



Bulletin

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Cover photo:

Footbridge between Melide and Boente,
Michael Krier

About the Bulletin

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Editorial

A couple of sentences in a *Guardian* article caught my eye. There was an extensive piece – the newspaper calls it “The Long Read” – on Stonehenge, described as “Britain’s favourite monument”.

What attracted my attention was the author’s comment, “A visit today offers little in the way of communion with the eternal verities. This is heritage commodified”. For me, those comments instantly fell into Alexander Pope’s category of “What oft was thought but ne’er so well expressed”. It summed up the unease I had felt since reading an article about the Camino in *1843*, “an award winning magazine of ideas, lifestyle and culture” as it describes itself. I don’t buy this magazine. At least, I think I don’t. It comes as an off-shoot of my subscription to *The Economist*. Why that venerable weekly, founded in, you have guessed it, 1843, should have decided to publish what has every appearance of being an in-flight magazine, minus the list of duty-frees, I can only speculate. Maybe they had a surplus of advertising.

Certainly *1843* has plenty of high-end adverts – it even has a “Luxury Editor” – urging its readers to purchase things which I, for one, neither need nor could afford. And yet, in the midst of all this consumer-oriented guff, there was an utterly charming piece about undertaking the Camino on horseback. The author experienced in the course of her ride exactly what so many others on foot also regularly experience, that “Slowing down on the Camino de Santiago” as Dr Katharina C. Husemann called her 2018 Constance Storrs lecture (see the Chairman’s report on another page). I am not finding fault with the piece itself, which could just as well have graced the pages of the CSJ Bulletin. My beef is with the context in which it appeared, amid all the expensive suits, watches and perfumes: seemingly the Camino now falls into the category of “heritage commodified”, to quote *The Guardian* once more.

And then there is the BBC. On BBC2 there is a programme called “My million-pound menu”. In it would-be restaurateurs bid for investment for their “concept” eatery, a kind of “Dragons’ Den”, but only for caterers. There is nothing wrong with that in itself, of course; it is just that in the one programme I watched a group of young men put before four potential investors the “concept” of a restaurant inspired by the Camino de Santiago, which one of the group had walked and by which he had clearly been bowled over. They decided to call their restaurant “Pilgrim”, and emblazon it with the Camino’s symbol of a stylised scallop shell.

The courses were to reflect the different cuisines encountered on the way – plenty of *pulpo* I presume – and the menu itself was in the form of a *credencial*, adorned with *sellos* and a map of the Francés, though there were occasional nods to the Norte. That, at least, was the tasting menu. I never did find out what was on the *menú del día*, as it were, because I was distracted, too busy reflecting that to base a menu on a particular Camino seemed rather too restrictive. Obviously, three of the four investors had similar thoughts, because they walked away. But one did not: The Pilgrim Restaurant will be opening in Liverpool in April.

While I have every admiration for the enterprise of these young men, I cannot but wonder whether an up-market restaurant is quite the sort of outcome that the Camino de Santiago is meant to inspire. In most people’s minds, I suspect, fasting rather than feasting is associated with pilgrimage, at least if one wants to commune with, as *The Guardian* put it, “the eternal verities”. The *menú del peregrino*, in my experience, rarely if ever extends to all of seven courses. Yet another example of “heritage commodified”?

Michael Walsh

Chairman's Report 2019

Colin Jones

for me, only the pilgrim's staff I want the limitless, fair camino

(The closing lines of León Felipe's 1920 collection *Versos y Oraciones de Caminante*)

Although he had never been on pilgrimage, it was said that Felipe expressed in his works the questing spirit of pilgrimage and the yearning to be on the Camino as though he had experienced them personally. In this, he stands for part of the work of the Confraternity – to awaken in those yet to experience the Camino a questing sense. Further, to discover that the Camino is far more than a route, historic or cultural; far more than an activity to occupy leisure time. The Camino affirms that at the core of who we really are, at the heart of being human, is the adventure of seeking things beyond us, seeking the transcendent.

In the pilgrimage to Santiago, those who take up this adventure will find that the Camino is so absorbing, so stimulating, so contagious than it can transform us.

The reports that are given at our AGM may seem factual, sometimes a little distant from the excitement of being on the Camino, but they reflect the task of the Confraternity, to promote the pilgrimage to Santiago as something very special, very precious.

Before these presentations it is worth taking a slight detour to remind ourselves of some of the noteworthy aspects of the Camino in 2018. First, the Pilgrim Office recorded the arrival of 327,000 pilgrims – a record number and 100,000 more than in the last Holy Year of 2010.

For the first time, more women than men were recorded. The surge in pilgrim numbers was not evenly distributed amongst the Caminos. The Portuguese routes and the Camino Inglés had the greatest increase, while the Camino Francés recorded a 6% fall in pilgrims. The bald statistics do not reveal the reasons for these figures nor whether this is the start of a trend or a one-off variation, due perhaps to the cold, very wet Spring. It may not seem like it for those who were walking last year, but fewer than 5% of pilgrims were on bicycles. Secondly, last year was the 25th anniversary of the Camino Francés being declared a World Heritage, was marked by various exhibitions.

To the joy of pilgrims and photographers, the scaffolding that had shrouded for so long the Obradoiro facade was at last removed, revealing the honey-coloured stonework concealed by decades of grime. Then, to complete the wonder, the restoration of the Pórtico de La Gloria was unveiled to international acclaim. Colours that had hitherto only been traces have been enhanced. The effect is breath-taking and the fruit of painstaking research and technical work. As an aside, the appellation of the west entrance as "Pórtico de la Gloria" is as recent as the mid-19th century and given by a British architectural writer who wanted to draw attention to the then nearly forgotten splendour of Master Matteo's work.

Two concerns emerged last year related to the Caminos: the effect on the environment due to the concentration of such large numbers on the Caminoroutes, and the distorting affect that organised Camino

Camino Life

tours/pilgrimages are beginning to have on the provision of accommodation.

Moving to the Confraternity's year, the 2018 programme of events contained, of course, our usual pattern of pilgrim and *hospitalero* preparation days, return days, as well as various local meetings. Of note was the Camino Portugués Exhibition held in October at Worcester Cathedral. This celebrated the Xunta of Galicia's designation of the camellia flower as this Camino's emblem. The exhibition drew Confraternity members, visitors to the Cathedral and the International Camellia Society. We were able to provide promotional material for this route and for the Confraternity.

The 2018 Constance Storrs lecture, held at Southwark Cathedral, drew good numbers. Dr Katharina C. Husemann's talk, "Slowing down on the Camino de Santiago", explored the popularity of the Camino in an age of anxiety and rapid change. The Camino, she argued, allows people to slow down on a variety of levels and in ways that are difficult in other contexts. Her talk was very well received and gave much food for thought. Of course, these events are only possible because of members and volunteers helping to organise and support them, and we must record our thanks for their time, energy and enthusiasm.

Two new Camino organisations came into being last year, the XirCaminni of Malta and the International Federation of the Camino Portugués. The first, formally came into

existence on 1 November, All Saints Day. We were able to offer advice and strong support for its inception. There will be a close relationship between us not only through the flow of information but also through the development of Hospitalero training. It will come as no surprise to this meeting that Dr William Griffiths was the consulting physician for the birth of our relationship with XirCaminni, for which we thank him.

In October, the Galician and Portuguese associations formed an International Federation to better coordinate the promotion and care of the various Caminos that carry the title Portugués. The Confraternity was honoured to be invited to become a partner in the Federation, which is a recognition of the historical importance of these routes for

pilgrims from the British Isles, the growing numbers of English-speaking pilgrims who choose these Caminos, and the regard with which the Confraternity is held in Spain and Portugal.

The trustees have continued to develop a programme for the forthcoming Holy Year. We have been in consultation with the Cathedral of Santiago about the possibility of launching an appeal, the proceeds going towards the restoration of an identified part of the fabric. In principle, the Dean and Chapter would like the Confraternity to support the restoration of the covers in the Communion Chapel. We hope to have full details very shortly from the cathedral

**“the restoration
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architect and we will then be able to launch an appeal. I hope that members will support this Holy Year Appeal in their usual generous and imaginative way. It could perhaps be an opportunity for members to come together on a regional basis. We would also like to organise a pilgrimage during May of the Holy Year along the Camino Inglés to Santiago. Given that it is anticipated that there will be great pressure on accommodation, we shall need to know very soon whether there is interest among members for this pilgrimage. Further information will shortly be available.

As we shall hear in a moment, work to refresh our website and give easier access to it is near completion. In the era of the internet search engines the trustees decided to add, "Camino Pilgrims" to the name "Confraternity of Saint James", to link the Confraternity with internet searches for information about the Camino. The refreshed design of our Bulletin has been greatly appreciated. We owe a debt of thanks to the expert editorial skills of Michael Walsh and all those involved in its production, which is no small task.

A quick glance of the Bulletin's notes and reviews remind us that that in March of last year the BBC broadcast the mini-series, "Pilgrimage: The Road to Santiago". Although the participants were broadcasting celebrities, for the Confraternity the real star was Refugio Gaucelmo.

