



Confraternity of Saint James

Bulletin



September 2014

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Proofreader	Liz Crean
Production Editor	Liz Keay
Production Coordinator	Marion Marples

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Cover photograph
St. James and Our
Lady of Pilar,
Nazareth, Israel
by Gosia Brykczyńska

Editorial

Gosia Brykczyńska

As you are reading this in early autumn, the majority of this year's pilgrims to Santiago will have already completed their pilgrimages. From now on, from October through to March, it will only be the intrepid winter pilgrim that will see fit to set out onto the camino – braving the snow covered mountains and venturing through the milk-soup opaqueness of the winter mists that settle on the *meseta*. But autumn is not devoid of activities connected to St James; for it is also the time when the Spanish speaking world celebrates *Hispanidad*, or *El Día de la Raza*, 12 October *being* the date of *Columbus's* discovery of the New World; known in the USA as Columbus Day! This date in Spain is also the feast of *Nuestra Señora de Pilar*.

The feast of Our Lady of the Pillar, according to ancient tradition, celebrates the first ever apparition of *Mary, even during her lifetime!* Legend tells us that she appeared to a weary St James as he rested on the banks of the River Ebro, despondent that he had managed to convert so few locals to the Christian faith. Appearing on a pillar, she re-assured James about the eventual success of his venture and soon afterwards he returned to Jerusalem where he was beheaded. She asked him to build a chapel on the spot of the apparition, now a baroque basilica, built near the spot – in Zaragoza. There is much that one could write about this most unusual of Marian shrines, but because it connects with St James, I thought it deserved at least a mention in this autumn *Bulletin*. Meanwhile, on the cover of the *Bulletin* is a photograph of a mosaic representing this very event, in Nazareth, Israel. It was commissioned by Spanish pilgrims to the Holy Land.

Our autumn *Bulletin* contributions touch – completely by chance – on St Francis of Assisi; his connections with the camino, his love of travelling light and his embrace of poverty. Dermot Wynne discovers his pilgrim-self through the presence of St Francis, while Rob Yeomans discovers the essential nature of the camino and its core spirituality. Kathleen Jowitt rejoices in the company of angels while Chris Fawcett describes the 'perfect joys' of the modern pilgrim and how – in the end – it opened her heart and gave her hope. Brian Mooney similarly

to St Francis, crosses Europe on foot – all the way. Lastly, we have two poem-songs – one a reworking of a traditional hymn by Rosemary Hill and the other by Tom Friesen which is based on an Irish folk-song. Recent ceremonies commemorating the outbreak of the First World War, have reminded me of the catchy marching tune of the soldiers– It’s a long way to Tipperary... written by Jack Judge and Harry Williams in 1912. Some years ago, a CSJ member reworked it as It’s a long way to Santiago... It would appear that re-working songs and hymns is a popular “pilgrimage” sort of activity; something that comes naturally! Long may this habit continue!

Chris Fawcett, in her insightful article touches on some problems and issues that are currently cropping up along the camino and also obliquely referred to by Brian Mooney. CSJ Trustees are trying to understand what may be the implications for us of all these changes and for the running of our two albergues.

As you know, all CSJ activities are focused on helping pilgrims, in a variety of ways. We are an organisation run by pilgrims for pilgrims and if any of you have the inspiration to give something back to the camino by helping us in the CSJ office, as hospitaleros, or as the *Bulletin* editor (Yes, I will be stepping down soon), or to help on the publications committee, or to give help with our shortly-to-be launched new website – please feel invited and welcomed to join us. John Revell was a CSJ proof reader par excellence so the error in his date of birth, in the obituary printed in *Bulletin 126*, only highlights the desperate need we have for more eyes and hands. Most of all we need more joyous volunteering pilgrim hearts so that the CSJ can continue the great work of helping pilgrims reach Santiago. ¡Ultreia!



A Roundabout Return

Brian Mooney

I have become alarmingly medieval in my approach to pilgrimage, believing that a pilgrim walk is not complete without the return leg. My conversion was quite sudden. Having walked to Rome in 2010, on my return I was challenged by a friend who observed that pilgrims in the Middle Ages didn't have the luxury of flying home. Two years later, I flew to Rome and squared the circle by walking back to my home in Coggeshall, North Essex.

On a similar whim, I flew to Spain in May 2014. I had walked 2,300 kms from Walsingham to Santiago de Compostela in 2000, thereby linking two of the great medieval pilgrim shrines. It was time for the return trip. Spain was my home for many years – I worked there as a foreign correspondent – and I decided to take a few liberties and make a somewhat indirect or roundabout trip home. Instead of beginning in Santiago, I would set out from Madrid. But even with such a devious or unorthodox route, for most of the way I found that I was never far from a familiar scallop shell waymark. Sooner or later in Western Europe, so it appears, all roads lead to and from Santiago.

Indeed for the first four days I followed what has come to be called the Camino de Madrid, the route that leads from the Spanish capital to Sahagún where it links up with the Camino Francés. I was in two minds about using my brand new Confraternity's pilgrim passport – the bright yellow booklet that had been so much my companion on the way to Santiago. I decided that fate would determine whether or not to use it, and so made my way from Barajas airport to the Iglesia de Santiago y San Juan Bautista in the heart of old Madrid. The church was open and a priest was in the sacristy preparing for morning mass. He readily offered to stamp my pilgrim passport and was happy for me to sit on a pew in the chancel and change into my walking boots. As I did so, I looked up at the retablo above the high altar – a striking painting of Santiago Matamoros. Setting aside the bloodthirsty sight of a Christian Saint slaying Moors, the image re-ignited my enthusiasm for the Spanish cult of St James and gave my journey purpose and a sense of direction – even if I was slightly off course. I felt with the Apostle's blessing, I could legitimately treat myself as a returning pilgrim.

A few steps from the Church led me to the Plaza Mayor and then to the Puerta del Sol, the Piccadilly Circus of Madrid and from which all distances to and from the capital are measured. As well as a km 0 stone in the pavement there is also a plaque on the walls of the old police headquarters giving the height above sea level of this particular spot – 650.7 metres. I always walk with an altimeter, a useful check for navigation, and I re-set it in anticipation of the climb ahead over the Sierra de Guadarrama.

I relish the challenge of walking in and out of large cities, and particularly enjoy marking the changing tempo and the gradual transformation of the surrounding environment. Walking out of Madrid is very simple; turn left or north on the Paseo de Recoletos and keep going until you reach the Cuatro Torres, the four modern skyscrapers which now define the northern end of the city. Along the way, I passed my old offices and a far more significant landmark in the build-up to the Football World Cup – Real Madrid's Bernabéu Stadium.

On reaching Plaza de Castilla, I was glad to have to hand an old Confraternity guide book by Marigold and Maurice Fox. I saluted them both, although sadly Maurice is no longer with us. They give a useful step by step guide to a slightly complicated section that involves crossing the ring road, a motorway and railway. Their guide was first published in 2000 and has since been largely superseded by wonderful waymarking along the route put in by the *Asociación de Amigos de los Caminos de Santiago de Madrid*. Indeed once clear of the M40 and past the Fuencarral cemetery, the way enters open country and follows a succession of *vias pecuarias*, or drovers' roads, with scallop waymarks and yellow arrows aplenty. I skirted the walls of El Pardo Palace, home of the former dictator General Franco, and set course across the plateau towards the great granite wall of snow-capped mountains to the north.

I followed the Camino de Madrid for four days culminating with the magnificent stage, crossing the Guadarrama Mountains on the *Calzada Romana* – the old Roman road – over the *Puerto de la Fuenfría*. The original paved stones and arches of three bridges remain intact because the route ceased to be used after the Bourbons drove another road across the range close by to serve their palace at La Granja. The Puerto is 1,792 metres above sea level and is the high point of the route from Madrid. At the top a bronze plaque portrait on a rough hewn granite plinth commemorates José Antonio Cimadevila

Covelo (1919-2001), a Galician who was the driving force behind the resurrection and waymarking of the Madrid route.

The way continues through natural pine forest until it suddenly opens out with distant views of Segovia and the vast plains of Castilla over which I would walk. I parted company with the Camino de Madrid the following morning at the twelve-sided Knights Templar church of the Vera Cruz, just to the north of Segovia in the shadow of its fairytale castle. The way to Santiago was northwest; I was heading north.

Crossing Castilla on foot was a revelation. The scorched red earth *meseta* is seemingly empty, but in fact it was once heavily populated, and with regular intervals I would descend little river valleys into another village, or a village would emerge in the distance from its earth-coloured camouflage, announced by a grain silo or the tower of its now oversized church and invariably with a white stork or two nesting on top. Occasionally I would fall on a castle, an ancient river crossing or the ruins of long-abandoned windmills. I marvelled at the immense horizons, and never tired of the vast shimmering fields of ripening corn and the wayside carpets of red poppy, and flowering sainfoin, echium, mallow, crucifer and mayweed. The birdsong was almost orchestral, and for many days in late May and early June I was accompanied by the chirpy call of cuckoos.

My route took me through Peñafiel, a town dominated by its imposing castle, and the lush vineyards of the Duero Valley and then across the Provincia de Burgos stopping at Tortoles de Esqueva, Villahoz, Olmillos de Sasamón, Nuez de Arriba, Escalada and Corconte.

