain and awarded the Cross of the Order of Isabel the Catholic. He will be giving us a talk entitled "Literacy, Sanctity and Stumbling to Santiago", about the history of written culture among world pilgrims, in particular on the Camino de Santiago.

We will also be hearing from Mercedes Carballo, representing the tourist board of A Coruña, who will be talking to us about the historical significance of the town, the Camino Inglés and the 100km rule. There will also be a screening of the cantata composed by one of our trustees, John Read, entitled "Pilgrimage: Way of St James to Compostela"; as well as our party, where hot food will be available.

You will find enclosed your AGM papers, with a detailed breakdown of what you can expect on the day. We hope to see as many of you there as possible!

Practical Pilgrim Days

Looking even further into 2019, we have our dates for our Practical Pilgrim Days:

London – Christ Church, Blackfriars Road – Saturday 16th February

Manchester – Friends Meeting House, Mount Street – Saturday 2nd March

Edinburgh – location tbc – Saturday 30th March

If you are interested in hosting a Practical Pilgrim Day in your local area, please get in touch with the office.

But before that, we hope you enjoy the holidays with your friends or families. Why not consider doing some of your Christmas shopping in our online shop? Watch out for the next enews with details of some of our special offers. Get your orders in quick though – the office will be closing at 5pm on Thursday 20th December until Thursday 3rd January. From all the trustees, staff and volunteers in the CSJ office, we wish you a very happy festive season.

Report from Albergue San Martín in Miraz

Priscilla White

Miraz enjoyed a long, hot, dry summer followed by some spectacular electrical storms as autumn approached, one of them being Hurricane Leslie. Despite the large numbers of pilgrims who stayed throughout July and August, the well did not let us down and we were never without water. Our volunteers worked incredibly hard to care for the pilgrims, who often arrived tired and thirsty after walking from Villalba.

Their commitment and dedication to the CSJ ethos of traditional hospitality makes staying at San Martín such a pleasure, and this is reflected in all the favourable comments we receive in the Visitors' Book. It is extremely hard work, and exhaustion has usually set in by the end of the fortnight, but we are very fortunate to have volunteers who return year after year. A huge thank you to them all!



Hurricane Leslie

The *albergue* stood up well to all the many feet that tramped through the building night after night. They much appreciated the well-appointed kitchen which gave them an opportunity to cook for themselves, as well as the chance to relax in the garden enjoying the evening sunshine.

There were 2,440 pilgrims who stayed with us during the season, from 64 countries. The lure of the Camino continues to attract pilgrims from all over the world, seeking answers to their busy lives as they walk along the tracks towards Santiago.

However, this is quite a steep drop in numbers from 2017, although the exact reason is not easy to pinpoint. There are now six other *albergues* within 15 km of San Martín and this may make an impact on numbers.

There is also a variant route by the church of San Alberto, just along the road from Baamonde, that sends pilgrims directly to Sobrado dos Monxes, some 35 km away.

This seems to be causing some confusion to pilgrims who think they are travelling towards Miraz but find themselves on a different route. On the other hand, it may just be that with the increase in accommodation all along the route, pilgrims have more choice of accommodation and are therefore spread more thinly amongst the *albergues*.

One pilgrim thought a scooter would make his journey easier, although the rough track between Miraz and Sobrado dos Monxes must have proved a bit of a challenge.

Refuge Reports



Another way to travel

Pilar continued throughout the summer to contribute to the volunteers' meals with salads and vegetables from her *huerta* (kitchen garden) in exchange for some of our stale bread.

She thoroughly enjoyed the experience of walking to Santiago with her son Maxi. On one occasion, one of our *hospitaleros* swirled her round the dance floor at a *fiesta* in Miraz, much to everyone's delight!



Serenading with ukulele

One evening saw the arrival of a family of nine from France which included six children, two parents and an uncle. They had decided to walk the *Camino del Norte* as the *Camino Francés* has become so overcrowded.

On another occasion, a pilgrim brought along his ukulele and serenaded his companions on the terrace. The sense of community and friendship still prevails if there is the opportunity to sing and eat together.

The church remains closed for regular services for the time being, but we were fortunate to have several pilgrim-priests staying overnight who agreed to say Mass for the pilgrims in the garden.

There were times when Mass was said in the church, but there was no prior notice, so pilgrims usually missed the opportunity to join in.