I would like to note with sadness the deaths of Aileen O'Sullivan, Stephen Brazier, Brian Haigh, Bill Hangnail Heard, Alan Hockley, Bridget Holden and of Ken Spittle. Ken was a former trustee, a great promoter of pilgrimage, especially in Scotland, who had for many years served on the Miraz Committee, offering his support to its development.

Before passing the baton to our Treasurer, Tony Ward, I would like to leave with this thought. Every day millions of people travel for what seem a million reasons. The Confraternity was formed, and continues to be formed, by people for whom one particular reason to travel is woven into our lives. That reason is, of course, to discover Santiago and to experience the way to that goal. Travelling is the central theme and topic of the Confraternity. Quite rightly, we should call ourselves Camino

**“the distorting
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Pilgrims and help others to discover the special bonds and relationships that this brings. As wrote our poet León Felipe, this sense of the Camino should be awakened for all.

Walking the Camino Torres: Salamanca to the Douro River Valley

Seán Deany



The Camino Torres is named after the path that Diego de Torres Villarroel, of the Guild and Cloister of the University of Salamanca and its Professor of Mathematics, made in 1737. It is also a convenient land route and cultural bridge between the Spanish university town and Portugal's Douro River Valley. In its entirety the Camino Torres is 567 km long from Salamanca to Santiago, but links up with the popular Camino Portugués at Ponte de Lima, several days north of Porto.

My journey along the Camino Torres took me from Salamanca to Peso da Régua on the Douro River before I made my way by train into Porto, to take the Camino Portugués to Santiago. While I had several weeks of blazing heat at the beginning of my pilgrimage out of Granada, the weather took a turn just as I swung southwest of Salamanca, bringing rain and cold. Having had other pilgrim company along the Via de la Plata, I was once more alone. Well not quite, as I will explain later!

I am no stranger to the Camino Francés. That said, for the past decade I had wanted to walk from Granada to Santiago de Compostela by way of the Camino Mozárabe and the Via de la Plata, but Portugal had also been on my mind. And due to the tyranny of distance - getting to Europe from Australia and packing in as much Camino mileage as possible - I still had a dilemma. This was until I discovered the recently created Camino Torres.

The first day out of Salamanca quite quickly got me far from the city environs. There were numerous yellow arrows along many kilometres of a wide cattle run, a few ruins and very little else over the course of the 33 km trail, until the village of Robliza de Cojos. There a disused school house, very basic, was my shelter for the night, and the local bar the only source of nourishment of the liquid and solid variety. Farmers' wives occupied one end of the room, the jovial boisterous



Amigos of Camino Torres

men at the other. I arrived only an hour before closing time – nine pm, unusually early for Spain! This was evident half an hour after my arrival when the women suddenly disappeared - I suppose the men's meals had to be prepared at home. Then the colourful language commenced, but the din was over in no time. As I was informed that nothing would be open in the morning, I had a strong espresso and prepared to walk back to my threadbare lodgings through the darkened streets, for the morning's start-up.

The Camino Torres, being new, receives only about 25 or so pilgrims per year. The route has been waymarked, as mentioned above, although having the Google Earth kmz route on one's mobile device comes in handy. The Amigos of the Camino Torres, based in Salamanca, have been preparing the Way for ten years.

On my second day a wind chilled me to the bone, and there was little prospect of company in the days ahead. Nonetheless it would be a distance of only 20 km to the next village of San Muñoz for this

day. About 4.5 km into the journey, on my approach to the abandoned Church of the Virgen de los Remedios, I turned around and saw a gathering crowd several hundred metres behind. Perhaps this church ahead of me had some great local significance for day trippers. To avoid getting mobbed, I increased my pace and reached the former house of worship, now used as a shed for storing farm machinery. Suddenly this crowd of fifty or more, with bright fluorescent parkas and umbrellas twirling with excitement, was approaching ... then passing. What! Not stopping to examine this holy site? What on earth was going on, was I hallucinating?

It turned out that the members and associates of the Amigos of the Camino Torres were on a day's outing to walk one segment of this little known Camino variant. Noticing a rotund man with a large brown cape, staff, and a ridiculous-looking floppy hat (complete with scallop shell) I called him over to tell me what was what. He was Pepe the Pilgrim, well known in Salamanca and a great enthusiast for the Camino Torres.

Camino Life

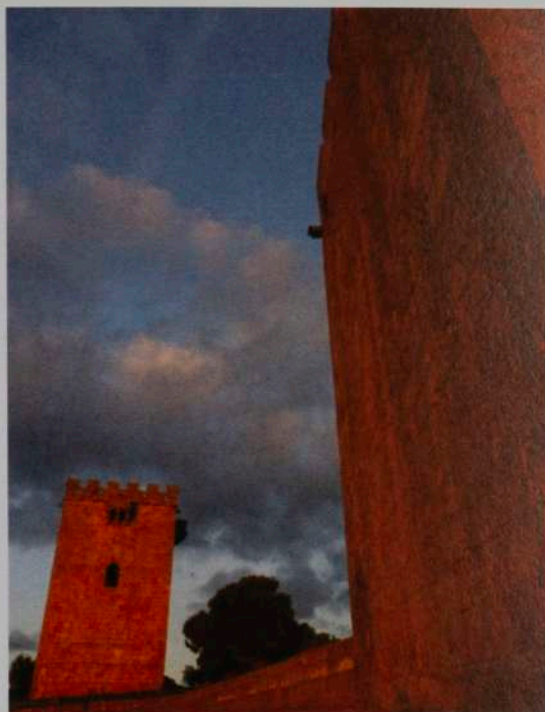


Pepe The Pilgrim

His group were walking to San Muñoz and had caterers preparing a group banquet lunch in the Ayuntamiento. I was invited to join them on my arrival at San Muñoz, which I duly did. It was a pleasant surprise, and greatly uplifting to be in the company of like-minded people at the right time and place. A couple of rare English speakers were hastily brought to my side at our lunch table to discuss all things pilgrimage. Lastly, at day's end I was taken to the village *albergue*, a former doctor's quarters, with a much-needed hot shower. Eventually the Amigos of the Camino Torres had to get home by charter bus, and as the day ended a thick frost set in outside. I was the sole pilgrim in the village. The daydreaming was over, but indeed it had all been real.

It took me eleven days to walk between Salamanca and the autumnal Douro River valley in Portugal. In Spain there are basic pilgrim *albergues* and little else, with the exception of the fortified regional town Ciudad Rodrigo. Here the comfortable

Hotel Arcos is a welcome comfort-stop, offers a fixed menu, and one can explore an historical city centre complete with ramparts. Beyond here the Camino Torres takes a kind of tradesman's entrance approach into Portugal. Immediately on crossing the border, I first heard the Portuguese language from a woman cursing her dog as it sat in the middle of the road – not much traffic here. I thought to myself there is not a hope in hell that I'm going to learn this language - it's so unlike Spanish!



Twin Towers of Pinhel, Portugal

Once in Portugal the waymarks are less common, but the numerous fortified hilltop towns increase in size and the accommodation is more variable. That said, there are no pilgrim *albergues*, but instead there is quite a surprise. In most of the principal halts for the night, the sole pilgrim is provided with hospitality at the Bombeiros - the local volunteer fire brigade.



Igreja Paroquial De Almacave Lamego, Portugal

In the towns of Pinhel, Sernancelhe and Moimenta da Beira I was provided with a hot shower and bed for the night by these welcome authorities. Interestingly, some of them even have a bar! What else to do when a volunteer fire fighter, waiting for a fire to happen, than have a beer - or five! It was my first time in Portugal, and I was not disappointed, given these facilities awaiting me.

Descending from the historic city of Lamego and arriving at the Douro River through vineyards was a kind of landmark moment, my only witness a surly, rough woman, who refused to photograph me with my phone.

However, crossing an iron-girder railway bridge, which never in its 100-year history carried a single train, but now provides a pedestrian way, I found a little café to celebrate my achievement. After hearing where I had walked from, the

pleasant young woman there let me try several of the local variety port wines, on the house. Salamanca was 250 km behind me, but seemed much further away, let alone Granada a full 922 km and six weeks since I left it.

Portugal made a good impression on me, despite the cold wet weather and having to walk along numerous paved roads. After a couple of rest days in Porto, I pushed on towards the Apostolic city before making my way to journey's end at Muxía.

For those who may wish to walk the Camino Torres there is a useful web site: www.caminosantiago.usal.es/torres

Seán Deany is a visual artist and freelance photographer with an active involvement in setting up the MacKillop Woods Way in Australia, and a member of the CSJ since 2009.

Editorial note: Mary Mackillop (1842-1909) was the first native-born Australian to be declared a saint.