Approaching Olmillos de Sasamón on a lonely provincial road I was suddenly aware of loud voices and shouting. Noise is a Spanish national product, but this was more strident and more persistent. On the brow of a hill I could see a long line of pilgrims making their way on foot and by bicycle along the broad ridge of the Camino Francés. I sat by a waymark where our routes intersected and watched this apparently ceaseless procession. A few walking pilgrims responded to my greetings and stopped to chat, but many were bent to the road, head down, charging onwards, driven by the piston action of their walking poles, seemingly oblivious to their environment. Viewed from that intersection between Hornillos del Camino and Hontanas, the Camino Francés has become a sort of long-distance racetrack – much changed from the tranquil uncrowded way I experienced in the early spring of 2000.

The flat *meseta* is left behind at the Ebro, and I began to climb the rocky gorges that lead into the Cordillera Cantábrica, which I crossed via San Pedro del Romeral, descending into upland valleys of green fields bounded by dry stone walls dotted here and there with slate roofed farm houses – a landscape more reminiscent of Wales or the Pennines.

My daughter Sophia, who lives in Santander, joined me for a wet day's walk over the hills from Vega de Pas down to the coast where I was once again in 'Camino Country' – this time the Camino del Norte which I followed backwards, with occasional diversions on to the coastal path, from Santander to Irún. I had chosen the toughest sections of the northern route, but the hardest parts were not the rugged hills but following, or trying to find, the waymarks. Unlike the Camino Francés, the Camino del Norte is only waymarked in one direction. So I was constantly looking out for arrows pointing the wrong way – not always easy when several paths converge in hillside woodland with an arrow strategically placed after the junction!

It was wonderful to share the route, albeit for only a few charged minutes, with so many other pilgrims. On average, I encountered about 40 a day – a large number from Russia. There were also Spanish, Canadians, Dutch, Italians, Germans, Americans, Poles, French, Mexicans and British. One of the most memorable encounters was with a Polish teacher from Kraków who had just come from Rome where she had attended the canonisation of Poland's late Pope John Paul II. She thrust a card with a portrait of the Church's newest saint into my hands; I like to think it gave me strength in those tough Basque hills. Another notable encounter, though for different reasons, was Tobin from Wisconsin, who was a self-confessed exile from the Camino Francés. He had started out on the Camino Francés but had peeled off in despair and taken a bus up from Logroño to join the Camino del Norte.

"The northern route is a lot tougher," he told me. "But anything is better than that mad dash on the Camino Francés every afternoon to join the queue to get into the next *albergue*"

Leaving Spain, the glamorous French seaside resorts of Biarritz and Saint Jean de Luz provided a refreshing break from the hills and a chance for a brief rest as I readied for the challenge of the pines and dunes of Les Landes. But apart from the heat, and at times the monotony, I am happy to report that there is a very satisfactory walking route the entire length of this 300 km forest. For nine days,

from Bayonne to Soulac-sur-Mer, I followed the *piste cyclable* which runs all the way down France's west coast. Part of it, in the heart of the forest from Lacannau Océan to Hourtin Plage, follows the old concrete motorcycle tracks which the Germans laid down in World War II to service their gun batteries on the shoreline. The route is extremely well waymarked and is interspersed with reasonable hotel and bed & breakfast accommodation. I would highly recommend it to anyone thinking of walking through Les Landes.

There is also an official Compostela route through the forest, which criss-crosses and at times dovetails with the *piste cyclable*. This is the way which leads down from Mont-St-Michel and crosses the Garonne – sometimes known as *La Voie des Anglais*. I followed part of the Mont-St-Michel route after crossing the Garonne on the ferry to Royan as I made my way mostly on minor roads up to La Rochelle, Nantes and Rennes.

Skirting the Bay of Mont-St-Michel and heading for Avranches, I could no longer pretend that I was under the care of St James. I took the ferry from Granville to the island of Sark and crossed the English Channel from Guernsey to Portsmouth.

From there I hiked over the South Downs to Midhurst and then over the Surrey Hills and North Downs to Guildford to join the Wey Navigation and eventually the Thames towpath. Fifty six days and 1,738 kms on foot from Madrid, I walked into the City of London along the Thames Embankment and took my final steps to the west door of the Christopher Wren church of St James Garlickhythe in the heart of the City. I had ended up where I started – at a church dedicated to the Apostle St James.

Brian Mooney, author and journalist, has written two books on his walks to and from Rome – *A Long Way for a Pizza* (Thorogood 2012) and *The Wrong Way for a Pizza* (Thorogood 2013).

Note: CSJ publishes Guides to Madrid to Sahagun, 2013, Max Long £4
The Voie Littorale, 2010, Judy Smith, £5
both also available for download from www.csj.org.uk

Making history

by Dermot Wynne

Take any of the hundreds of small villages and towns along the many pilgrim routes to Santiago and it would be possible to make a case for any one of them to epitomize the whole message of what the pilgrimage means to the individual. Very often, I suspect, this embodiment would reflect a personal or particular experience which just happened to 'glue' itself to the memory of a person. In this respect my town is Villafranca.

By the time I had reached Villafranca del Bierzo I had cycled one thousand five hundred kilometres and was beginning to feel that Santiago, a mere two hundred kilometres further on, was within my grasp. Although I had been truly stunned and amazed by all the wonders of architecture, people and nature since leaving Le Puy-en-Velay, I hadn't really 'connected' with or felt personally part of that bond – religious, spiritual or otherwise – with St James and the pilgrimage in the medieval sense. I had just allowed myself to enjoy the changing kaleidoscope of each day's events as they unfolded. I was free from any spiritual or intellectual commitment. This arrogant attitude was not to last.

As I cycled into the centre of Villafranca I didn't, as John Wayne might have done, make straight for the Saloon bar. In fact I was attacked immediately by a nasty dog who had clearly decided that part of my leg was going to contribute towards his lunch. Fortunately, like John Wayne, I was quick on the draw and zapped the dog with my battery-operated dog dazer. A very effective and necessary piece of equipment in any cycling pilgrim's kit.

Created during the latter part of the 11th century by Alfonso VI, Villafranca flourished and grew because of its position on the road to Santiago. A settlement for the French was founded on the banks of the river Berbia and the king also established there a community of Clunic monks. Picaud, Vach, Harff and Laffi all speak in glowing terms of the town and its abundance of food and wine. By the last few days of the 11th century the whole of northern Spain, which even included areas which are now part of Portugal, belonged to the kingdom of León and Castile. There was, of course, a small section towards the Pyrenees which formed the kingdom of Navarre, but in general the whole of

northern Spain was free to develop, in relative peace and prosperity, the pilgrimage to Santiago. This period was the hey-day of pilgrimage. The Holy Land was a war zone at that time and the first crusade was well under way, so a pilgrimage to Santiago was a safer and easier option.

I visited the centre of town. The old church of St. Nicolas now seemed to be an hotel. The *Calle del Agua* with all its merchant houses and the Collegiate church were part of the rich history of Villafranca. Eventually I made my way to the *refugio* which is immediately adjacent to the church of Santiago. As I looked at the *refugio* I was convinced it had been built by Walter Gabriel of Ambridge fame.* I had the distinct impression that if one piece of the supporting corrugated iron or wooden fencing was moved the whole structure would collapse. However, as I entered the ramshackle *refugio* I was met immediately by a wall of warmth, comfort and happiness. "Of course it didn't matter that I was a cyclist. Of course there was somewhere to leave my cycle in safety. Would I like a cold drink – free? If you take your shower now and do any necessary washing you will find the water quite hot. Don't forget to reserve your place for the pilgrim evening meal." These and many other comments by the warden were all made with a charming smile and a genuine desire to welcome pilgrims – of all methods of propulsion – as warmly as possible. This truly was the spirit of pilgrimage and gave a capital 'c' to the word confraternity.

As the afternoon turned into early evening the *refugio* began to fill with pilgrims from all countries. I found myself talking with a number of them whilst I enjoyed a cool drink in the shade outside the *refugio*. A coach pulled up and about forty tourists got out. Their guide had obviously brought them specially to visit the *refugio*. Although I couldn't understand a word he was saying he was clearly explaining who and what we were. And this was within a few feet of where we were sitting. A total silence fell upon our group and we remained stunned as the tourists poked their cameras within a few inches of our noses and clicked away merrily as if we were animals in the zoo. This little scene led one pilgrim to remark that at least they, the tourists, should had had the courtesy to offer us all a banana each if they considered us to be monkeys! We all laughed at this comment, even if it was a little disingenuous. But this scene together with the experience earlier in the day did bring into sharp focus an understanding of what 'going on pilgrimage' meant personally.

Naturally I had to visit the church of Santiago adjacent to the

refugio. The famous and richly carved north portal, the *Puerta del Perdón*, gives onto the pilgrims' way. In the 15th century the Spanish Pope Calixto III granted concession to pilgrims, who were sick and unable to continue their journey, the right to stop at the church and receive absolution and the plenary indulgence they would have received on reaching the Apostle's tomb in Compostella. And, of course, the church of San Francisco, elsewhere in Villafranca commemorates the passing of St. Francis of Assisi in 1214, who also went to Santiago. So it was almost certain that I had trodden along the same path as St Francis of Assisi! Amazing! The tourists had clicked their cameras at the refugio and modern day pilgrims so, perhaps, each of us in our own modest way was something special. Perhaps we were trying to find a 'peg' on which to hang our *raison d'être*. Certainly, after the incidents of the day, I felt a purpose in belonging to a continuous process of pilgrimage history. Maybe St Francis had found his peace along the camino? Perhaps this had led to the now arguably second most famous Christian prayer: Lord make me an instrument of thy peace.