We are getting an increasing number of "weekend" pilgrims who arrive by coach and wish to have their passports stamped at San Martín. We now have a separate stamp to differentiate them from the walkers or cyclists who spend the night with us.

After the wet spring, the garden thrived throughout the summer and volunteers were kept busy mowing the grass and trimming the hedge. Despite the lack of subsoil, even the roses bloomed along the wall at the bottom of the garden.

The *albergue* is now closed for the winter that we hope it will not be as brutal as last year, when it rained constantly for four months.

Heartfelt thanks go to all our volunteers, without whom we would not be able to keep San Martín open to welcome pilgrims from all over the world. We look forward to seeing you all on another occasion!

Report from Albergue Gaucelmo in Rabanal

Julie Davies

Hospitaleros: Gilbert Cabergs (BEL) Jenny Heesh (AUS) Paul Murray (UK) Mary McGrath (UK) Mathieu Notelaets (BEL) John Kiernan (UK) Betty Tuite (IRL) Ursula McSweeney (IRL) Leo Mullen (IRL) Christine Fawcett (UK) Alison Ronan (UK) Peter Garlick (UK) Dick Millard (UK) Nancy Curren (USA) Betty Macdougall (UK) Andrew Horsey (UK) Ray Woolrich (UK) Fiona Busbridge (UK)

I write this Report nearly at the end of Gaucelmo's 2018 season. One of the biggest surprises this year has been the erratic fluctuation in pilgrim numbers during the middle months of the season. The steep drop continued into August, a decline that was reflected throughout Rabanal del Camino with local businesses very concerned. Gossip from the bread man indicated numbers were low in Albergues all the way back to León. With only a week left until the end of the season it will be interesting to see how much of a disparity exists compared to other years. Will it become a trend or merely a blip? Thankfully September saw a small upward surge with only 50 down on 2017.

Italy was the most popular country with 457 pilgrims followed by USA with 443. Gaucelmo received our first pilgrim from India - making a total of 68 different countries. (Thank you, David Wesson, for statistics.)

It is interesting the number of visitors who come to Gaucelmo, either to stay as pilgrims, to enjoy a bit of nostalgia, or purely out of curiosity. Hospitaleros welcomed José from Spain on his 38th Camino Francés; Stuart from the UK who had been a hospitalero 20 years ago; Margaret and Don from County Dublin first time back after 27 years (in a camper van this time); and Joanne King who proof-reads the CSJ Bulletin (from Vancouver). Joanne was given a conducted tour so she can picture Gaucelmo when she proof-reads articles about the Refugio.

The excellent, well-stocked kitchen at Gaucelmo has been much used by pilgrims: international meals of amazing quality and creativity have been the norm. Groups of pilgrims become exquisite chefs, concocting feasts from ingredients gleaned from the local shop. The kitchen heaves and bubbles with steam and the aroma from our herbs. Hospitaleros are often invited - some accept whilst others decline - personal choice. The venue for eating can be anywhere. The huerta when the weather is glorious or in the salon with the wood-burning stove when it's chilly.

It is amazing what some pilgrims are prepared to carry. A pilgrim couple from Belfast were walking with a "drone" which made one backpack very heavy because of the weight of the batteries. There were some beautiful aerial shots of Gaucelmo and the surrounding countryside which will be uploaded to Facebook, accompanied by music, when they return home (to view: "the hound of Ulster")

Saint James' Day was a celebratory one with lots of visitors in the village. The monks had organised two tables laden with delicious food, wine and soft drinks in the square outside the Monastery and Refugio Gaucelmo. The experience for pilgrims was inclusive and significant and will undoubtedly become a positive memory in their caminos.

In September a catastrophic accident occurred in the village. Norberto's house exploded, probably gas-related. He was rescued from the building by Abel, one of Gaucelmo's pilgrims from Italy. Norberto had bad burns to his face, arms and chest and was airlifted to León/Madrid hospital. Very sadly, he passed away several weeks later. Gaucelmo extended their condolences to his family and friends.

The end of the season is always a time for saying "thank you". Gaucelmo is supported by so many kind and generous people - from our very good neighbours the monks, to the villagers of Rabanal, to Goyo who cuts our grass, and to our very wonderful, dedicated and unique hospitaleros. Thank you, we wouldn't and couldn't exist without you.