The Vézelay route

Arno Cuppen

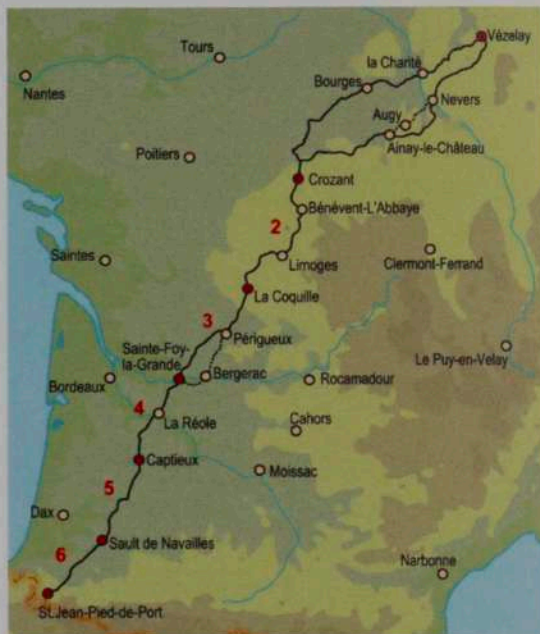
Introducing the Arles Route, the Confraternity's website encourages visitors "to try alternatives, even for a first pilgrimage, to the increasingly overcrowded Le Puy route". The same is true for the other main routes through France, from Vézelay and Paris, both also roads less travelled. This article offers an introduction to the Vézelay Route to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. At the request of the editor, particular attention is paid to the historical aspects.

The historical route

The focus on history fits the French name of this route: La Voie Historique de Vézelay. However, this route has existed only since 2000 and is an initiative of Monique Chassain. She based the route as much as possible on historical sources, hence its name. It was a huge project. The route is more than 900 kilometres, not counting an extra 300 kilometres of variants. Pilgrim accommodation was established and a pilgrim office opened in Vézelay. These initiatives of Mme Chassain had been adopted by five regional Associations of Saint James some years before her death in 2017.

Codex Calixtinus

One of the sources she consulted was the Codex Calixtinus. The Codex, named after pope Calixtus II, dates from the 12th century and is one of the oldest books about the Camino de Santiago. The final part is a travel guide for pilgrims. It describes the four main routes through France and the route through Spain.



Map of route from Vézelay

Relatively few places in France are mentioned. In the chapter about the shrines to be visited by pilgrims, the Codex lists only three saints on the Vézelay route: Saint Mary Magdalene (Vézelay), Saint Leonard (Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat) and Saint Fronto (Périgueux). On the Le Puy route only one shrine is mentioned, that of Saint Foy (Conques).

The Codex was written in a period of great economic, spiritual and cultural upswing, in which, for example, Gothic architecture developed.

On their way to Santiago, pilgrims must have seen many churches, abbeys, and other buildings under construction. The Codex is said to have been written by the French monk Aymeric Picaud, supposedly in Asquins, at the foot of the Vézelay hill...

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

The church of Asquins, named after Saint James the Greater, has been a World Heritage Site since 1998, as part of the Route of Santiago de Compostela in France. Along the Vézelay Route ten sites are included, mainly churches. The Vézelay basilica and hill (1979) and Bourges cathedral (1992) had already been selected as World Heritage Sites in their own right.

The UNESCO focus on churches is logical, since this is a pilgrim route. But along it there are more historical themes to be discovered, such as the Hundred Years War. For example: shortly after Limoges, the route passes the castle of Chalus-Chabrol, where King Richard Lionheart died in 1199 while besieging it, and shortly after Saint-Ferme, a variant passes the bastide of Monségur.

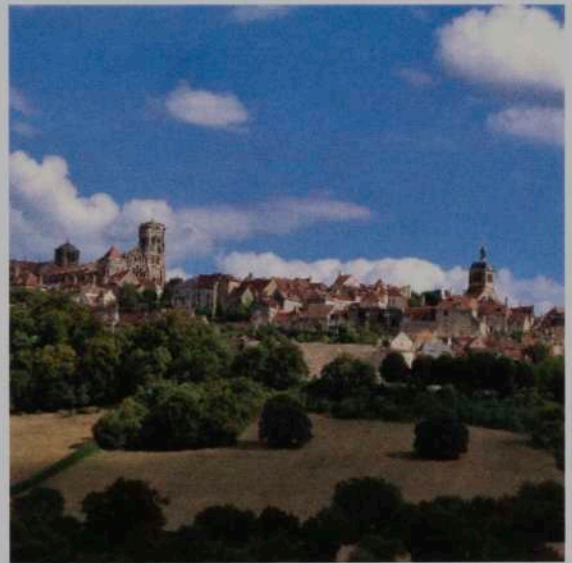
This fortified town was built in 1265 by Eleanor of Provence, Queen consort of England, who in doing so copied French examples of a successful settlement policy. Moreover, the route does not offer spiritual places in only the Christian tradition. For instance, near Saint-Ferme, only 7 km off the route, is Plum Village, Europe's largest Buddhist monastery.

Vézelay

In the 9th century a Benedictine abbey was built on the hill of Vézelay. According to legend, in the 10th century relics of Maria Magdalene were brought here. In 1058 Pope Stephen IX confirmed their authenticity, leading to an influx of pilgrims and the construction of the basilica, consecrated in 1104. So this masterpiece of Romanesque architecture is built on a mystery. That is sometimes beautifully symbolised, when the hill is shrouded in fog and the basilica seems to float.

This is not the only mystery in Vézelay. The overwhelming tympanum and beautiful capitals tell intriguing stories, going back not only to the Bible but also to other ancient sources. A few days a year, around the summer solstice, the narthex and priest's choir are joined by a path of light along the floor from the precisely positioned windows above. Six months later, around the winter solstice, the capitals are highlighted in the same way. Thus, the basilica invites pilgrims to "go to the light".

Before setting out, make time to visit the Maison du Visiteur, halfway down the main street, which tells the fascinating story of this basilica: discover how the universe and the Christian faith were represented in stone many centuries ago.



View of Vézelay

Two variants

Leaving Vézelay the route splits into two variants, via Bourges and Nevers. They meet again after almost 300 kilometres, in the village of Gargilesse.

Camino Life

Places of historical interest along the Bourges variant are the Benedictine priory of Notre-Dame (UNESCO) at La Charité-sur-Loire, built in the 11th century; the cathedral of Saint-

Étienne (UNESCO) at Bourges, built mainly in the 13th century as a replacement for a mid-11th-century structure; and the former Benedictine abbey of Notre-Dame at Déols, built in the 10th century. One of the largest Romanesque churches in France, it is now mainly in ruins.

Along the Nevers variant are the cathedral of Saint Cyricus and Saint Julitta at Nevers, rebuilt in the 13th century after a fire; . Since 1925 the body of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes reposes in the former Saint Gildard Convent, and is now a pilgrimage site in its own right; the cathedral of Saint Stephen (UNESCO) at Neuvy-Saint-Sépulchre, built in the 12th century, with a remarkable, circular ground plan.

The Confraternity's website contains a useful comparison of the variants in terms of landscape and the onward route.

To Saint Leonard

Around 65 kilometres after Gargilesse is Bénévent-l'Abbaye, named after its abbey, built in the 11th century. The Codex mentions as the next destination the tomb of Saint Leonard of Noblac (died 559), who with "his powerful goodness led countless thousands of captives from prison". In the 12th century his cult spread throughout Western Europe following the release in 1102 of Bohemond, a charismatic leader of the First Crusade, from a Turkish prison. The collegiate church of Saint Leonard (UNESCO), built in the 11th century, contains the saint's grave. The Codex refers to him as "sanctum

Leonardum Lemovicensem" (Saint Leonard of Limousin), hence the Latin name of this route: Via Lemovicensis.

To Périgueux

When the Codex was written, the Benedictine abbey of Saint Martial of Limoges, 22 km after Saint-Léonard, was an important spiritual, cultural and scientific centre. After the French Revolution, the building was gradually dismantled. The crypt was rediscovered in 1960.

The next destination, according to the Codex, is "the remains of Saint Fronto, bishop and confessor, at the city of Périgueux". The cathedral named after him was rebuilt in the 19th century. Only the bell tower and crypts, both from the 12th century, were left from previous structures. However important Saint Fronto may have been at the time of the Codex, nowadays very little is known about him.

In 1575, during the Wars of Religion, the cathedral was plundered and his relics thrown into the Dordogne. At Chancelade (shortly after Périgueux) is the abbey of Notre-Dame, founded in the 12th century, rebuilt in the 17th and partially destroyed during the Revolution. Today it is in use again.

To Ostabat

From Périgueux you can choose a slightly longer variant via Bergerac to Sainte-Foye-la-Grande. Places of historical interest after Sainte-Foye are Saint-Ferme, with a former abbey built in the 11th and 13th centuries to welcome pilgrims; La Réole, a fortified town on the Garonne, around a former priory, founded in 977; Bazas, with the cathedral of Saint John the Baptist (UNESCO) which dates mainly from the 13th-14th centuries

and was built on the model of the great Gothic cathedrals of northern France; and at Saint-Sever there is a 12th century Romanesque church (UNESCO) which once belonged to a Benedictine abbey founded in the 10th century.

The Codex Calixtinus mentions that the routes from Le Puy, Vézelay and Paris meet in Ostabat. The meeting point is today marked by the Cross of Gibraltar, a disk-shaped stele, 7 km before Ostabat. From here on there is no more tranquil silence: the route quickly becomes busier and busier.