When you get up in the morning you can never be exactly certain how the day will finish. At the end of my day in Villafranca I slept with the certain knowledge that I did have a bond with the camino and I was happy to acknowledge that I had at least found something to make me part of the Confraternity of St James and the continuing history of the pilgrimage.

*Ed Note: WG is a character from a long-running BBC radio soap-opera – The Archers.

Did St Francis go on pilgrimage to Santiago?

Gosia Brykczyńska

For an event which may not have really happened at all – the arrival of St Francis in Santiago de Compostela, 800 years ago, will be celebrated this year with a lot of pomp and certainty. The ancient tradition that St Francis went as a pilgrim to Santiago comes from a single reference made in the *Fioretti of St Francis*, which states “. . . Francis’ devotion brought him to Saint James of Galicia . . .” But the *Fioretti* were written in the middle of the XIV century by Fra Ugolino Brunforte (died 1348) and by then many wondrous deeds were being attributed to the saint. Moreover his first recorded biographer, *Thomas of Celano*, a contemporary, friend and follower of St Francis (died in 1265) gives no indication of the saint ever having been to Santiago. Neither does St Bonaventure (1221-1274) who was given the task of writing the first **official** account of the saint’s life.

Meanwhile, in the second chapter of the third section of the *Fioretti*, we do read about Brother Giles going to Santiago! Given that we know pretty well what St Francis was doing most of the time – it has been generally accepted, that if we believe that he went on pilgrimage to St James, it would have to have been in 1214. This is because we know that in the late spring of 1212, he set out for Jerusalem but being shipwrecked by a storm off the Dalmatian coast, he was forced to return to Italy. In May 1213, he was given the use of property on Mount La Verna by Count Orlando di Chiusi, who described it as “*eminently suitable for whoever wishes to do penance in a place remote from mankind*”. The mountain was to become one St Francis’ favourite places for prayer and contemplation and he is known to have immediately taken its solitude to heart. And finally, in 1214, Francis attempted once again to sail for



Statue of St. Francis in front of Franciscan Monastery in Santiago



St. Francis on the Road

Morocco to convert the Saracens, but this time an illness forced him to break off his journey, in Spain. Whether he then went on to Santiago, as a pilgrim, is however, as noted, open to much speculation.

Certainly the city of Santiago would have been no-where close to where he may have been forced to stop, on the southern coast of Spain. Even if he did attempt to go on pilgrimage, once he had recovered, it would have been from the south up towards the northwest of Spain – not along the Camino Francés – or not along its early paths across the Pyrenees. That is, not if he did the pilgrimage immediately after he was forced to break his journey somewhere along the south coast. One possibility in favour of his having undertaken the pilgrimage is that he broke off his journey to North Africa near to present day Barcelona and then went up parallel to the Pyrenees till he reached Zaragoza/Jaca and then along the Camino Aragonés; and only after Puente la Reina following the route of the Camino Francés. Alternatively, he may have gone up north from further along the south coast, for example, along the Camino Portugués.

Either way, he would have returned to Assisi (most probably) along the Camino Francés –then proceeding along the Arles route, through southern France, back home. But whatever route he took and however he did it, he would have had to return home to Umbria – on foot! In total this would have been an absence from Assisi of anything from four to six months possibly even up to a year. It is this notable length of absence from Assisi – which is no-where recorded during his lifetime – which is

the greatest problem in determining whether he ever reached Santiago.

Meanwhile by 1215, Francis was documented as being in Rome for the Fourth Lateran Council. We also know that in 1217 at the very first general chapter of the Friars Minor, a Spanish province was formally established; which means that some very early followers of Francis must have already been living in Spain. Several monasteries along the Camino Francés and in other parts of Spain claim to trace their origins back to St Francis passing through the area, among them the large Franciscan monastery in Santiago itself. I feel honoured to have found refuge in that monastery twice, and both times as a pilgrim – since today the main building has been turned over into a luxurious hotel. In the ancient refectory – even today, for all guests to see – is a large wall painting of St Francis and St James.

According to one Franciscan legend a poor Galician family put up St Francis during his pilgrimage in 1214. When Francis asked the family's father to build a monastery he naturally replied that he had no funds. But the *Poverello* from Assisi, that is – St Francis – led him to buried treasure. Subsequently the local Benedictine monastery, in exchange for an annual basket of fish, gave St Francis land to build the monastery. The friars continued to pay this rent to the monks until the end of the 18th century! Moreover, to this day, pilgrims associated with the Franciscan order can still find refuge in the monastery (as opposed to being guests of the luxury hotel).

The Spanish government has produced a stamp to commemorate the event and the friars themselves have produced a special St Francis certificate called a *cotolaya*, which is produced once every one hundred years. There is also an exhibition open until 30 November 2014, about the event called *Peregrinatio* (On the Road), commemorating the 800th anniversary of St Francis' pilgrimage to Santiago. It is sited in three locations in Santiago de Compostela and includes works by 35 contemporary artists.

In recognition of this 800th anniversary, pilgrims from all over the world are setting out in honour of the saint, including a group which set out on 2 August from Santa Maria degli Angeli from Assisi itself (the date being the patronal feast of that church) to journey to Compostela in the footsteps of St Francis. Mindful of the many adventures that may yet come their way – I can only say to them, in the words of the saint himself, "Go, and expect Perfect Joy".

The regional Xunta of Galicia is working with the Municipality of Assisi, the Franciscans and two institutions from Perugia, to present an

exhibition entitled *Pilgrim and New Apostle: St. Francis on the Camino de Santiago*, at the Bonacquisti Palace on Assisi's main square. Assisi, as some pilgrims may already know, is twinned with the towns of Santiago and Bethlehem! The artefacts on show include a very early codex of the official life of St Francis written in 1263 by St Bonaventure. There are also relics from the Holy Land and paintings of St Francis from the 13th to the 18th century including paintings by El Greco and Zurbarán. Among the sculptures on display are a stone panel, from around 1425, of St James from the Cathedral Museum of Santiago; an 18th-century polychrome wood statue of St Francis giving Alms, from Lugo; and an early 14th-century granite tympanum from San Francisco de Pontevedra, which is but one of the many religious institutions on the camino that may date back to a visit of St Francis in 1214.

In conclusion, all that can be said for certain is that the *tradition* that St Francis undertook the pilgrimage and did indeed reach Santiago is very strong. Well, it was either St Francis who did the camino or some early Franciscans whom he entrusted to do the pilgrimage in his name. I for one would like to think he made the pilgrimage – one way or another. He certainly had a pilgrim's feel for nature:

*... Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and You give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour!
Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.
Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars
in the heavens You have made them bright, precious and beautiful.
Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
and clouds and storms, and all the weather,
through which You give Your creatures sustenance.
Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water;
she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure . . .*

*From the **Canticle of the Sun** attributed to St Francis*

Finally, being such a great saint a bit of bi-location may have come into play also. St Bonaventure mentions in his biography that the Poverello was known to have been seen to be in two places at once – so who knows? Maybe along the camino also . . .

The feast of St Francis is celebrated on the 4th October.

My first Camino – a journey of two halves

Chris Fawcett

May 2012

“I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave” . (Pilgrims Progress – John Bunyan)

My first camino experience has been an interesting one and not in ways I was expecting. I hadn't anticipated for instance sitting up in bed with an English couple doing the Guardian crossword, or watching old Hollywood westerns dubbed into Spanish on TV or for that matter meeting a woman called Cinderella! In other ways too, the camino has been full of surprises.

Like many people, my reasons for going were multiple and somewhat ill-defined: to give thanks for a daughter recovered from illness; to begin a retirement by taking time to think about my next step; for a family member recently born with cerebral palsy and his devoted and exhausted mum and simply because I could – or thought I could – and there are many people who can't. Only it didn't turn out quite as I had planned.

At 10k I knew I was carrying too much weight but in my arrogance thought I could manage it and for the first ten days I did – walking short distances, taking it easy as the guide book advised and, apart from blisters which soon healed, all went well. Then a combination of sleepless nights (I found hostel living something of a challenge) and physical exertion began to take their toll. So I stopped, stayed a night in a hotel, got my pack transported and carried on. And for a while all was well again until the day I arrived at an *albergue* earlier than expected, picked up my pack and, deciding I didn't want to spend all afternoon and evening sitting around in yet another small village, moved on.

Less than five minutes later I knew it was a mistake. I'd already walked a good 17km along the Roman road, my pack was heavy and the weather much hotter than previously but in my pig-headedness I went on. By the time I reached the next *albergue* I was exhausted and it was full. Despite my pleas and protestations the guys in the bar refused to help me call a taxi since the next *albergue* was only 3km

away and a taxi, they said, would cost me 15 Euros. Furious, I stomped off, got to the next albergue, collapsed in a heap and by evening was unable to walk at all.