Additions to the CSJ Library, October 2018

Margaret Simonot, Librarian

This list only includes books, not the CSJ Bulletin articles, (PER 1) nor pamphlets (PAM); these can be found by author in the online catalogue.

Asociación Galega Amigos do Camno de Santiago. **Ao aire do Camino hacia Compostela**. 2008 (CD under AVM D 65)

Chassain, Jean-Charles and Chassain, Monique. **Itinéraire du pèlerin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle; Voie historique de Vézelay par Bourges et par Nevers**. L'Association des Amis de Saint-Jacques de la Voie de Vézelay, 2005

Davis, Kat. **Camino Portugués; from Lisbon and Porto to Santiago - Central, Coastal and Spiritual Caminos**. Cicerone, 2018

Day, Alan. **Coffee in Santiago**. Oxford, 2018

Deaney, Seán. **On Hannibal's Way; the Camino mapping project**. 2018

Deaney, Seán. **Mapping the way of St. Ignatius with Homer (Simpson)**. 2018

Deaney, Seán. **Cape to Cape: a long haul pilgrimage. Singapore to Cape Finisterre by bicycle**. 2018. (All three generous gifts from the author - for REFERENCE only)

Gómez, Emilio Pedro. **Pasos; diario lírico del Camino de Santiago**. Huerga & Fierro editores, 2013

Hakluyt Society. **The travels of Leo Rozmital through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy 1465 - 1467**. Letts, Malcolm, ed. and translator. The University Press, Cambridge, 1957

Henery Ian. **Scout on a bike; the miracle of Saint James**. Adrian Baggett of Mapseekers Publishers, 2016

Kyoryokukai, Henromichi Hozon and Mizayaki, Tateki. **Shikoku Japan 88 Route Guide**. Buyodo Co Ltd, 2017

Mairis, Lewis Roxby. **English Guide to the Camino del Sureste**. Mairis, L.R., 2016

McCarthy, M.J. **Sarria to Santiago; guide to walking the last 100 km of the Camino Francés**. Mc Carthy MJ. 2018

McCarthy, M.J. **Leon to Santiago; guide to walking the last 300 km of the Camino Frances**. McCarthy, MJ, 2018

Meyer, John. **Shadows, shells and Spain**. Summer Nomad Publications, Toronto, 2017

Nicholson, Geoff. **The lost art of walking**. Harbour, Chelmsford, 2010

Phillips, Mefo. **Long ride to Rome; 1400 miles by pilgrim horse from Canterbury**. Signal, Oxford, 2018. (CPR)

Prince, Victor. **The Camino Way; lessons in leadership from a walk across Spain**. Amacom, New York, 2017

Simsion G. and Buist A. **Two steps forward**. Harper Collins, New York, 2018

Stmichaelsway.net. **On St Michael's Way/ War Fordh Sen Mighal**. Cornwall 2016

Warren, Thorn William. **St Cross Hospital Near Winchester, its history and buildings**. Warren and Son, Winchester, 1899



CAMINO PILGRIM™

THE CONFRATERNITY OF ST. JAMES

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Members wishing to borrow slides should make their selections from the catalogue four weeks in advance.

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CAMINO PILGRIM

THE CONFRATERNITY OF ST. JAMES

Please bring this booklet with you

Notice of the 19th Annual General Meeting of the
Confraternity of Saint James (the Company) to be held on

Saturday 26 January 2019

St Alban's Centre, Baldwins Gardens, London EC1N 7AB at **11:30**

Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Minutes of the 18th Annual General Meeting (27/01/18)**
4. **Chairman's Report for 2018**
5. **Annual Report & Accounts 2017-2018**
6. **Proposal – To re-designate the Bursary Fund to the General Account.** *The CSJ are in need of funds to continue enhancing the quality of our guide books, promote and support activity within local member groups and redesign our website, amongst many other projects. Our Bursary Fund for students carrying out research projects on the camino has not been requested since March 2006. Whilst we continue to support ongoing research in other ways, such as publishing articles in our Bulletin and organising academic lectures, the Trustees feel the Fund could go towards projects which are more immediate and just as deserving.*
7. **Trustees presentation to members**
8. **Programme for 2019**
9. **Election of Trustees:** Half the directors stand down and are standing for re-election: Colin Jones, Tony Ward, Robin Dorkings, Richard Jefferies, John Read; continuing – Priscilla White, Mary Moseley, Catherine Davies, Arthur Chapman, James May.
10. **Report from Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome**
11. **Any Other Business**