By the way

Of course, history is not only about saints, royals and enormous buildings. More often it consists of small stories, ordinary people and simple details, for those willing to see them. Sometimes it is just at your feet, as in the region south of Vézelay, once an ocean on the shores of the Morvan.

Along the way you can find shells and ammonites fossils. The shells are like the famous pilgrim's scallops on the shores of Galicia. The ammonites recall the spiral forms on the robe of Jesus on the tympanum of Vézelay.

Another thing to see is the beautiful little 12th-century church of Magdeleine, opposite a former pilgrims' hospital run by the Knights Hospitalier.

Having come from Mary Magdalene on "the eternal hill" of Vézelay to Mary Magdalene at the foot of the Pyrenees, our journey is almost over. It is only another 1.5

km to the city gate of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, named after "our" saint, Porte Saint-Jacques (UNESCO). It is the logical end of this "historical route".

"Since 1925 the body of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes reposes in the former Saint Gildard Convent"

Or perhaps not? The Codex names Saint-Jean only once, just in passing. However, Saint-Michel is mentioned three times as the most important place from which pilgrims crossed the Pyrenees. A brief look at the history of Saint-Jean explains why. It was founded in the 12th century. Apparently it was already known when the Codex was written,

but only later it would take over the role of Saint-Michel, now a small village.

Looking back

The Confraternity's website concludes: "This is a demanding route... in the context of a relatively deserted rural environment". Yes, this route lures you out of your comfort zone, but isn't that an essential part of becoming a pilgrim? A pilgrim who walked the Vézelay route last year concluded: "The encounters with the local residents were heart-warming... Every 10-15 kilometres (on average) there was an affordable place to sleep ... For me, it was the ultimate journey for tranquillity and reflection, far away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life".

Arno Cuppen is a member of the working group of the Dutch Association of Saint James which produces guides to the Vézelay Route. During the season he and his wife run a pilgrims' hostel called L'Esprit du Chemin in Anthien, 25 km from Vézelay on the variant via Nevers.

Voices from the Past and the City of Caliphs: An interfaith exhibition on a pilgrim route

Evan Rutherford

A pilgrim willing to start a journey of 1030 km on an infrequently used Camino Mozárabe has the opportunity to start with a hearing of four sage figures from the 12th to the 14th centuries making a plea for tolerance between the three Abrahamic faiths. But this would be such a strange theme to on which build a whole pilgrimage that it might be best to think of it as a supplement to any pilgrimage to Santiago, from anywhere at all.

The hearing can be done in person in the Tower of Calahorra, a remodelled defensive tower at the southern end of the Roman bridge from the Great Mosque at Córdoba. Room 2 contains effigies of four sages whose discourses can be heard translated on headsets - and can be accessed in print via the website www.torrecahorra.com The Fundación Roger Garaudy, disseminating the idea of "*convivencia*" - mutual tolerance and respect, in this case between religions - is led by a French convert to Islam, who proceeded by way of an origin in atheism and Marxism, and a transitional phase as a Catholic.

While the statements put into the speakers' mouths are very striking, they conflict with other circumstances belonging to the

history of the time. They should be seen in the context of other medieval developments in faith, since mutual tolerance was not the only topic in dispute.

Averroës (1126-1198), the Muslim authority on Aristotle, is quoted as saying that an ideal society "is not a question of theocracy like that of Christians in Europe, where religious authority is in collusion with the power of tyrants. God, says the Koran, has filled the human being with His spirit. Let this spirit live in all of them!"

**"The force
ejecting them
came from the
Almohad empire"**

Both Averroës and the Jewish writer Maimonides (1135 -1204) were instrumental in the Aristotelian belief that the existence of God can be demonstrated by reason. They led up to the system of belief set out by Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225/6-1274).

The Maimonides figure in the exhibition is given the lines: "In my Guide to the Perplexed I have given the rules of allegorical reading, which takes history into account. Our historical problems must be resolved on the basis of eternal principles, including that man's reason is nothing but a participation in divine reason, which surpasses us infinitely and which can only be attained if we accept and assume biblical prophecy".



Torre de la Calahorra, Puente Romano, Triunfo de San Rafael y Mezquita

Both Aristotelian authorities, Muslim and Jewish, had historical consequences, but the times were such that their main effects were outside Spain. Each had to leave his place of origin in Córdoba, Maimónides to move to Egypt, whence his influence spread over the centuries. In both cases, the force ejecting them came from the Almohad empire, ruling in the cause of a “unity of God” which had no place for philosophy of Greek origin which was seen as “foreign”. The works of Averroës continued to be actively pursued in Christian circles, particularly in France, until the 16th century. Averroës’s doctrine included the deduction that the individual soul cannot survive death, although “intelligence” can.

Maimonides’s approach was that meaningful statements about God can only concern

that which He is not, since such things are otherwise beyond our comprehension. This, compressed into the “Yigdal” (He shall be great) continues to take a place similar to a Creed among Sephardic (Spanish origin) Jewish congregations, to the present day.

“The works of Averroës continued to be actively pursued in Christian circles”

For the other two figures on display, a political change in the context of the Christian Reconquest altered what might have been possible in the field of “toleration”. For two centuries since the end of the Caliphate (929-1031), which had ruled from Córdoba, there had been a rough balance

between expanding Christian states to the North and remaining “Taifa” states in the South. In 1212 the Almohad defence of the South was decisively broken at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. Other than the small Muslim kingdom of Granada (1248-1492),

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Muslim political power in Spain was now a lost cause.

Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), the next figure to speak, belongs to this time when the Muslim faith was not to be imposed by political power. His lines quoted include: "God is unity. The unity of love, the lover and the beloved. All love, whether we are aware of it or not, is the love of God. You make visible the invisible each time you surpass yourself: artist, when you express the beauty which God loves, lover, when you see and serve God in the one you love; scholar, when you uncover new truths, and leader, when you create for each person the conditions necessary for their development".

Ibn Arabi was one of the most popular mystic writers of his day but there were many others. The Sufi movement preceded and succeeded what was propagated in these times; it came near to tolerating Christian practice, and was subject to repression for this reason. It was followed by similar groups of adherents down to the present day. It may now be said, in a disparaging sense, that Sufi dances are a feature of the tourist industry, whatever the country involved. In no case has the Sufi approach to Islam appeared as a creed for the majority.

The last leader, displayed in sequence of time, is Alfonso X of Castile (1226-1288). Known as "*El Sabio*", the best translation of which is "The Learned" rather than "The Wise", since many of his political initiatives proved to be self-defeating. As a character, he is shown

to say, "The most glorious act of my reign was to create in Murcia, together with the Muslim philosopher Muhammad Al Riquiti, the first school in the world in which

Christians, Jews and Muslims were taught side by side". While it is certainly true that his court at Toledo featured many cultures side by side, this was not evidence of a deliberate policy of integrating the three religions. His military policy involved seeking alliance from the kingdom of Granada against other Christian states. He also raised enormous sums in taxes with the aim of being elected Holy Roman Emperor (an aim in which one of his rivals was Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III of England).



Cantigas Musicians

Finally, in 1282, his policies provoked so much resistance from his vassals, as well as from the Pope, that his son, the future Sancho IV, effectively deposed him from power, leaving him to exercise authority in Seville alone. From the aspect of his influence on Santiago pilgrimage, his contribution was immense and in many cases personal.

His *Cantigas de Santa María* are compiled from pilgrim songs and miracle stories, interwoven with extreme expressions of devotion to the Virgin Mary. They provide very direct insight into the thinking of the times. On the one hand, the miracle stories describe such extreme events that they

must have been seen as mythical even in their time; on the other, the works of visual art with which they are illustrated are a most excellent representation of life, courtly or everyday, and its manifestation between the three peoples of Spain during the fourteenth century.

To what extent can the Calahorra display be seen as a useful aid to the Santiago pilgrim? It is certainly very striking, and comes as a surprise if one is not expecting such a thing. But it would be just one item in the course of a very long pilgrimage (the entire Camino Mozárabe from Almería stretches for 1420 km, and does not even include Seville). The city of Córdoba would seem to be a preferable stand-alone addition to some other pilgrim route. While Averroës and Maimonides are towering historical figures, they should perhaps be seen in their own context as medieval philosophers. The Jewish Museum in the old Jewish Quarter

of Seville is possibly an even better guide to the contribution made by Maimonides than the surviving synagogue in Córdoba (CDs of Sephardic synagogue music can be bought in Seville).

Self-transcendence, as described by Ibn Arabi, could lead the modern reader to the prescriptions of Nietzsche. The writings of Baruch Spinoza, with overtones similar to the mystic writings of Ibn Arabi, were once condemned as atheistic by his synagogue authorities. His face is now featured on Israeli banknotes.

Whatever steps are thought right for entering the spirit of Alfonso *El Sabio*, his *Cantigas de Santa María*, with their illustrations, are an incomparable work of art which would enhance any pilgrimage.