I spent most of the following week sitting with my leg up, hobbling around on a stick and waiting for my over-strained muscles to heal. It was hard to watch the daily tide of pilgrims come and go – tired at the end of the day but full of robust health and energy and raring to get started the next morning. All the friends I'd made along the way were well ahead of me by now, sending texts as to their whereabouts and enquiring after mine. I began to feel increasingly isolated as there were few English-speaking pilgrims about and since I speak very little of any other language I felt starved of company and conversation.

Eventually, after several days of sitting around and still only able to hobble with the aid of a stick I found Paddy O'Gara's number in the Confraternity handbook and was duly rescued by him. He picked me up, took me to his home, fed me, consoled me, helped me with travel arrangements and eventually put me on a train to Bilbao to catch a flight home.

But that wasn't to be the end of my trials. Unfamiliar with the habits of Spanish trains and still with limited mobility I had left my pack in the carriage behind the one in which I was sitting only to find, on arriving in Bilbao, that at some point along the way the train had split in two and the pack and I had parted company. After frantic enquiries in very broken Spanish it transpired that my pack was now at Irún and that since there were no trains from Irún to Bilbao, it was up to me to retrieve it either by bus or a private transport company. Since by then it was late evening there was nothing to be done until the next day anyway.

I spent a disturbed and restless night, wondering what to do, mentally itemising all the things in my rucksack and how much it would cost me to lose them in both monetary and emotional terms. In fact I had all essential items with me – passport, money, phone, flight details – and it was tempting to go home in literally the clothes I stood up in and thereby free myself at one stroke from the horrible rucksack and my attachment to material possessions. But I couldn't quite manage to do that. As I write this I am sitting in the Holiday Inn at Bilbao waiting for a private transport company to reunite us. Tomorrow the rucksack and I and all it represents will fly home together.

And the moral of this sorry tale?

I seem to have spent a lot of time on the camino concerned with the material world – “What shall I eat, what shall I drink, what shall I wear, how far shall I walk, where shall I sleep, how’s my body holding up?” I had hoped to spend more time considering the lilies of the field and by leading a simpler life, free myself from the petty concerns of everyday existence and think on higher things. Instead, the opposite has been true and unable to lighten my load I have suffered the consequences.

I spent some time with a fellow pilgrim I met along the way discussing the symbolic aspects of the load we carry and how my inability to let go of material things corresponds to my difficulty in letting go of old ‘guilts’ and behaviour patterns, but while insight is a marvellous thing, without action not a lot changes. When I return to complete my camino I know I need to lighten the load both physically and spiritually.

And the other important thing I’ve learned? To ask for help and receive it without reciprocation – something I also find difficult to do in my “normal” life. Without the help and kindness shown to me by so many strangers I would never have got this far. The guys in the bar were one of only a few instances of unhelpfulness I encountered and even they thought they were being helpful in their own way. Nearly everyone else I met was kind and encouraging. From strangers who unbidden would put me straight when on the wrong road and wish me “*Buen camino*” to La Señora at the last *albergue* who brought me special gel to rub into my failing muscles, did my washing, gave me her arm whenever I needed to move and never, ever made me feel I was a nuisance. And of course Paddy, without whom I would still be sitting somewhere along the Way, crying!

And that for me has been the most valuable lesson of my camino – learn to trust that kindness and help will be given and accept it with grace and an open heart and in the end “all will be well and all manner of things will be well”.

May 2014

Two years on, older and a little wiser and with a lighter rucksack, I pick up from where I left off – welcomed and generously accommodated once more by Paddy and Rebekah at Moratinos. This time it is my fellow *peregrina* who suffers an injury and after a real *dolorosa* of a day outside León, has to give up and take a train home. And so once again I continue alone – on up through the Montes de León, through Astorga and into Galicia, meeting with fellow pilgrims and parting and meeting again as

is the way on the camino. The weather is glorious – hardly a cloud in the sky, cool in the mornings with the cloud lying low in the valleys and the wild flowers stunning in their colour and abundance.

This time I take things easy – never walking beyond my strength and teaming up with pilgrims who, for whatever reason, are also walking slowly. And the spirit of the camino persists – in the young man offering fruit and drinks just when we're all hot and tired outside Astorga, in free hugs at La Fuente del Camino, English tea and biscuits at Gaucelmo and the best shared meal ever at Paloma y Lena. Vespers with the nuns at León and a blessing from the Benedictines at Rabanal and fellow pilgrims always ready to help out with blister cures, shared meals or words of consolation or encouragement.

I'm not sure when I began to feel a sea change. Not exactly at Sarría but sometime before when there seemed to be more new and private *albergues* where profit appeared to be the main motive. Maybe it was the home-made "No Shit" sign in a quiet corner of one of the most attractive villages in Galicia (yes I was shocked too), or the fact that as the number of pilgrims increased exponentially there was a corresponding decrease in the exchange of greetings between both pilgrims and local residents. Prohibition notices began to appear in the bars as well – no taking shoes off, no bare feet, a charge of 50 cents to non-customers to use the toilet, the standard bottle of wine which came with each pilgrim menu suddenly reduced to one glass and payment to be made with order against the time honoured Spanish tradition of eat first, pay later. Bikes too became a problem, charging down steep and narrow paths many without bells – the only warning to those of us on foot being a yell from behind and a "*Buen camino*" as the riders hurtled past.

Maybe it has always been like this. I don't know – I've never walked this part of the Way before. Maybe I was just sometimes unlucky in the places I chose to stay or the people I met. Most likely I could walk the same way again tomorrow and have a very different experience. I hope it's not that as the Camino Francés becomes more and more popular that the sheer number of pilgrims destroys the very thing we seek. Some of the *hospitaleros* certainly looked like they were suffering from pilgrim fatigue and not all pilgrims were polite, grateful or friendly.

The Pilgrim Mass the day we arrived in Santiago kind of said it all. We'd walked only a short distance that morning from Monte de Gozo through the unlovely suburbs and rush hour traffic, had somehow missed the way to the cathedral and when we finally managed to arrive in the Plaza del Obradoiro found half the building under scaffolding

and the square full of taxis, coaches and tour parties. We queued in the drizzle for our *Compostelas* at the pilgrim office cheered up immensely I have to say by the warmest welcome from the *Amigos* and then queued again to leave our bags so we could go into Mass. By the time we got to the cathedral it was standing room only and any hope of experiencing a sense of the sacred was lost in the school party in front of us misbehaving and the numbers of people wandering about apparently sightseeing and taking photographs while the Mass was in progress. I suppose in one sense it was all very medieval and if you like, therefore authentic, but it just left me feeling deflated. I did return later when the cathedral was quiet and went to the Encuentros de Oración but the cathedral was closing and there was little time to look around. So I haven't seen the Pórtico de la Gloria – except in pictures – nor have I embraced the Saint's statue or heard my name read out at the Pilgrim mass. By then I just wanted to come home, so I did.

And was it still worthwhile? Strangely – yes. A fellow traveller I met in the queue for the airport bus asked me what I had gained from the camino – caught unawares I found the question difficult to answer at the time and muttered something about confidence and wonderful scenery. But the other night whilst falling asleep in my own bed for the first time in a month the answer came to me – “It opens the heart and it gives me hope” and the difficulties and disappointments pale into insignificance by comparison. And yes – this time I carried my pack all the way.

Services provided for pilgrims by the Pilgrim Office 2014

There is Mass in English in the cathedral Monday - Saturday at 10.30am.

Groups can also be welcomed by name at the beginning of the Pilgrims' Mass - if known about in advance.

Groups can also nominate one of their number to read one of the readings of the Mass in English.

A special certificate in the name of the group can be provided free of charge.

For groups with priests it is possible to reserve a private chapel if they wish to say a Thanksgiving Mass for the group.

Contact johnniewalker-santiago@hotmail.com

The Pilgrim's Vision

Tom Friesen

*I heard you're walking far from home,
Your heart's desire: it now needs to roam.
To find itself in places which you don't know yet,
Creating memories you will never forget.*

*Where every step will bring you to
Deep understandings you will find new.
Shining and profound, right through to your core
Inner and outer life, you will see so much more.*

*Surprised by joy, you'll find everywhere
By those at your sides, the birds in the air,
The flowers blooming sweetly, dawn's early rays
Hymns in the churches, everywhere there is praise.*

*When you come back as a pilgrim returned,
Settled, unsettled with shell that you've earned,
You'll find us all waiting with praise in our heart.
I'll tell you the truth now: We were never apart.*

Sung to Slane (Ancient Irish Folk Tune)

Camino de Santiago – Walking the Way

Rob Yeomans

Two centuries of rampant materialism have resulted in a spiritual aridity unparalleled in human history. Statistics reveal a collapse in church attendance matched by a significant fall in the numbers entering the priesthood. Recent surveys indicate that Spain, until recently seen as a deeply religious society, now has less than 20% of its population actually practising Catholicism. Yet here is the rub – in this same period the numbers entering the Camino soared and pilgrim figures have risen tenfold in a decade. How do we interpret these trends?