PROGRAMME for the Day | PLEASE NOTE TIMINGS

- 10.30 Welcome reception for first-time AGM members
- 11.00 Meet & Greet with all members. Tea and coffee available
- 11.30 **Annual General Meeting. See agenda on first page.**
- 12.30 Reports on Refugio Gaucelmo and Albergue San Martín
- 13:00 Lunch (bring picnic lunch; drinks are available) or pubs nearby
10 Best Photographs will be shown on a loop in the Main Hall
- 14:00 Talk: "Literacy, Sanctity & Stumbling to Santiago" – Professor Emeritus George Greenia, College of William & Mary Williamsburg, VA United States. Followed by Q&A
- 15.00 Tea break
- 15:30 Presentations from the Danish and Dutch Confraternities of St James
- 16:00 Members will have the opportunity to talk to local group leaders about activities in their areas.
- 16.30 Talk: A Coruña and the English Way – Mercedes Carballo, Turismocoruña
- 17.00 DVD screening: Cantata – Pilgrimage | The Way of St James to Compostela by John Read
- 17:30 New Year Party

The **Annual General Meeting** is the main event for members in the CSJ's year. It is friendly and fun and a good way of meeting other pilgrims.

Please help us by returning the form enclosed with this booklet to help with registration on the day.

Trustees: Existing and those Standing for Re-election

Colin Jones (joined 1991): It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve as a trustee helping the CSJ to fulfil its role of supporting and promoting the pilgrimage to Santiago. The various aspects of being a trustee come together as "giving something back" to the Camino.

Robin Dorkings (joined 2001): office volunteer since 2003, spent 2 weeks in Santiago in 2013 as an "Amigo". I have walked several Caminos to date and hope to do more in the future. I have been a trustee since the 2015 AGM.

Mary Moseley (joined 1997): An enthusiastic walking pilgrim on *Camino Francés, Via de la Plata, Camino Portugués*. I help to organize major CSJ events.

Tony Ward (joined 1997): I became a member whilst on a long-term pilgrimage from St Neot (Cornwall) to Santiago, which took 8 years in fortnightly slots. I was appointed Treasurer in 2004 and have continued in that role ever since. I have actively supported the activities of the CSJ over the years, including several spells as hospitalero at Miraz.

Priscilla White (joined 1992): I joined the CSJ in 1992 before walking the Camino Frances from Le Puy-en-Velay to Santiago. Subsequently, I have walked along the Camino del Norte and the Via de la Plata. I am now the Chair of the Miraz Committee, having volunteered as hospitalera for many years. I have been involved with the organisation of the AGM and the Camino, Miraz and the CSJ are a huge part of my life.

Richard Jefferies (joined 1996): I joined the CSJ in 1996 before walking the Camino Frances from Puente la Reina to Santiago. Subsequently, I have walked along the Camino Portuguese and the pilgrimage from Guildford to Canterbury. I was the Chair of the Miraz Committee for six years during its commissioning, after working as hospitalier on the Voie de Vézelay in two refuges, I have been involved with the trustee board as fundraiser and look forward to developing its confraternity in France and other parts of the pilgrim world.

James May (joined 2002): Having been brought to The Camino Frances in the late 1990's, practical information, guide, maps etc largely came from the CSJ as the main source offering support to new pilgrims. This support and information was crucial in encouraging my initial journey along the Way.

Catherine Davies (joined 2011): I have been heavily involved with Refugio Gaucelmo at Rabanal with my mother, Julie Davies, the hospitalero coordinator. I look forward to supporting the CSJ and its members.

Arthur Chapman (joined 2010): Have walked the Camino Frances from Burgos, the Camino del Norte and the Camino Ingles. Have volunteered as hospitalero at Miraz for four successive years (since 2013). I hope to help promote the CSJ in Scotland and encourage people to walk the caminos.

John Read (joined 2005): Composer of the Pilgrim Cantata. I cycled with a friend to Compostela in three stages from Caen in 2000-2002 and helped run a pilgrim hostel in France (I speak reasonable French). I am a former Marketing Director and director of three public companies, and project manager and currently chair a voluntary organisation and am a Trustee of our Community Centre which I helped to found and am experienced in public speaking.