The Camino as a Model for the Church

Stephen McCarthy

Some readers may recall my article in the September 2016 edition of the Bulletin in which I recounted how we came to establish our little place of welcome and spirituality on the Camino in the French village of Arthez de Béarn. But just to recap, several years ago, walking along the Camino de Santiago in France, and just outside the small village of Fonteilles, I came across a roadside memorial to, and photo of, Pepe Catusse, including a short inscription, which translates as follows:

“Friends, Pilgrims, Walkers: over many years one of my greatest pleasures was to come to the *chemin* to meet you, say hello, offer encouragement, chat for a minute, recount some stories... I came very often to sit here but, since 5 April 2008 I have gone to join the thousands of stars marking out your route, and from on high, I am accompanying you”.

I later commented to my wife, Carol, that sitting by the road talking to passing pilgrims must be a good way to die. Her response was: “In that case you’d better get on with it!”

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Gîte in the mist

In 2014, therefore, we bought a second home directly on the Camino in Arthez de Béarn in southwest France, and in the front garden pitched the old family tent as a place of welcome for passing pilgrims. We reasoned that there was no lack of gîtes and albergues along the Camino, and plenty of places for pilgrims to eat an evening meal, but there were only limited opportunities for just rest and conversation - spiritual or otherwise - along the Way. Two years later the old tent blew down in a storm. So the following year, 2017, we replaced it with a small wooden shelter, complete with a coffee corner and a small oratory.

The centrepiece of the oratory is a copy of Caravaggio's painting of the dinner at Emmaus, in the National Gallery in London. The story of the two disciples walking the road to Emmaus and meeting up with the risen Jesus on the way seemed particularly appropriate. More importantly, in this particular painting Caravaggio had imagined one of the disciples to be St James, as indicated by the shell he is wearing, though, of

course, this is not borne out in the scripture story itself, where Luke merely identifies one of them as Cleopas (LK24:18). Personally, I like to believe that the other was Cleopas's wife, Mary, who stood at the foot of the cross (Jn19:25). Anyway, the Emmaus story speaks of a surprise encounter along the road, which, as we shall later see, is a salient characteristic of the Camino experience.

Supported by a group of volunteers who stay in the house when we are not there, we now welcome about four hundred pilgrims who stop by each year. Some stay just a few minutes and perhaps take a coffee or use the toilet - very much appreciated by the ladies. Others stay longer and occasionally pray in the oratory. A few join us for morning prayer, which we hold at 8.30 each day. All have their own individual stories. Most pilgrims are French but some have set off from their homes across Europe - Germany, Austria, Switzerland, even as far away as the Czech Republic - and have already been walking for many weeks. Indeed it is a pity that few British pilgrims choose to walk along this stunningly beautiful Camino path in France.

Most of our visitors leave with a postcard of the Caravaggio painting (the National Gallery is now accustomed to our orders of several hundred postcards at a time!) Some like to leave a coin or two in our jar, though we make no charge for anything. Almost all let us take their photo which we put on the wall of the shelter, then they excitedly search for the photos of other pilgrims they have met on the Way. Some give us permission to share their photo and story on the blog of our website: www.caminoaccueilarthez.org/blog. A few send us emails or postcards when they reach Santiago and complete their pilgrimage. All display on their rucksacks

the precious shell, the symbol of their sense of belonging to this particular travelling community. And what is perhaps most pleasing and unexpected is the gratitude that pilgrims show in our visitors' book for the tiny gesture of hospitality that we offer.

As the 2018 pilgrim season drew to a close, I found myself reflecting on the Camino as a model for a pilgrim Church. If we think of the pilgrims as forming a kind of church, how might we identify the principal characteristics of this particular religious community?

In my experience only a minority of pilgrims are church-going Christians. But most, if not all, are looking for something, though few could articulate what that is. Many seem to start as walkers and end up as pilgrims. I remember one particular young woman who only began to feel like a pilgrim as she started walking *back* from Santiago. But the puzzle remains: if they are not practising Christians, why do pilgrims choose to leave home and walk, sometimes for weeks at a time, along this ancient pilgrim route towards a destination which has a totally mythical history? Those of us who are churchgoers might think they are seeking "salvation", but that is a word that has no meaning at all nowadays to people outside "churchy" circles – a topic, in my view, for some serious theological reflection.

What the pilgrims find, as those on the road to Emmaus, is support in their desolation and perplexities, incredible companionship from other pilgrims and sometimes from their hosts in the *gîtes* or *albergues*. And whether they are sleeping in church porches or graveyards – popular because they always have a water tap - or camping out in the countryside, or enjoying the relative luxury

of a dormitory or B&B, they rediscover how few material possessions they really need. And, like poor people with few possessions, pilgrims are surprisingly generous with what they do have – notably sharing their food or their favourite foot balms and medicines. They experience the physical pain and exhilaration of getting up each morning and setting off again along the road, notwithstanding tired muscles, blisters or worse, and facing perhaps drenching rain or blazing sunshine.



Yet, as the pilgrims walk along, sharing their stories or their hopes and disappointments with each other, or simply enjoying silent companionship, there is no approved message or doctrine along the Way. I am tempted to write that the Holy Spirit is remarkably free along the Camino - except that the Holy Spirit is always free. Perhaps I should rather say that pilgrims are especially open to Its promptings whether through contact with Creation or through other people.

Many pilgrims, even those not practising Christians, drop into the frequent churches along the Way. They may pray silently, light a

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candle or just sit for a moment in contemplation. (Somewhat surprisingly more of the Wayside churches seem to be open in France than in Spain. I believe the explanation for this is that in secular France the responsibility for keeping a church open falls to the local community, whereas in Spain the official Church authorities seem to have held onto this responsibility!) Stopping at churches is perhaps part of the necessary ritual of walking the Camino. But the greatest ritual is to be found at journey's end, with the midday Pilgrim Mass which fills the Cathedral at Santiago almost every day – at least in the pilgrim season. Often they will also have the good fortune to witness, swinging from high up in the nave, the Botafumeiro, which, or so it is said, was originally intended to disguise the smell of the newly-arrived pilgrims. To this of course is added the ritual hugging of the statue of St James behind the altar, which can bring tears to the eyes of many pilgrims after their long ordeal.



Finally, they will reflect on what they have “found” on their journey, new insights perhaps, or some peace or reconciliation, or a new way of perceiving the world and their life. Very often, because, of course, this is

the way the Holy Spirit works, what they find is not what they thought they were looking for. This is beautifully illustrated at the end of the fictional film *The Way*, when at least two of the principal characters find, not that they are changed persons, but that they have a greater acceptance of who they are.

Overall, what strikes me most in my reflection is that no one is in charge of the Camino; there is no overall authority. Certainly, the religious authorities in Santiago organise the pilgrim Masses and the issuing of certificates – the *Compostela* – to those pilgrims who wish to mark their achievement. There are many organisations, such as the Confraternity of St James, which support and guide pilgrims. But they are not formally “in charge”. So, although the Camino is undoubtedly Christian, it is not run by the Church, or indeed any “church”. Rather all along the Way it is the initiative of religious communities, or local village congregations, or even private individuals, like ourselves, who mould the Camino into a Christian institution.

The Camino, may not be the “field-hospital” that Pope Francis would like the Church to become, but it offers a model for our future Church – without hierarchy, open to all-comers, undogmatic - though certainly bearing the mark of Christ’s teaching and also in its own way demanding commitment. And all this is mixed with that dose of myth and ritual – not that the Eucharist is ever mere ritual - which all religions need

Steve McCarthy started walking the Camino from Le Puy en Velay in stages following his retirement from a career spent working for the European Union on its overseas aid programme. He continues to walk with friends along different parts of the Way each year - most recently the Camino Primitivo.

A different Camino Adventure

Sybille Yates

In May 2017 I moved to Santiago with the vague idea of “doing something for pilgrims”. Friends helped me to find a house to rent and I started to welcome pilgrims in the afternoon for a cup of coffee, tea and a chat about their Camino experience.

As I had two guest bedrooms, I was able to offer hospitality not only to friends and family, but also to pilgrims that found themselves, for whatever reason, without a place to sleep. All went well and I enjoyed being able to help pilgrims again. If somebody would have told me then that I was about to embark on a very different Camino adventure, helping to start a chaplaincy from scratch, I would have laughed out loud.

I then learned that John Rafferty, who started the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy, had proposed to David Hamid, the suffragan bishop in the Diocese in Europe of the Church of England, that he establish an Anglican Camino Chaplaincy, and

I contacted the bishop to offer to help. The bishop's reaction was positive and enthusiastic. Knowing my background in the Anglican Church he asked me to coordinate the initiative.

First I did some market research, asking for opinions on the proposal on Facebook and the Camino Forum. The positive reaction was overwhelming, including a number of volunteers, both priests and lay people. In this first year we agreed that it was sensible to run the Chaplaincy on a pilot basis to learn for future years. Therefore we settled on two six-week periods from May to the middle of June and from September to the middle of October.

Everyone agreed that relationships with other faith traditions were important and so Bishop Hamid contacted the Archbishop of Santiago and the Dean of the Cathedral, both of whom welcomed the initiative. I discussed the proposal with Pilgrim House and the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus who run the Camino Companions Service in Santiago. Everyone was enthusiastic.