(from *A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago* by John Brierley. 'The Present Breakdown & Breakthrough', with permission from the author)

A purpose of pilgrimage is to allow time for old belief systems and outworn 'truths' to fall away so that new and higher perspectives can arise. We may also need to recognise that colleagues and partners at home or at work may feel threatened by our new outlook on life. Breaking tribal patterns, challenging the status quo or querying consensus reality is generally considered inappropriate at best or heretical at worst. The extent to which we hold onto any new understanding is measured by how far we are prepared to walk-our-talk and live our 'new' truth in the face of opposition, often from those who profess to love us. Christ was crucified for living The Truth.

(from *A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago* by John Brierley. 'Returning Home – Reflections' with permission from the author.)

When I was a child I thought like a child, I sang like a child and my father loved nothing better than to accompany my boyish treble voice on the piano. One of his favourite hymns, and certainly one of mine, was *The Holy City* (1882 by Frederic Weatherly and music by Michael Maybrick) It is strange and interesting what goes through your head when walking the camino! My head buzzed with music and lyrics both sacred and secular. But *The Holy City* kept coming back. Essentially those few words from the second half of the song '*And all who would might enter, and no one was denied*'. And why? ...*Because of the shadow of a cross – upon a lonely hill.*

The camino is a route – traceable on a map from your starting point to your goal. The camino passes city and countryside, hamlet and hillside

– some of the way is rough and stony, some level and direct. There are green pastures, fields full of flowers, flowing waters. There are valleys that evoke death. There are mountains that have to be climbed, and bridges that have to be crossed. Scorching heat, blinding rain and mist so thick that you can't see a foot in front of your face! Sometimes there are pleasant walking conditions with the sun warming your back and a cool breeze cooling your face. But the camino only comes alive because of the people. Fat ones, thin ones, peoples of all colours, beliefs, sexualities and cultures. Young ones, old ones and many middle-aged ones; speaking every language under the sun. Yet there is only one language.

*++'And it is for this that we are born,
to be brother to the other.
It is for this that we are pilgrims,
not to travel to the shrine of St James of Compostela
or St Michael the Archangel,
but to travel
to the shrine which each person is,
to this temple
in which resides the Kingdom of God.
This is the pilgrimage of the Christian,
of every human being.
This is the pilgrimage
which became more and more obvious
as the days went on for me.'*

(from *Listen Pilgrim* – by Christopher William Jones DLT 1968)

The language of the camino has three words. *Hola!* A word of recognition and greeting and *Buen Camino* – Good Way – an expression of hope that your path may be fulfilling and an expression of affirmation that we are following this 'way' together. Always said with a smile, a wave, a touch, a nod – even when the rain of Galicia is hammering down, *Buen Camino* means not that I am/we are enjoying this part of the experience, but that 'The Way' is good.

Did you walk alone? I set out on my own – but I was never alone. Physically there was always another pilgrim up front and always a pilgrim way behind – sometimes 'with you' as a group – sometimes 100 yards away, sometimes maybe a mile – but always a person, a fellow

peregrino– close to you on ‘The Way’. But that wasn’t the only reason I was never alone. The story of Cleopas and his friend on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus may help you to understand what I mean. (Luke 24 verses 13-35)

And why did I do it? To prove to myself that I am still alive and so to celebrate being 70! To thank God for 47 years of ordained ministry in His service and trying to (and often failing) to follow His Way. Oh, and to avoid collecting more *stuff*. “So what do you want for your birthday?” friends and family kindly asked. A donation to the *Stratton Deanery Camino Fund* I was able to reply. A fund to enable people in our deanery to follow The Way in *their* way – through retreats, pilgrimages, quiet days or whatever may help them on *their* Camino. And the fund is still open! If you would like to make a contribution you may send a cheque to the address at the end of the article

And have I been changed by the experience?! Thirty-three days and 450 miles later how has the camino affected me? It has clarified my resolve to continue the adventure of discovering new ways of ‘being’ church. Ways of making a reality what ‘*The shadow of a cross on a lonely hill*’ made possible – ‘*That all who would might enter and no one was denied*’.

The camino underlines the words and the concept of ‘being inclusive’. All walking the same path, with a common goal, a common greeting and a common affirmation. *Hola! Buen Camino!* Some walking fast, some just plodding – yet all with a common purpose.

Walking the camino has strengthened my resolve, as John Brierley eloquently expresses it ‘*to allow time for old belief systems and outworn ‘truths’ to fall away so that new and higher perspectives can arise*’. To learn more how to listen – until the day of *my* funeral – for as someone said in the Truro Diocese, ‘Together we can!’ That is the affirmation of the camino and my prayer for all of God’s people.

*Please make the cheque out to: ***The Stratton Deanery Synod*** and send to Mrs Sue Dickenson, Stratton Deanery Treasurer, Ranelagh, Stewarts Road, Week St Mary, Nr Holsworthy, Devon, EX22 6XA.

Angels with Umbrellas

Kathleen Jowitt



“**Y**ou meet angels, of course,” someone said. Was it Marie-Noëlle at the Emmaus house in Burgos? If so, we had met one only that day. Even if not, we knew what she meant. We had met angels; ours carried umbrellas.

At Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, two days into the pilgrimage, and with the forbidding snowy bulk of the Pyrenees looming ahead of us, the *hospitalero* came out, umbrella in hand, into the drizzle to point us the right way to cross them – away from the Route Napoleon, towards the gentler, safer way.

At Roncesvalles, a lifetime later and somehow still the same day, with night sweeping in along with the snow, we were frozen, soaked, lonely, exhausted. We had abandoned the way-marked camino on the grounds that the road was a lot easier to follow – and as we struggled down the last few metres into the village, a monk emerged from the restaurant, his habit brushing the fallen snow and his umbrella raised aloft against what was still coming down. “*Peregrinos? Vamos!*” he said,

and swept us into the monastery, to shelter, warmth, and a bed for the night.

At Logroño, leaving before daybreak, and already uncomfortably conscious of our propensity to get lost in cities, we missed our way. Grey sky, grey pavements gleaming under the street lights, and rain, and a man with an umbrella to point us back in the right direction.

At Burgos, a glorious, sun-soaked Easter Day, and another city to get lost in. And another angel with an umbrella to put us back on the right path, or, rather, since we had already planned on stopping, and knew where we wanted to spend the night, an angel to read our guidebook, ask the directions for which we were too tired to think up the Spanish, and walk with us until we were in the right quarter.

We met angels.

This is what I have learned about angels, and about their habit of carrying umbrellas:

- They are, as is generally rumoured, messengers and guardians (sometimes this is the same thing, if the message is what keeps you safe).
- They are quite obviously distinct from you, and your needs are different from theirs. (Even in everyday life I find using an umbrella irritating beyond belief, and it would be an impossible encumbrance for a walking pilgrim; but an angel might well use one, and so might any other normal person on the street.)
- They provide you with what you need (and it is not something that they lose by sharing it with you).
- They do not neglect their own needs in caring for others (and this, more than anything, is where I am still learning from them).

Albergue de Miraz Report

Richard Jefferies

September 2014

*T*ourists complain, pilgrims are grateful.

Thus runs the aphorism that has inspired many of us in helping to serve our fellow pilgrims over many years. Hence you can imagine the surprise when the Civil Guard knocked on the door in Miraz this July. Three experienced *hospitaleros*, Averil and Ted Jones and Trevor Hockey were taken aback when they discovered (admittedly in their limited Spanish) that the refuge had received a formal complaint from a Spanish-speaking walker. He had required unreasonable opening times in the morning (4am!) and insisted he should be able to have his breakfast at that time also. Obviously our intrepid trio were unable to accede to his request on grounds of security and in the interests of fellow pilgrims and personal concerns. Nonetheless, the walker, (who was never registered, nor stayed as a pilgrim at Miraz), decided to invoke his apparent rights under Galician tourist regulations to complain formally to the *Guarda Civil*. Two police officers arrived and asked for the formal complaints form to be completed. "What complaints form?" was the response from the *hospitaleros*. All of this seemed somewhat ironic as the law is seen as the last resort to preserve order in a refuge. Usually, it is the *hospitaleros* who call out the police rather than the other way round. The situation was defused somewhat by a phone call to the Confraternity's Chairman, Colin Jones who speaks excellent Spanish and was a source of conciliation. However the involvement of the law extended to a further demand for our license to operate a refugio. Naturally, the three *hospitaleros* were shocked and hurt by this experience.

After this sad and bizarre incident, the CSJ needs to consider what lessons are to be learnt from the current situation in Miraz. We are now into our ninth year of operation at Miraz, and this year we may well accommodate over 4,000 pilgrims. It is a very successful refuge as far as numbers are concerned. Indeed, we are still turning pilgrims away into the local Social Centre in the village and sending pilgrims into the arms of private hostals and B&B's in the vicinity. Sadly, there are no other places to stay in the village itself. We are only a small



Music at Miraz

albergue, but the pilgrim numbers coming through in the summer are enormous. This causes great stress and complications for the *hospitaleros*. However – and it is a big however – we are only just coping to maintain the pilgrim dignity of the *albergue*.

The demands of the tourist officials (and the police) to regulate pilgrim facilities are placing challenges upon us that are provocative to the very ethos of the Confraternity and the camino spirit. The promotion of the camino as a valuable adjunct to a failing Galician economy means that the volume of pilgrims coming through and the expectations of pilgrims and pilgrim-tourists have changed radically. We have a responsibility to our hard working and enthusiastic *hospitaleros* and to dedicated pilgrims, to maintain the ethical values that have inspired CSJ members over the last three decades. Both of these groups of people have invested a lot of time and personal finance to sustain the spirit of true pilgrimage. To this end Trustees have agreed a period of reflection and consultation as to the future operation of Miraz before we initiate the 2015 pilgrim season.