Notes on the Accounts

Receiving a hard copy

In order to save on considerable printing and postage costs, the Accounts and Reports for the year ended 30 September 2018 will be emailed to all members with an email address. If you would like a hard copy, please let the office know.

Office Closure

The Office will close at 5pm on Thursday 20th December and will reopen for visitors on Thursday 3rd January.

Stands:

Ground Floor

Sponsor-a-Week at one of our pilgrim refuges

This scheme allows you to continue supporting and staying in touch with Refugio Gaucelmo and Albergue San Martín by sponsoring-a-week for £50 (or share with a friend). You can pick the dates you want to sponsor, and you will receive a letter from the *hospitaleros* to update you on how your money has helped that week.

1st Floor

Balcony

Overflow for Main Hall

2nd Floor

Bookshop

A chance for you to browse some our best-sellers, including practical guides to the various routes to Santiago, as well as some more reflective and discursive texts on other camino-related topics.

Pilgrim Records and Register

Our Pilgrim Records Secretary Stanley Howarth and our Pilgrim Register Secretary Paul Turnbull will be presenting their respective statistics from the last year.

Giving Something Back

Discover the many volunteering opportunities available to give something back to you camino experiences.

Minutes of the 18th Annual General Meeting of the Confraternity of Saint James (the Company)

Held on Saturday 27th January 2018

1. Welcome and Introductions:

The Chairman, Colin Jones, opened with a general introduction and indicated that AGM papers and accounts were available for any who wanted them. He welcomed all members, particularly new members or people at their first AGM. New members were invited to the upstairs meeting area to introduce themselves over a glass of wine.

The Chairman said that the AGM was an opportunity for members of the CSJ to be members.

Colin welcomed Rotraud Rebmann of the Deutsche St Jakobus-Gesellschaft, Padraig MacSweeney of Camino Society Ireland and Søs Byrfelt of the Danish Pilgrim Association.

2. Apologies:

James May who is unwell. Brian Keech, David Smith, Stuart Goldie, Jane Oosthuizen, Doreen Hansen, Kevin Corrigan, Damian and Penny Buckley, Sandra and Richard Brown, Michael Wilkinson and Anne Froud.

3. Minutes of 17th AGM of the CSJ (Company):

The minutes were proposed by Arthur Chapman, seconded by Mary Moseley and accepted.

4. Chairman's Report for 2017:

For full text please see Bulletin 141, March 2018.

Colin Jones opened with quotes from Thomas. A. Clarke about distance and proximity to set the theme and expanded this regarding how some types of CSJ work seem more obvious (and thus closer) than other types. He talked about some of the activities carried out by CSJ staff and volunteers.

The Chairman then gave an overview of the Camino and the CSJ, mentioning:

- Over 300,000 *Compostelas* issued, making it a record for a non-Holy Year, and more than were issued in the last *Xacobeo*.
- According to the Pilgrim Office statistics, the *Camino Del Norte* saw the least growth in pilgrim numbers.
- Pilgrims from the thirty - fifty age group are the most common, followed by the over-fifties.
- Much accommodation is still crowded and there is sometimes a 2 -3 hour queue for *Compostelas*.
- Santiago Cathedral is constantly full of tour groups.
- Advice for pilgrims is often practical rather than spiritual.
- Some say that the Cathedral authorities have made it too easy to get a *Compostela*.
- Environmental concerns; Galicia is now encouraging recycling along the Camino.
- There is a new Braga – Santiago route.

Various people who passed away in 2017 were remembered: the 3 academics Simon Barton, Robert Plötz and Fr Gerard Postlethwaite and Vincent Kelly.

The Chairman then went on to discuss the 5 challenges which face the CSJ in 2018:

- Promote pilgrimage in all its formats – cultural/spiritual/historical/religious – and remain a distinctive voice amongst the various pilgrim community organisations.
- Broaden events and offerings, particularly the geographical range.
- Encourage academic research.
- Maintain the distinctive ethos of our *albergues*.
- Increase membership.

The Chairman closed with the poem In Praise Of Walking by Thomas. A. Clarke

5. Finance: Annual Report & Accounts:

The Treasurer, Tony Ward, gave his report.

He said that sending the accounts electronically had saved about £1,400, although there were some corrections needed. There will be an updated certified copy in April, along with progress reports.