Next on board came the Rev. Alasdair Kay, a parish priest from the diocese of Derby, and a very experienced pilgrim. Soon our respective roles were defined. Alasdair would lead on the recruitment of priests and pastoral workers, Bishop Hamid would lead on taking up references, following the Church's safeguarding procedure, and issue Permissions To Officiate. My role was to sort out accommodation for priests and chaplaincy assistants, find a venue for



David Hamid

Rev. Liska Stefko

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Sunday Eucharist, help devise a daily work programme, and provide on-the-ground support in Santiago.

The Diocese of Europe announced the initiative and we posted about it on Facebook and through personal contacts. Many priests and lay people volunteered, so much so that we soon had enough volunteers not only for the pilot but to develop the Chaplaincy if it were to be approved for a further period. The application process was simple – the only additional requirement being that applicants had to have gained a Compostela.

And so the Anglican Camino Chaplaincy began. The first volunteer priest, the Rev. Liska Stefko from the diocese of Toronto (Canada) arrived at the end of April, followed shortly by Alan Pearce, a lay reader from Australia. Our first team was made up of three different nationalities and three different “home churches”.

Very appropriate for the Camino! Subsequently, the team was joined by a priest and wife team from the UK, a priest and wife team from Northern Ireland and two more priests from the UK. These volunteers served here in Santiago for very different time spans, from nine days to nearly two months.

The pilot has ended. During the 12-week period we provided fifteen Sunday services in the Saint Mark room, which the Parador provided free of charge, and twelve Wednesday services at my house, followed by a shared meal. We visited several sick pilgrims in hospital and albergues, served countless cups of coffee and tea to whoever came to our Open House in the afternoons, and listened to many pilgrim stories and blessed pilgrims. Since our priests were

easily identifiable, they also blessed many rosaries during our wanderings about town and the last kilometres of the different Caminos that lead to Santiago.

Although the Chaplaincy now has a winter break there is still work to do, praying for those that asked for our prayers and for those that God had laid on our hearts; preparing for the next pilgrim season and organizing next year’s volunteer rota, and discerning what we want to offer to pilgrims next year.

So far our plans for 2019 are threefold:

1. We want to offer our ministry 2019 during the whole pilgrim season, starting April/May and running all way through to October/November.
2. We will continue to offer Sunday Eucharist and hopefully more than just one midweek Eucharist, followed by a shared meal, here in Santiago. We will go out and about in the town to chat with pilgrims, and/or visit those that ask for a visit, in hospitals etc. We will open the door of the house to whoever wants to enter and offer them hospitality and a listening ear.
3. In addition to these activities in Santiago we hope to also run a second project, with Camino Chaplains going on pilgrimage, on whichever route they choose, and ministering to the pilgrims they meet along the way: Pilgrim priests on the Way.

If you would like to know more about what we do, and what our exact dates and events for 2019 are, have a look here: www.egeria.house/chaplaincy.

The bell-ringer and his family who lived on the roof*

John Rafferty

Shortly after I moved to Santiago, one of the Cathedral staff told me that there had once been a bell-ringer who lived on the roof of the building. Whether he said it or not, I assumed that the bell-ringer had lived in one of the towers. That's not that unusual; even nowadays some cathedrals and major churches provide accommodation for both priests and staff. For example, many cathedrals have "live in" caretakers and some cathedral organists live in housing in the cathedral precincts.

I thought no more about this until the other day I got a message from Lois who lives two doors down. He is the son of an old Santiago family. His father, now wheelchair-bound, was a famous champion *gaitero*, a bagpiper. The message read, "John, I'm attaching a curious photograph of the old house of the Cathedral's bell-ringer which was on the



Fandino House

roof of the cathedral. My family knew the last family who lived there. It is a pity it was demolished and not conserved".

I was astonished at the sight of a little dwelling on the roof of the great medieval cathedral and did a little research. Some facts emerged from an article published in the newspaper *La Voz de Galicia* in 2009 by Nacho Miras, which I've translated and expanded:

This is the story of Ricardo Fandiño, the last bell-ringer, who lived in a house 40 metres up on the roof with his wife and children. Ricardo wrote everything down. Therefore, the 20 years he lived on the roof from 1942 to 1962 are well documented.

In Ricardo's diaries there are drawings, sketches, handwritten notes and even a date stamp on the front of an envelope from the Bank of Bilbao. Although Fandiño died in 1988, thanks to these documents and the testimony of his children, we can get an insight into what life was like for the last people who literally lived on the roof of the cathedral.

Ricardo Fandiño was a young tailor from Sobrado dos Monxes. In 1940, when he was 28 years old, he is recorded in the residency register of the City of Santiago. Then he got the job as bell-ringer in the cathedral. On 16 January 1942 he recorded in his diary: "I started as bell-ringer, being paid 180 pesetas a month. This was arranged between the Dean don Antonio Villasante, my godfather don Salustiano Portela Pazos, and the Treasurer don Claudio Rodríguez. At that

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time all employees had the same salary, 180 pesetas a month". Increasingly, mechanical means were being used to ring bells in the great churches of Europe. Perhaps the reason Ricardo kept notes is that he realised that he was the last of a trade which would soon become extinct.

As for living in the house on the roof, "the dampness was the worst", says Jesús Fandiño, Ricardo's son who, until he was well into his twenties, shared the small shack with his parents and his brothers Ricardo and Feli. The small dwelling was located on the roof of the cathedral, next to the tower on the right as you face the facade from the Obradoiro. "The world was different up there, with views over the city that made you a kind of guardian of a watchtower of Christianity."

The Fandiños lived their lives above the heads of the other Compostelanos; they were the citizens who were closest to heaven. That was very special. "The house would have been three or four hundred years old," says Jesus, "with a large kitchen, a dining room and two rooms. We stayed there until they began to remodel the roofs and removed all the tiles and we moved to Entrerriós".

The family was not alone in living on the roof. There were also chickens and a rooster that crowed punctually every morning when the sun began to appear behind San Paio de Antealtares. The henhouse was installed in a side nave, flanked by walls which rise many metres above the cloister. The "quiquiriqui" (cock-a-doodle-doo) of Fandiño's cock was famous in Compostela, just like its owner. And there were no eggs more holy than those from the aerial chickens of the bell-ringer.

A diary entry from 1943, a Holy Year, reads, "The manufacturer Villasante gave me five pesetas for each peal of the bell as the official pilgrimages entered the cathedral, "The tailor picked up in his notes."

"It is said that we kept and killed a pig up there," says Jesús Fandiño Vidal, "but that is an urban legend. Perhaps it was the previous bell-ringer. But it is a good story. What we did have were many pigeons to shoot and eat."

Ricardo was employed first as a bell-ringer when his predecessor, José María González, retired. But the salary of 180 pesetas was hardly enough to feed his family and so he began to take orders as a tailor. At first he worked in a room in the bell tower, next to the house, and from 1961 in a room on a floor below. "With the same skill that handles the bells, turning them with amazing agility, he cut a gentleman's dress of impeccable line", said a report in the *Diario de Barcelona* in 1968.

When the official tailor of the cathedral, Emilio Quinteiro, died, Fandiño started to be the tailor to the clergy.

The downside, he wrote, is that the priests used to pay him for the work with words and not money, "God will reward you, Fandiño" were words useless for buying potatoes in the shops of Santiago. That is why he always said that he preferred to tailor clothes for men and not for God.

Ricardo Fandiño has been compared to Quasimodo, the character in Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. But there is a difference between the two: Ricardo Fandiño, bell-ringer and tailor, actually existed.

**This story first appeared on the Camino Pilgrim Facebook page*

"It is said that we kept and killed a pig up there"

Healing miles: Gifts from the Camino Norte and Primitivo

Susan Alcorn

Oakland CA, Shepherd Canyon Books, 2017, £13.48. ISBN 978-0-936034-06-5

The writer and her husband are seasoned long-distance “senior” walkers and no strangers to pilgrimage hikes across Spain. This very personal account describes their journeys to Santiago de Compostela via the northern ways, hugging the beautiful coast along the Bay of Biscay and through the hills and mountains to join the Camino Francés for the final miles into Santiago.

Other reviewers have recognised that while this is primarily a book about specific walks to a specific place, it is also a book about ageing, and I found it refreshing to read how this fit couple, both well into their 70s, had to adapt their pace and approach in order to achieve their goal and maintain the pleasure and satisfaction their long walk provided. With Fitbits, tablet and mobiles adding to their - at times - isolated walk, they are firmly in the 21st century.

Throughout the book, Susan Alcorn practises her aims of recognising and recording every day some *Joy*, some *Satisfaction*, some *Appreciation* and some *Gratitude* – a quartet of mindful elements that can be applied very positively to all our days, but which focused and tested her during the long weeks in Spain. The narrative covers their various trips between Spring 2015 and Spring 2016 from their home in California, to complete these northern Caminos. The “healing” of the title refers to Susan’s mobility problems which made the physical aspects of walking a real challenge, and to the emotional strain

of knowing that during their first walk (the Norte in 2015), the life of her 104-year-old mother thousands of miles away was coming to its end. These are problems not restricted to older people, but they are more likely to affect them as their family responsibilities and the changes of ageing impact on their ability to just walk free and “discover” themselves, as so much Camino literature describes. This couple had to remain in touch with family, and they had to walk within their limits and adapt their mileage (sometimes just four or five miles) simply to be able to keep “on track”, but they always looked outwards and beyond their own feelings.