There are real pressures along all the main pilgrim routes in Spain. The functionaries in Galicia and Castile y Leon are also raising concerns of public behaviour from would-be pilgrims. A dossier will therefore be produced by the end of the year to be widely circulated. To this end, any comments on the situation from CSJ members should be directed to Richard Jefferies, chair of the Miraz Committee, at the CSJ Office.

But it would be wrong to leave our members thinking that there is no joy in serving pilgrims in the *albergue* in Miraz. This is simply not so. There are many testimonies in our *refugio* guest book from hundreds of very happy and grateful pilgrims. Moreover, our last venture in promoting the pilgrimage spirit in Miraz, involves inviting pilgrims to attend a simple prayer-service in the village church of St James, every evening. A quiet, reflective time – open to all – which is truly appreciated; a gentle reminder that, (to paraphrase), all is well and all manner of things will be well – for the weary pilgrim and the tired *hospitaleros*.

Swiss player in Rabanal



Refugio Gaucelmo News

Julie Davies

HOSPITALEROS

31st May/16th June – Sue Hemmings (UK), Michael Krier (UK), Alan Pearce (AUS)

15th June/1st July – Sharon and Kevin Berry (UK), David Garcia (UK)

30th June/16th July – Jenny Heesh (AUS), Julie Milne (AUS), Jayne Phillips (UK)

17th July/1st August – Georgina Davey (CAN), Jayne Phillips (UK)
Gilbert Cabergs (BEL)

2 August/ 14 August – Chris Gibson-Bell (UK); Keith and Clare Taylor (UK)

15th August/1st September – Betty Mcdougall (UK), Margaret Macdougall (UK), Gene and Rosann McCullough (USA)

Despite the occasional very cold weather (flurries of snow in May) the barn has been operational since the middle of April. Pilgrim numbers have fluctuated but probably average around the high twenties. A new country – Antigua and Barbuda has been added to our list which means we have received pilgrims from over 130 different countries! A group of six Indonesians stayed and doubled the number of pilgrims from that country overnight. The World Cup came and went and made a marginal difference to pilgrim numbers. One Brazilian did the camino to avoid it all!

We have received many repeat customers – pilgrims who have stayed with us on their previous caminos. A pilgrim cleaning the camino as he walked along – his second time. A Brazilian family drawn back to us after the melodic music made by *hospitalero* Peter in previous years. Two pilgrims who had walked from their home in Holland – second time to stay. A French pilgrim on his seventh visit – we even recognised each other! And two lots of pilgrims with horses.

There has been a definite trend in this year's pilgrims. Children and musical instruments have been the "pilgrim accessory"! (See photo) Many families, sometimes with three generations have stayed at Gaucelmo. The youngest was 20 months old through to late teens. A Finnish family from Tampere stayed with two young children being pushed in a pushchair accompanied with the Father and his Guide Dog. They made it to Finisterre and appeared on Refugio Gaucelmo's Facebook page. The small four-bed room and the end of the barn nearest the *huerta* is proving an excellent place for families to find rest and peace plus giving children a safe place to play.

Musical instruments have ranged from the Japanese flute, a large number of Ukuleles, guitars played appallingly, and a long Swiss/Alpine horn. The pilgrim with the horn didn't stay at Gaucelmo but played outside the church after Vespers. The horn weighed 7 kilos and was played outside churches as he progressed to Santiago. He gained much respect from everyone!

In June there was a visit from 38 Irish Friends of St James and the MS Society of Ireland. They came to view the James Blewitt plaque and raise a glass to their friend. It was the 25th year that the MS Society of Ireland have been on the camino and were staying at Pilar's.

Angel Luis Barreda Ferrer – first President of the *Federation of Associations of Amigos* paid a visit to Gaucelmo. We have a lot to thank him for. Barreda along with José Ignacio Díaz helped identify Rabanal as a place in desperate need of a refuge – there was no accommodation between Astorga and Ponferrada (40 km). He facilitated the negotiations whereby CSJ London and *El Bierzo Amigos* were offered the ruined Parish house which is now Refugio Gaucelmo. He saw a big change in Gaucelmo when he visited – we now have hot water! I'm sure he will be one of the Guests of Honour in 2016 when the CSJ celebrates 25 years at Rabanal.

There was also a special day in July for Father Javier and the monks at Monasterio San Salvador de Monte Irago – our neighbours. The Bishop of Astorga attended to consecrate the new altar in the parish church of Santa Maria. The *hospitaleras* Jenny and Julie opened slightly later that day and felt privileged to be part of the ceremony. It is quite a rare occasion these days to have new altars consecrated. Normally churches are closing but in Rabanal they are full due to the presence of the pilgrims. Serafin of *Refugio Pilar* has died recently, and the funeral of Serafin saw the Plaza outside Gaucelmo packed with people who couldn't get in the church. The *hospitaleros* think there could have been over 200 people standing outside.

It is now nearly three quarters of the way through Gaucelmo's season. We have had some amazing *hospitaleros* and all deserve an enormous thank you for giving so generously of their time and energy. We have had Christmas cakes weighing 2.8 kilos carried all the way from Australia to serve pilgrims at tea time! Tilley hats returned to their owners in Canada after being found in the lost property box, plus so many more acts of kindness which we never get to hear about. Thank you to all of you – Gaucelmo couldn't exist without you.

Obituaries

Serafín Rodríguez García RIP

Members who have worked at Refugio Gaucelmo in Rabanal del Camino will remember Serafín of the Albergue de Nuestra Señora de Pilar situated on the main square. He was the husband for 60 years of Esperanza and the father of Isabel and José, all members of the family who worked so hard to give a welcome and shelter to thousands of pilgrims over some 18 years.

Serafín was born on 7 May 1930 in Peñalba de Santiago near Ponferrada. He spent his early working life as a shepherd and subsequently as a coal miner. In 1954 he married Esperanza and was blessed with the two children, Isobel and José. They spent a number of years as a family in Madrid but then returned to Rabanal and eventually began to receive pilgrims, at first on a modest scale and gradually in greater numbers, as they expanded the accommodation and comforts of the *albergue*.

The kindness and support of Serafín and his family towards Gaucelmo hospitaleros and to all who passed through their doors is well known and will always be remembered.

Serafín passed away in a León hospital on Friday 22 August 2014 and will be greatly missed by his family, friends and all who knew him.

There was never an occasion when Anja and I have been in Rabanal, either as *hospitaleros* or visitors, that we were not invited to share a meal with the family in their cosy kitchen. We also remember fondly the time when he invited us to accompany him to Peñalba where he showed us round his native village. He was a man of few words but his heart was always in the right place.

MICHAEL MANNION

Patricia Seccombe RIP 1933-2014

Patricia Seccombe was one of our members about whom we knew little. She joined CSJ in 1992 and described herself as a 'teacher'. She lived in South London but we never met her or spoke as she enquired as to how to make her camino. Her step daughter Monica fills in some of the details:

Patricia Seccombe (know as Patsy – she was the actress Patsy Byrne) was my step mother and in around 1992 she and my father went on a "pilgrimage" to Santiago (but my father then being well into his 70s they did the trip as part of a coach tour). It struck a chord with Patsy and she kept up her interest after her return and read all your publications avidly (even though the pilgrimage was really originally my father's devotional wish). They had intended to go again, but my father's health took a down turn shortly after they returned and somehow neither of them was able to go again. I am not quite sure what the origin of the devotion to San Diego would have been (my father Patrick John Seccombe OBE, a devout Roman Catholic, was a British Council Representative who spent many years in Portugal and Latin America and it was one of his ambitions to go on this pilgrimage so Patsy naturally accompanied her husband).*

*Patsy Byrne, probably best known as 'Nursie' in the Blackadder II series.

Members' Pages

From Liz Crean

If you live anywhere near the M4 in Wiltshire do go and visit the church of St James the Great in North Wraxall, just off the



St. James in church archway, North Wraxall

A420 near Ford and Marshfield. "Werochesalle" from which Anglo-Saxon name Wraxall is derived, means 'where buzzards fly' and the church was recorded in the Domesday book in 1085. Inside the protective porch, it has a wonderful original Romanesque arch with a 19th century statue of St James the pilgrim. Inside the church are wall paintings of Jerusalem, a cityscape, with a pilgrim in one corner and an angel in the other. These were uncovered in 1989. Nine members of the Bristol

group visited this May.

!!!! WANTED: Pamela - Pilgrim on the Via de La Plata in 2004

A very friendly man called Luis runs *El Rincon del Peregrino* on the stretch between Laza and Vilar de Barrios on the Via de la Plata in Galicia. His village is called Alberguería and his bar and albergue are both filled with thousands of scallop shells that all his visitors are encouraged to write their names on and hang from his ceilings.