The deficit is reducing and Miraz is now in surplus. However, membership numbers and associated income is reduced.

The income from the online shop has increased significantly and the funds held in the bank were sufficient.

The Treasurer said that an ambitious break-even position had been set, with plans to attract more members and make more Kindle/Amazon sales.

There will be a review of the restricted and designated funds.

The decline in volunteers meant that more paid help was needed. He thanked the paid staff and volunteers including Chris Abrahams (accounts inspector), Freddy Bowen (General Manager), Alison Thorp (Finance Manager), Christine Pleasants (Tuesday office help), Rosemary Creeser (Bookshop Administrator, Linda Hallsworth (Membership Secretary).

There were no questions.

Annual accounts were agreed *nem con* (proposed by Priscilla White / seconded Peter Fitzgerald).

Colin Jones proposed a vote of thanks to Tony Ward and the volunteers.

6. The Way Forward - engagement with pilgrims and the public

Richard Jeffries talked about pilgrim numbers and numbers of credentials sold by the CSJ (over 2,000). The CSJ is trying to convert these pilgrims to members.

He talked further about the CSJ's distinctive identity and the events and activities that can reach out to a wider audience:

- Our website which has over 28,000 hits.
- The CSJ is reinstating the Camino wine bar informal meeting events.
- The BBC will be running a 3 – part programme “The Pilgrimage” which follows a group of celebrities and their journey along the camino Francés, including a stay at Rabanal.

Richard Jefferies also mentioned that there would be various pilgrim events and festivals in Ireland and France.

7. Communications

Robin Dorkings reported that it had been a strong year for CSJ communications with over 12 updates to guidebooks and the publication of new ones – Preparing for the Caminho Português and the Camino Francés, the Português Coastal Route, Invierno and a guide to Santiago itself. Many of the most popular guides are now available in Kindle format and over 1000 of these have been sold.

He said that more updates are planned this year, but as we rely on volunteers to supply information, more help would be welcome, particularly for the Camino del Norte or the Via de la Plata.

The website continues to be a source of information as well as our Facebook groups to engage with the ever-increasing online market.

The Bulletin has a new editor, Michael Walsh. Robin Dorkings asked that people continue to submit material, and if anyone is interested about writing about particular points of interest on the Camino Francés they should contact Michael. He mentioned that the Bulletin was now available in electronic form which saves the CSJ a lot of postage costs; members should contact the Office to arrange this.

In addition to updates for 2018 and continuing to develop our online presence, Robin Dorkings stated that the CSJ would revise the content and layout of our guidebooks in accordance with consumer feedback, while maintaining our aim of keeping them lightweight and inexpensive. A new Camino Francés guide, perfect-bound and small enough to fit in a cargo trouser pocket, was shown to the meeting.

8. Library

The Librarian, Margaret Simonot, said that loans were on the increase and that most members were good at returning them. However, some people forget, and eventually will receive a request to return it to us.

The Librarian said that the Library, which includes the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome collection on the *Via Francigena*, continues to acquire books on a wide range of topics linked to the Camino: some guidebooks, some personal accounts as well as those covering the arts, history and archaeology and fiction. She also said that we have CDs and DVDs and a number of periodicals in the main European languages.

The Librarian thanked William Griffiths for all his help in managing the Library.

9. Programme of Events for 2017/18

Mary Moseley said that in 2017, we had a number of preparation and planning events for prospective pilgrims:

- Practical Pilgrim Days in London, Manchester and Edinburgh – the London event selling out with 100 attendees.
- Mini pilgrimages in the UK, namely along the way of St Augustine and the Pilgrims Way from Southwark Cathedral.
- Regular screenings of the film *Walking the Camino: Six Ways to Santiago* at Christ Church.
- Returned Pilgrim Event at Reading Abbey
- Constance Storrs lecture with a moving account of Daniel Dolley's pilgrimage on crutches.

Mary Moseley said that in 2018 the CSJ is planning to enhance its events programme to include:

- more mini-pilgrimages, including to Christchurch College, Oxford and Worcester Cathedral.
- more lectures, including from the marketing department of the University of Royal Holloway.
- more activity from our regional groups, to help us engage with our members across the country.
- the re-establishment of Camino Wine Bar every month as a way of pilgrims being able to interact in a more informal setting at a time of day more suitable for younger people in full-time employment.