Alcorn is sensitive to the economic and social problems of the poorer areas through which they travelled and they were concerned to see the degradation to the Camino Francés as they had known it, with increasing litter, disrespect for the Way, overcrowding, commercialism and noise.

The going is hard – harder than the Francés – and often quite isolating, as there are fewer fellow-walkers and thus less chance to chat and exchange experiences. This is no “getting away from it all” escape. It’s a very down-to-earth, but vivid, day-by-day account of distances, leaving possessions behind in hotels, the beauty (and ugliness) of places and landscapes seen, people encountered, places stayed in, weather endured, nature observed, and of chronic pain (both physical and emotional) stoically coped with. Theirs was not a religious pilgrimage, not even a spiritual one - the emphasis is very much on the practical aspects, but throughout their dogged humanity of “keeping on keeping on” shines through. Their mantra is “hike your own hike”.

Book Reviews

We are given the background history and myth to the Camino and St James; there are relevant quotations heading each section of their journey; little maps; the terrain and the state of the waymarking is described; details of which *albergues*, hotels and restaurants they used (and their comments – good and bad – about them), but this would not be the kind of guide to carry with you on the Norte or the Primitivo. It is the sort to savour before you leave, to study

with your map and make notes of places and recommendations and to select from the extensive and helpful personal planning advice which fills the last 50-odd pages. So much detail and so many references! One has to be aware that this is written from an American perspective with language and spelling (plus specific references in the “planning” section), which occasionally puzzle – or delight – like “dude ranches”! I hadn’t come across the term “cookie cutter” décor before – a visit to the internet confirmed that it means bland and mass-produced. Not what they considered the CSJ hostel in Miraz to be. They had booked accommodation elsewhere in the village but were welcomed for a visit to St Martín which met their approval.

I was disappointed to find my reading checked in a few places by typos but as a whole this is a solid, very detailed, very readable and useful contribution to pilgrimage literature, from a travel writer who knows her stuff and carries the reader from page to page.

Helen Willson

Walking a Rainbow

Michael Shearer

*CreateSpace, 2018, 340pp £7.99,
Kindle £3.03. ISBN 978 1722279486*

Some Camino books are written as an immediate response to the particular experience. Others have a much longer gestation. In the 1980s Michael Shearer was both a lecturer in philosophy and an early CSJ member who walked to Santiago with his 9-year-old son, Kes. Nearly forty years on, his account is deeply thoughtful and reflective. Although he speaks of the places visited it seeks to be relatively timeless, being an in-depth description of the feelings, moods, emotions and thoughts as they emerge, rather than a blow-by-blow account of their pilgrimage.

Michael is also a poet; several of his poems appear in the CSJ’s Pilgrim Anthology, edited by Phinella Henderson and published in 1994. He writes well of the colours and textures of the landscape and the mind. Mostly the universal observations are still recognisable and resonate, though it is a surprise to have Phinella’s name found in a guest book. Both the Irache wine fountain and Gaucelmo are still to come.

By meeting some extraordinary pilgrims Michael learns that he should be looking for signs, places of a particular energy and power, along the Way. At Eunate, San Bol, Rabanal, and Santiago he explores the particular emotions. Having arrived at Santiago and feeling still restless, Michael and Kes and new friend Claudio continue to Finisterre, before the Camino was well marked. The final days bring together many of the threads of thinking and philosophy opened up by the walk.

Marion Marples

Johnnie Walker writes:

The Cathedral of Santiago recently announced the suspension of all Masses and other liturgical celebrations for a period of at least a year. This is to enable planned major restoration works to be carried out in preparation for the Holy Year in 2020.

The 12 noon Pilgrim Mass has been transferred to the Church of San Francisco. The other regular masses of the Cathedral are being held in Iglesia de Santa María Salomé in the Rúa Nova.:

- From Monday to Friday: 7.30 am, 9.00 am, 10.00 am, 7.00 pm
- Saturdays: 7.30 am, 9.00 am, 10.00 am, 6.00 pm, 7.00 pm
- Sundays: 7.30 am, 9.00 am, 10.00 am, 1.00 pm, 6.00 pm, 7.00 pm

The Chapel of the Corticela, accessed from inside the Cathedral, is a separate parish and Mass will continue to be celebrated daily at 11 am.

Mass will be said in English in the Chapel of the Pilgrims' Office at 10 am from Monday to Saturday, starting in April – the date will be confirmed on the website of the Pilgrims' Office.

Mass for important events such as the Feast of Saint James will be held in the Church of San Martín Pinario.

The programme of works inside the Cathedral is extensive and is being funded and supervised by the Director General of the Heritage Department of the Regional Government. The total cost of the internal

restoration is 4.5 million €, which is part of the overall programme of repairs to the Cathedral for which a grant of 17 million € has already been made.

The Botafumeiro will not be used until the works are completed.

The Cathedral remains open from 9am to 7pm for visits to the Tomb of the Saint and to Hug the Apostle [sic]. Entry and exit is by the door onto the Plaza Platerias.

Professor George Greenia, who gave a talk at the last AGM, writes to solicit Members' help with the following project, originally addressed to American Pilgrims on the Camino, the US equivalent of the Confraternity:

Please tell us what you think of mobile technology and app use on the Camino.

My name is Rob Nickerson, Professor Emeritus of Information Systems at San Francisco State University and a member of American Pilgrims on the Camino since 2012.

We need your help again. Five years ago we carried out a survey of mobile technology and smartphone apps used by pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago. We learned a lot, but technology moves rapidly and we suspect that many things have changed in the intervening years. Therefore, we are repeating the survey in order to see what changes have occurred. We want to learn what technology and apps pilgrims use today, what they find useful, whether they feel the technology and apps enhance or detract from the Camino experience, and what they would like to have in an "ideal" smartphone app.

Member Pages

Whether or not you responded to our survey five years ago, we would appreciate 20 minutes of your time to complete the new survey. The survey is completely anonymous - your identity cannot be connected in any way to your answers - and it is voluntary, so you can opt out at any time. We plan to publish a summary of the results on the American Pilgrims website for the benefit of all pilgrims. This information will help pilgrims like you decide what mobile technology and smartphone apps they want to use, if any, when walking the Camino. Here is a link to the survey. Just click on it to begin!

www.sfsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6MequB6fWIsWSuV

If you have any questions please contact me at the email address below.

Thanks for your time. Buen Camino.

Rob Nickerson
Professor Emeritus of Information Systems
San Francisco State University
RNick@sfsu.edu

The Editor writes:

In my editorial I mentioned The Pilgrim, a restaurant shortly to open (in April) in Liverpool, with an menu based on the cuisine of the Camino. Though I expressed some scepticism about the project, I would be very interested to hear, and to print in the Members' pages, the views of any readers who have dined there, and specifically just how authentic they found it to be.

Secondly, in the article in *1843* the author writes "in Flanders, Belgium, one prisoner each year is pardoned on condition that he walks to Santiago, carrying a heavy pack". Can anyone throw light on this custom?

Freddy Bowen

A new year for the CSJ office and we remain as busy as ever! Our new website design, recurring events like Office Open Days and CSJ Wine Bar and updating our guidebooks have been keeping us occupied so far, but there is much to look forward to.

In January we registered around 170 attendees at our Annual General Meeting, with new and long-time members (and some non-members) from across the country. We were delighted to welcome Professor George Greenia of William and Mary College, Virginia (pictured) to talk about pilgrim narratives and literacy, along with some fascinating pilgrim artefacts.



Prof Greenia's Keynote speech at the AGM

We were also fortunate to have Carsten Maegaard of the Danish Confraternity and Monique Walrave from the Dutch Confraternity, who both gave us presentations on their thriving associations. In addition, we also had Mercedes Carballo from the tourist board of A Coruña who came to talk to us about the Camino Inglés and the continuing work being done to promote it as an official

starting point, as well as Guy Hayward of the British Pilgrimage Trust who reported on their collaboration with A Coruña and the CSJ in promoting the Camino Inglés in the UK, with a couple of routes in England already being granted official status as the Camino Inglés. To top it all off, we also briefly heard from Tony Lemboye, our keynote speaker at last year's AGM.

He gave us an update on Young Star Mentoring, his charity dedicated to taking young people who have recently left care on the Camino for personal development and a sense of perspective. Tony is always looking for support to carry on his great work. If you are interested in sponsoring his, you can visit his webpage at www.youngstarmentoring.org.uk

In February we welcomed almost a hundred people to the CSJ office for our London Practical Pilgrim Day, with many more pilgrims undertaking the Portuguese and English routes to Santiago than in previous years. We hope our days in Manchester (sold out for the second year running) and Edinburgh are just as successful! Many thanks to all the volunteers who help organise and carry out these popular events.