He is very keen to track down the very first person who did this so if anyone knows (or is) Pamela from London who was 25 in 2004 and whose idea this was, please make contact with Luis Sandes Fernandez, Alberguería 81. E-mail: elrincondelperegrino@yahoo.es or phone him 0034 988 984 004

From Dermot Wynne

The picture on the opposite side is of a painting by Charles Cottier entitled "A water colour painting of an early pilgrim to Santiago". It was

Painted in the early part of the 19th century. He lived and lectured in Lausanne, Switzerland. He was a distant relative of my wife (Geneveive Bouser) who inherited the painting from her family. A colour version of this aquarelle can be seen on the CSJ website.



A water-colour painting of an early pilgrim to Santiago
by Charles Cottier

From Andrew Bethune

While cycling through France en route for Compostela recently, I camped at the municipal campsite at Chateaudun. It's on the pilgrim route between Chartres and Tours. The site had only that week received a new Saint-Jacques scallop shell stamp, and I was fortunate to be the first pilgrim to benefit from the new stamp.

Later, I stopped a couple of nights with one of my cousins who lives near Marmande. He and his wife belong to the Chaplaincy of Aquitaine, a group of English-speaking, Anglican churches, who meet in several centres dotted about the area round and south-west of i.e. in Périgueux, on the Vézelay route. They also meet in Bordeaux. I was able to have my Pilgrim Record stamped there as well as attending one of their Sunday services. Their meeting places tend to be in slightly out of the way places, but it might be worth detouring particularly if passing through the area on a Sunday. Expect a warm welcome. Full details on <http://www.churchinaquitaine.org>

Book Reviews

Immortelle randonnée; Compostelle malgré moi.

Jean-Christophe Rufin ; 2013, Editions Guérin, Chamonix 259pp

Firstly, my thanks to M. Nicolas who runs a *gîte d'étape* in Vauvert for his generosity in not merely recommending, but lending me and my walking companion, Maggie, his personal copy of this book, to take with us on our way on the *Chemin d'Arles*, no mean feat of optimism and generosity when one knows how books can go off on their own camino, often never to return!

Immortelle randonnée; Compostelle malgré moi (Immortal Hike, Compostela despite myself) by Jean-Christophe Rufin is at the time of writing not yet available in English, but it is to be hoped that someone will translate it soon. It is not organised as a guide book, nor a manual of useful practical tips, although there is some interesting and useful information about alternative routes and tips about what not to carry. It is his personal account. As he says towards the end of the book,

My aim is not to convince but simply to describe what this journey was for me.

(Mon propos n'a pas pour but de convaincre mais seulement de décrire ce que fut pour moi ce voyage).

Jean-Christophe Rufin's pilgrims of the twenty-first century are a motley crowd and, in this, his tale reminds one of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The pilgrims and the Spanish residents he meets range from the devoted Christian, to the sanctimonious priest, the couple he walks part of the way with, the moonstruck lovers, to drunkards, to those who cheat, to the pampered tourists in their coaches, the Yoga group snapping away with their cameras on discovering "real pilgrims", to the proud and the humble. The whole of the human race is there, described unsparingly, but with compassion. For those of us that have been *hospitaleros*, it's a good lesson in accepting that everyone has the right to their own camino and that one cannot possibly start to judge what that is.

The book has met with great acclaim from many and some criticism from others for holding onto what he defines as the presence of God for only one page; but for a non-believer, having got to that point at all is an astonishing and moving admission.

Maybe the key to appreciating this account of walking the camino are those words, "*Compostelle malgré moi*". This is indeed

the account of a journey despite himself. Like many people, he could not explain his motivation for walking. He was even unsure at the start about whether to walk the Haute Route along the Pyrenees or the camino, but weather conditions prevented the former. However, when he purchases his *credencial* in Paris, the impassioned advice of the volunteer he meets nearly makes him change his mind since pilgrimage appeared to be a matter for fanatics, (*une affaire des exaltés*). In the end, the Camino del Norte chose him. He was hesitant about throwing off the comforts of everyday life, didn't want to share dormitory spaces initially, but took a tent because of being a very light sleeper, (he has some interesting, though not new, comments about the unpredictability of snorers), and his approach at the outset of the pilgrimage is one of scepticism. Afterwards, he emphatically rejected the idea of writing about his experiences. And yet in the end, he wrote.

Rufin's account of his pilgrimage on the Camino del Norte and the Camino Primitivo is both brutally honest and very entertaining. For example, the slipping away of "normal" conventions of dress and behaviour are contrasted with the neatly dressed business employees of the rush hour in Bilbao and with his former academic self. His fellow pilgrims are described honestly, some might say unkindly in parts, yet I suspect everyone meets people they can't get on with, however hard they try. He applies the same rigour and sense of humour to himself: his failings, his outcast status in the eyes of our fashion-conscious, hygienic society as someone who looks, dresses and smells intolerable by current standards, a "celestial tramp" (*clochard céleste*) and the physical strains of coping with the elements and weeks of walking on one of the most difficult caminos. He describes not only the way and the people and stunning countryside he passes through, but also his own inner journey starting out with no particular motivation as a rather picky walker through to embracing the camino to the point where he is "just moving", you could say, meditating. Despite his humour and the cutting descriptions of the physical trials that the camino presents us with, he asserts that after having coped with all that and losing even the ability to reflect, the pilgrim obeys the camino; he has found his master and undergoes a spiritual transformation. In the early chapters, he recognises that the camino takes charge of you in that it is, "*a power that imposes itself on you, seizes you, abuses you and shapes you. It doesn't give you the right to speak, it silences you*". (*Une force, il s'impose, il vous saisit, vous violente et vous façonne. Il ne vous donne pas la parole mais vous fait taire*). Throughout the book,

one gets the sense that for Rufin, this experience of letting go of the everyday, of opening up to whatever comes your way, is revitalising and in so doing, he captures one of the main aspects that many others have shared.

The book does not hesitate to describe both the beauties and the ugliness of different parts of the camino. Surprisingly, his least favourite part is the route along the Cantabrian coast with its slog beside the main roads, the frightening emptiness of badly designed holiday flats and the seedy bars whilst he admits that there are one or two wonderful places such as San Vicente de la Barquera and that the interior is wild and beautiful. In contrast, he is totally enamoured of Asturias and Galicia and describes the sheer unexpected beauty of the mountains and villages, the peace in some churches, the sudden appearance of wild horses on the horizon and the kindness of those who provide bed and board that he avails himself of every few days.

This is what makes *Immortelle Randonnée Compostelle malgré moi* so special. The author, a doctor who has worked with Médecins sans Frontières, and who is a novelist and member of the Académie Française to boot, does not shy away from recounting all those nasty physical moments, the exasperation and the joy of meeting other pilgrims, the awe of the force and beauty of the country he walks through and that moment where you are brought up short to admit that there could be something different and more powerful than the sum of the parts of rationality, everyday life, worries, intellectual meanderings, love, spirituality. As he says, after three weeks, he had rejected dreams, then reflection, finally faith. At this point, he calls his experience a Buddhist pilgrimage, in that it brought him to detach himself from the world; “*by leaving for Saint James, I was looking for nothing and I found it.*” (*En partant pour Saint-Jacques, je ne cherchais rien, et je l’ai trouvé.*) And it is an enjoyable read. Like Chaucer’s, his account is funny; he mixes the most trivial and ribald with the profound and he is generous.

So this is one man’s story, but it is important because it becomes one pilgrim’s story. Maybe it doesn’t add anything for those who have already walked the camino, but it does strike some important chords of what it was like, for you. Like the rest of us, he couldn’t have known what the camino would throw at him, what, especially, it would give him and, like the rest of us, he comes away at the end of the camino enriched in many ways. His final lines say it all:

I'd be hard put to it to explain what the Camino is about and what it really represents. All I know is that it is alive and that you can't talk about any of it unless you talk about it all as I have tried to do. But, even like this, something essential is missing, and I realise that. So it's for this reason that, shortly, I'll be setting off again.

And so will you.

(Je ne saurais pas expliquer en quoi le chemin agit et ce qu'il représente vraiment. Je sais seulement qu'il est vivant et qu'on ne peut rien en raconter sauf le tout, comme je m'y suis employé. Mais, même comme cela, l'essentiel manque et je le sais. C'est bien pour cela, d'ici peu, je vais reprendre la route. Et vous aussi.)

REVIEWED BY MARGARET SIMONOT

Book Reviewers

We are very grateful to our team of Book Reviewers. We are always glad of more offers to review the many books which flow in. All books are then available in the CSJ Library for members to borrow, by post or in person.

Here is the current list: please contact Marion at the office if you would like to review any of the following:

One Million Euro, Rorie Smith (pub UK)

This novel recounts the many and strange adventures of group of pilgrims led by long dead poet Walt Whitman and legendary football manager Sir Roy Babadouche. (Rorie is a CSJ member)

Strangers on the Camino: A Father, Son and a Holy Trail, Sanjiiva Wijeshinha (pub Sri Lanka)

Account by father of walking to Santiago with adult son (originally from Colombo, Sri Lanka) from Saint-Jean. Interesting fresh perspective from non Christian cultural background by father working in Australia and son in US.

Spiritual and Walking Guide: I. León to Santiago

Stacey Wittig (pub in US)

Readings, meditations and useful advice in daily stages.