Information about these will be available on our website, on our Facebook page, and in our e-newsletter.

10. Membership

Gosia Brykczynska said that the 1900 CSJ members were spread across the globe; most are UK-based but we have members in USA, Australia, Spain and many other countries.

She mentioned that some members have died.

Gosia Brykczynska also said that the CSJ needed to make local groups more important and mentioned that she headed the West London group.

11. Statistics

Catherine Davies said that in 2017 the CSJ distributed around 2,500 passports, the majority of which went to non-members of the CSJ.

The CSJ has also this year started to analyse the data that we collect from pilgrims when they apply for their passports. Since we started, 54% of CSJ pilgrims have travelled the *camino Francés*, 14% along the *Portugués*, 10% along the *Norte*, 6% along the *Inglés*, with a huge variety of other routes making up the remainder (1% from England). The most common starting points are, unsurprisingly, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port (26% of pilgrims) and Sarria (11%), followed by Porto, Ferrol and León. 57% of pilgrims say they are undertaking it for “Spiritual” reasons, with 22% stating “Religious”, 18% “Cultural” and 3% “Sport”.

12. Programme for 2018

Freddy Bowen said that the CSJ continue to provide first hand support to pilgrims every Thursday and on occasional Saturdays in the office. He thanked the volunteers who have helped this year – William, Willie, Robin, Richard, Tom, Mary, Liz, Marilyn, Eric, Yvonne, Angelika, Marigold, Catherine, Kitty, Anthony and Henriette. He also thanked Ruth Abrahams for managing the content of the website, Marion Marples for her continued support and management of the Facebook and Twitter pages, Margaret Simonot and William Griffiths for running the library, Paul Turnbull (Pilgrim Register Secretary), Stan Haworth (Pilgrim Record Secretary), John Hatfield (Slide

Librarian), Michael Walsh and the Bulletin editorial team, to Peter Garlick and the Rabanal Committee, Priscilla White and the Miraz Committee and to all that volunteered as hospitaleros in 2017, the Communications committee, the trustees and Johnnie Walker for his tireless promotion of the CSJ in the form of guide book updates and mediation of the CSJ Facebook Group and enthusiastic ambassadorship from Santiago.

Freddy Bowen said that over 1,000 more items were purchased in the online shop in 2017 than in 2016, and thanked Rose Creeser and Christine Pleasants for their efficient management of sales. He also thanked Alison Thorp, finance and systems manager, Linda Hallsworth, membership secretary and Elzbieta Frankiewicz, guide and Bulletin designer.

Freddy Bowen concluded by mentioning that our next events were Practical Pilgrim days at Southwark, London Office and Manchester.

13. Election of Trustees

Colin Jones gave details of candidates and it was agreed that a group election would take place:

- John Read, Robin Dorkings, Priscilla White, Mary Moseley, Catherine Davies, Arthur Chapman, James May, Richard Jefferies
- Retiring, Not Standing: Gosia Brykczynska

Proposed by William Griffiths/seconded by Peter Fitzgerald, the 7 candidates were elected *nem con*.

Marion Marples thanked Gosia for all her many years of service to the CSJ and recounted some of her many roles – thirteenth member of the CSJ, Vice Chairman, trustee, *amiga* in Santiago, *hospitalera*, Bulletin Editor, delegate, choir member, conference organiser, guide to Poland.

14. Report on Refugio Gaucelmo – Rabanal

Peter Garlick reported that last year there were 36 volunteer hospitaleros at Gaucelmo, welcoming 4,457 pilgrims and two donkeys. 67 different countries were represented including “firsts” from Afghanistan, Kenya and Palestine. US pilgrims are the most numerous with the UK providing 281 pilgrims.

Donativos and sponsorship continue to cover running costs and there are no plans to introduce any fixed charges.

Major costs have related to a new chimney lining, employment of a groundsman and a new registration system imposed by the Guardia and local council. This latter development caused some difficulty but was solved with the help of Spanish-speakers on the committee, friends in the village and the hospitaleros.

Relations between Gaucelmo and the village and the monastery remain very close.

Peter Garlick remembered Rabanal committee member Tony Green who passed away suddenly. He thanked Freddy Bowen and thanked the volunteer gardeners Paul Graham and Ken and Joan Davies for all their help over past years.

Lastly, he mentioned an upcoming BBC reality programme which features Gaucelmo.