This year we are increasing the number of day-pilgrimages organised by the CSJ in the UK:

- Saturday 1 June: Hyde Abbey to Winchester Cathedral (6.5 miles), following a section of the St James Way via the shrine of St Swithun and Hospital St Cross
- Saturday 20 July: Chester-le-Street to Durham (8 miles) via Finchale Priory on the newly recognised English

Camino Pilgrim™ Notebook

section of the Camino Inglés, on which the medieval hermit St Godric made his pilgrimage to Santiago, alongside the river to the Cathedral

- Saturday 31 August: Kilpeck to Hereford Cathedral (8 miles), the final section of the newly designated St Thomas Way, along which an unlikely group of pilgrims travelled from Swansea in 1290. Among them was William Craigh, who having been hanged in Swansea, came back to life in what local people understood as a miracle of St Thomas of Hereford.

If you are interested in taking part in any of these walks, please contact the Office for more information. Remember, too, that you can look at the back cover of this Bulletin to find out who your nearest local group leader is, with whom you can get in touch for information about their own activities and events.

In the Northwest, for example, Ultraia Mancunia are organising three walks: at Hebden Bridge (14 April), Tatton Park (16 June), and in North Wales (7 September). Contact Ned Spencer for more details.

For members around Bristol, the Creans have organised a Camino Coffee morning on 26 March and a St James's Day walk in Kilton, Somerset (25 July). Contact them for further information.

We also have three newly-formed groups in Surrey, the Thames Valley and West Wales – see the back cover for contacts.

If you would like to start your own group, or organise events that you think would be interesting to CSJ members, please let us know and we can advertise for you!

Lastly, please note that a financial report with updates and corrections to the previously distributed CSJ Year End Accounts up to September 2018 will be sent out with the June edition of the Bulletin. Many thanks to Tony Ward and Michael Walsh for all their ongoing efforts.



Report from Albergue San Martín in Miraz

Priscilla White

We are about to hold the first of two Preparation Days when our volunteers come to learn about both the CSJ ethos of traditional hospitality that makes staying at San Martín such a pleasure, as well as the practicalities of running an *albergue* in this remote region of Galicia. We will be opening our door to welcome pilgrims once again on Palm Sunday.

After last winter's challenges of cracked pipes and empty tanks, we now have someone visiting regularly to see that no disasters occur while the building is empty during the winter months.



Iglesia de Santiago, Miraz

The statistics for 2018 are as follows: 2,382 pilgrims from 64 different countries stayed at San Martín during theseason, 370 fewer than in 2017. Donations were also down from the previous year by €880.

Although it is not easy to pinpoint the exact reason for this, we must bear in mind that there are now six other *albergues* within 15km of San Martín and this must have an impact on numbers. There is also a new variant route

after Baamonde which sends pilgrims directly to Sobrado dos Monxes, thereby avoiding Seixon and Miraz. Alternatively, it may just be that pilgrims are choosing routes other than the Francés and Norte fearing that they have become overcrowded. It will be interesting to see how numbers stack up in 2019.

Pilar continues to contribute to the volunteers' five-a-day by producing salads and vegetables from her garden in exchange for our stale bread, which she feeds to the local hens. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience of walking to Santiago with her son Maxi and, at a fiesta in Miraz, she found herself being swirled round the dance floor by one of our gallant *hospitaleros*.

Parga market is always a highlight for volunteers who happen to be here at the time. It is like stepping back to a time when markets had livestock, farm implements, wooden clogs and vegetables from the kitchen garden. Lunch, eaten outside on trestle tables, consists of such local delicacies as fried pig's ears and *pulpo a la Gallega*.

Despite our best efforts, we cannot still offer regular access to the church and it remains closed for regular services. However, we were fortunate to have several pilgrim-priests staying overnight who agreed to say Mass for the pilgrims in the garden.

There is 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 from pilgrims who spend the night with us.

The building has been painted in and out, the grass and hedges will be trimmed and cut for our opening date and we look forward to welcoming all the pilgrims who walk through our doors looking for the traditional hospitality we offer at San Martín.

Refuge Reports

Report from Refugio Gaucelmo, Rabanal del Camino

Julie Davies and Dave Arthur

2019 March Working Party : Dave Arthur, Ray Woolrich, Peter Garlick, Paul Murray

First Hospitaleros: Muriel Porter (UK), Ray Woolrich (UK)

The doors may be closed on Refugio Gaucelmo but work and planning for the 2019 season has never stopped. The much - needed external and internal painting has been completed. The doors are looking very smart with a good, strong, welcoming red colour. The balcony, old doors to the *huerta* and lintels have been rejuvenated with coats of black preservative and varnish, an impressive job which came in within budget.

An inspection during January by Dave Arthur (Property Co-ordinator for Refugio Gaucelmo) showed the building to be in good condition and weathering the winter very well. There was no evidence or smell of dampness - a relief in such an old building.



Red front door

On this visit, thinking ahead to opening on 1 April, Dave took to Gaucelmo more than 3,000 Fiscal Registration forms for registering pilgrims, ten new fleecy blankets and 2,000 coffee filters - the basics now already there! To keep *hospitaleros* and pilgrims warm, a new grill for the wood-burning stove has been ordered, plus two cubic metres of firewood, to be delivered on 28 March. The first few duties can be very cold and unpredictable and the stove is appreciated by *hospitaleros* and pilgrims alike.

The barn, a short distance across the patio from the main building, now has a very smart-looking boot rack made by Dave. Pilgrims can keep their boots on now until they have a place to rest. Previously, some had walked across in their socks after taking their boots off, or struggled to find other shoes to change into. Pilgrims no longer have to place them under their beds, which must be a relief in some cases to other members of the dorm!



Boot rack for barn

The *huerta* is looking good and ready for next season. There has been an invasion by moles, with the usual mounds generously dotted around, and a branch was blown down from one tree.

March jobs include organising a gas-fitter to come and repair the burners on the stove, and fixing two ceramic tiles on the wall in the outside washing area. The original ones had been removed by plumbers to fix a leak.



Colony of moles!

To the left of Gaucelmo an extension is being erected by the monks on the piece of derelict land where Father Pius used to keep his compost pile. It is to be completed at the end of March - hopefully! The removal of the walnut tree (which was necessary for the project) has benefited Gaucelmo.

No longer is there a huge pile of leaves to clean up in the Spring, no large branches overhang our Refugio, and no leaves gather in the gutters on the roof. It is hoped this will ease the problem with leaks in the Refugio. I'm sure *hospitaleros* will be bursting with curiosity to be given a "guided tour"!

April 1st will soon be here. The 2019 rota is complete, with 36 volunteers from the UK, Ireland, Belgium, Lithuania, Italy, Australia and the USA. Anyone tempted to become a *hospitalero* at Gaucelmo, Rabanal del Camino or at San Martín, Miraz should please contact the CSJ office; the 2020 rota is already beginning to fill up!

News from the Library

Margaret Simonot, Librarian

This is by no means a full list of all the new items acquired: for example, I have included only recently published guides, and omitted older ones. Pamphlets have also not been included. However, there is always a list of the most recent additions to the Library on the general search page of the Catalogue. We continue to receive journals and bulletins from a wide range of organisations associated with the Camino and they can be viewed in the Library, but we have never catalogued them individually. Do come in and have a browse or send in a query to the Library via the Office.

Association des Amis du chemin de Saint Jacques en Pyrénées Atlantiques, **Chemin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle; Lourdes – Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port** 2015

Boulting, Laurence (director), **Within the Way without** 2002 DVD

Brierley, John, **Camino Portugués; Lisbon- Porto-Santiago; Camino Central, Camino de la Costa. Maps** Camino Guides, 2019

Butcher, Justin, **Walking to Jerusalem** Hodder & Stoughton, 2018

d'o Río Martínez, Bizén, **El sello de creencia jacobeo del siglo XIII, antecedente de la credencial en los caminos jacobeos altoaragoneses** 2014

Fernandes, Luís Filipe, **Peregrinos de Santiago Paulus**, 2018

Kelly, Gerald, Camino de Santiago, **Practical preparation and background** 2018
www.caminoguide.net

Kelly, Gerald, **Walking guide to the Camino de Santiago. History – culture-architecture** Gerald Kelly, 2019

Kelly, Gerald, **Walking guide to the Camino del Baztan; from Bayonne to Pamplona** Gerald, Kelly, 2019

Nicolas, Fernan, **Les Peintures murales à la Chapelle des Moines de Berzé-la-Ville** Académie de Mâcon, 2005

O'Sullivan, Mark H., **Camino ready. Backpacks, boots and (no) blisters; preparing for the Camino and other long treks** Mark H. O'Sullivan, 2018

Pittet, Olivia, **The Camino made easy: reflections of a Parador pilgrim** Archway Publishing, 2018

Rafferty, John, **Pilgrim Guide to the Celtic Camino and the City of Santiago de Compostela** Camino Society Ireland, 2018

Solano, Alberto, **El Enigma Compostelano** Xacobeo Galicia, 2016



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