15. Report on Albergue San Martín - Miraz

Priscilla White reported an increase of nearly 300 pilgrims from 54 different countries.

She thanked the volunteers who help care for and welcome pilgrims.

Miraz itself changes little; a rural village in an undiscovered part of Spain whose inhabitants are largely self-sufficient or work in the local granite quarry. Recent changes include tracks being sanded by the local council and a new water system installed in the village.

San Martín now has efficient broadband in order to cope with new legal requirements for electronic reporting of pilgrim data. The building is due to be repainted and have a new fence with metal silhouettes of pilgrims (thanks to Ela Frankiewicz).

The bar/restaurant/*albergue* at the end of the village is still open although Pilar's bar is closed for good since Pilar retired. The 40 beds here have taken a lot of pressure off San Martín.

One unfortunate development is that the church is shut and can no longer be opened every evening. It is hoped that a new parish priest will be appointed soon.

Priscilla White concluded by asking for people to support the sponsor-a-week programme or join the hospitalero team.

16. Appointment of officers

These officers were elected:

- Reverend Colin Jones, 13 Dunsley Drive, Wordsley, Stourbridge, W Midlands DY8 5RA, United Kingdom
- Mr Robin Dorkings, Hillside, Gillotts Lane, Harpsden, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 4AY, United Kingdom
- Mr Anthony Ward, Syracuse, St Neot, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 6NJ, United Kingdom
- Mr Freddy Bowen, 27 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8NY, United Kingdom
- Mrs Priscilla White, 27 Hawley Square, Margate, Kent, CT9 1PQ, United Kingdom

17. AOB

Brian Mooney spoke about the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome.

Carole Vose said that there was a new pilgrim stamp available in Salisbury Cathedral for those interested in walking in England as part of the *camino Inglés* route.

Evan Rutherford said that the plaque at La Pedraja had been installed but had been stolen and had been replaced by one paid for by the families of the victims.

Local area map



London Practical Pilgrim Day 2019

London - Saturday 16th February

10-30 am to 2.30 pm

Christ Church, 27 Blackfriars Road, SE1 8NY

An opportunity to hear what others say about the pilgrimage experience, to build up your knowledge of the route and to ask all those niggling questions about gear, maps, washing, socks... Opportunities to learn from others, browse the guides to see which suits you best, and grab your all-important credential!

Bring your questions. Set off better prepared!

Tickets

Members £5

Non-members £7

Please indicate whether walker or cyclist and which routes are of particular interest

	What route(s) have you done?	What route(s) would you like to learn more about?
Walker		
Cyclist		

Name (s):

Address/email:

Return details to office@csj.org.uk

Please pay through the online shop at

www.caminopilgrim.org/shop send your cheque or credit card details to:

CSJ Practical Pilgrim, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY

Manchester Practical Pilgrim Day 2019

Manchester - Saturday 2nd March

10-30 am to 3.30 pm

Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, M2 5NS

An opportunity to hear what others say about the pilgrimage experience, to build up your knowledge of the route and to ask all those niggling questions about gear, maps, washing, socks... Opportunities to learn from others, browse the guides to see which suits you best, and grab your all-important credencial!

Bring your questions. Set off better prepared!

Tickets

Members £5

Non-members £7

Please indicate whether walker or cyclist and which routes are of particular interest

	What route(s) have you done?	What route(s) would you like to learn more about?
Walker		
Cyclist		

Name (s):

Address/email:

Return details to office@csj.org.uk

Please pay through the online shop at

www.caminopilgrim.org/shop send your cheque or credit card details to:

CSJ Practical Pilgrim, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY

Edinburgh Practical Pilgrim Day 2019

Edinburgh - Saturday 30th March

10-30 am to 3.30 pm

Venue TBC

An opportunity to hear what others say about the pilgrimage experience, to build up your knowledge of the route and to ask all those niggling questions about gear, maps, washing, socks... Opportunities to learn from others, browse the guides to see which suits you best, and grab your all-important credencial!

Bring your questions. Set off better prepared!

Tickets

Members £5

Non-members £7

Please indicate whether walker or cyclist and which routes are of particular interest

	What route(s) have you done?	What route(s) would you like to learn more about?
Walker		
Cyclist		

Name (s):

Address/email:

Return details to office@csj.org.uk

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