Grandma's on The Camino: Reflections on a 48 day pilgrimage walk to Santiago, Mary O'Hara Wyman (pub in US)

A 72 year old grandmother reflects on her solo pilgrimage from Saint-Jean in 2010.

A daily post card to her granddaughter, a journal entry and a reflection written back home.

The Stained Glass of St James's Church, Reading

John Mullaney (pub in UK)

The stained glass in St James's church complements the history of the building, people, benefactors and architect A.W. Pugin. The text gives insights into Catholic Social History.

Journal your Camino: Reflections on your Journey

David Jennings, 2014

Apt quotations, photos and space to write – this is a book to accompany your camino to record the inner journey

Earth under my heel: a journal of a walk across Northern Spain on the Camino de Santiago

Capt David Beveridge

Account of pilgrimage made on foot in 2013.

From the Secretary's Note Book

Membership changes

With this Bulletin you will receive a membership Subscription Renewal notice letter. Please help us by renewing promptly.

From the beginning of the next Membership Year (October 2014) the Trustees have decided that the £10 Joining fee will no longer be payable. Please tell your friends. We hope this means that more people than ever will support the CSJ by becoming members. In addition there is a new rate of £20 pa for full time students. The 10% discount for 3 years rates will still apply.

New Website At Last www.csj.org.uk

After an inordinately long period of development the new CSJ website should be about to go live as you receive this copy of the Bulletin. We have revised the basic information sections and brought them up to date and introduced a new Members Area which we shall develop over the next months. The shop has been improved and we hope you can find what you are looking for. All feedback appreciated. Thank you for your patience.

Thank You

Thank you to all those members who have responded to the request for up to date information on new refugios/albergues where you have stayed this year. Tricia Griffiths, an Office Volunteer, Rabanal Hospitalera and Amiga in Santiago is also covering the Camino Francés route again to collect more information to update the 2015 Guide. Please send in any feedback you may have on any of the CSJ Guides to office@csj.org.uk or the Guide writer/editor to help us keep the Guides as up to date as possible.

Amigos Service 2014

If you have served as an *Amigo/Amiga* at the Pilgrim Office in Santiago this year the Trustees would be glad to have any observations or comments on the service that is being provided to pilgrims. Also, if you have been an arriving Pilgrim and would like to make any remarks about the Welcome Service we should be very grateful to hear from you. Please email office@csj.org.uk

New Publications

We have two new handy books of maps, published by Michelin. One is 34 maps and 5 town plans for the Camino de Santiago (Francés) and the other Chemins de Compostelle covers the Le Puy route in 32 stages with 6 town plans. They are £5.99 each. We also have Michelin maps, scale 1:150000, also £5.99 each. No 141 covers Costa de Galicia (most of Galicia except for the area E of Orense); No 142 is Asturias, Costa Verde covering most of Asturias and south of Oviedo; No 143 is Costa de Cantabria, from Llanes in the west to Bilbao in the east; No 144 Pirineos Atlanticos/ Pirineo Vasco-Navarro. Available in the new online Bookshop or by post. Phone or email for postage costs.

Pilgrim Numbers January-August 2014

By the end of August a total of 173,549 pilgrims arrived in Santiago, an increase of 9.2% compared to the same period in 2013. Most noticeable has been the increase in Americans (influenced by The Way?) and Italians (following the 800th anniversary of Francis of Assisi's possible pilgrimage to Santiago). Johnnie Walker's Camino Blog gives a full breakdown of nationalities, routes and starting points.

Political Pilgrims

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy enjoyed a good photo opportunity in Santiago recently on the eve of talks about the EC and the Spanish economy. They walked a few km from Monte del Gozo and Mrs Merkel was shown hugging the Apostle.

25th Anniversary of Refugio Gaucelmo – new publication

The week end of the 9th July 2016 has been chosen to celebrate the silver anniversary of the opening of the CSJ's Refugio Gaucelmo in Rabanal del Camino in 1991.

To mark the celebrations in the village, Paul Murray, a member of the Gaucelmo Committee, will be producing a booklet in Spanish and English about the refugio.

He is inviting members to send him any photos you may have dating back to the renovations of what was the former parish priest's house in the village as well as any recollections you may have of the building work, the opening, or the early days of Gaucelmo. In addition, any interesting or amusing incidents over the last twenty five years would be most welcome.

His email address is *mutill@hotmail.co.uk* or any material can be posted to him at 4 Apperley Drive, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 4WP.

Camino Wine Bar, Blackfriars, EC4

– a new venue for finding out about our Camino

Between St Paul's cathedral and Blackfriars Station there is a new branch of the Camino wine and tapas bar, which is just across Blackfriars Bridge from the CSJ Office. Camino is kindly providing lunch for the Hospitaleros' Thank You this year and we hope to build up a good relationship with them. On the evening of say the second Monday of each month we propose that a CSJ member will commit to being at the wine bar to be the 'host' at a CSJ table and anyone wanting to enquire about the camino or share their experience is invited. If you would like to be part of a team to commit to being available on a regular basis in this way please contact Marion at the Office. This is the way that the hugely successful Australian group has grown its membership.

St James Day: 'Sons of Thunder' Islington walk

About 20 pilgrims gathered at St John's RC church in Duncan Terrace to see the recently restored copy of Mantegna's 'Baptism of Hermogenes'. William Griffiths and Mario Pozzati-Tiepolo were able to tell us about the original (destroyed in WW2) in a chapel in the Eremitani in Padua. This was supplemented by a reading from *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus Voraigue which tells of the tradition where St James converts and baptises the magician Hermogenes. The painting depicts the magician's books thrown down to be cast into the sea-not to be burnt in case the evil fumes caused harm. Then we walked along the Regents Canal to St James's Islington for a welcome coffee and chance to learn about the many layered history of the church. Fr John Burniston had kindly looked out some of the archival material relating to the church, which was built by the Clothworkers Company in the 19th c after the sale of their church of St James-in-the-Wall in the City of London. After the Reformation, St James-in-the-Wall had become a home for Clothworker and general 'fixer' for Elizabeth I, William Lambe, who had a great devotion to St James. There is a fine bust of Lambe above the west door. Some 16th c Flemish glass from the chapel survives in the sacristy and there is a flamboyant statue of St James, bought from Oberammergau. The crypt of the

Chapel can now be seen at All Hallows Staining, near Fenchurch Street station.

From Islington we travelled by bus and train to Don Pépé's restaurant in Maida Vale, where we arrived in the middle of a thunderstorm – our own version of 'Sons of Thunder'. Here we were joined by more members and your editor Gosia discovered she was sitting next to Anne Smith, who had taught her English fifty years ago. After a generous lunch we made our way to St James Spanish Place and tea in various locations, again getting quite wet in the process. The Solemn Mass at 7pm was great and glorious and as ever followed by generous refreshments.

Greenbelt Report-Travelling Light

Our team of a dozen or so CSJ pilgrims spoke to at least 400 would be pilgrims in the course of the Greenbelt Festival, held this year at Boughton Hall in Northamptonshire over the August Bank Holiday weekend. We were very grateful to local members Brian Haigh and Stanley Haworth who helped with logistics and to Amanda Harrold who had encouraged us to consider being at Greenbelt in the first place. Amanda's uncle made us, free of charge, a splendidly professional display stand with a map showing all the routes through Europe to Santiago. Kate Monkhouse, Sue Oxlade and Paul Smith were already attending and came to help out, while Rosie and Joe Skivington, Linda Mackenzie, Maria Hendra and Alan Cutbush, Dick and Liz Crean were camping/camper vaning and 'enjoyed' the new experience of not quite sufficient loos and showers. Mary Moseley kindly drove resources from London to Irthlingborough and back. Participants were also able to experience the huge variety of talks, music, performances and worship on offer as part of this Christian music festival. We were able to reach many people who had heard of the camino but did not actually know much about it or how they could tackle it themselves. Many people with young children were encouraged to hear that there has been an increase in families of many kinds on the Camino this year. Some Notes from the log book:

- * KG from Oxford took a Membership pack – coming up to retirement and has had it in mind for a long time.
- * C from Winchester (serial pilgrim) has made many valuable

friendships on the camino “it is such a meaningful activity”

- ★ Lots of people who had heard of the camino but not CSJ so useful to encourage them to see role and value of CSJ and to join us as they plan
- ★ Couple with 3 young children would love to do camino but feel the children too young. Happy to have had the opportunity to sound it out and hear what CSJ has to offer.

Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Grace: Southampton

On Sunday 17 August the 5th annual ecumenical pilgrimage took place from St Mary's parish church, Southampton to the site of the medieval Trinity chapel on the banks of the river Itchen. It is a short walk c 100 m, along Chapel Road, once a causeway to the chapel. Henry VII and VIII both made pilgrimages there in the 15th c. The site is currently rather unprepossessing, having once been the town dump but now to an extent cleared as a parking space for camper vans. The whole area is due for redevelopment for housing and shops and a new riverside path. This will be a very useful link for the route of the St James Way into Southampton. Next year the service and pilgrimage will be attended by the RC Bishop of Portsmouth and will be held at St Mary's on Sunday 16 August (Feast of the Assumption) at 6pm. All Welcome!

CSJ Events

Saturday 27 Sept Day Pilgrimage Cambridge to Ely

Starting with prayers at Jesus College chapel and concluding with evensong at Ely Cathedral.

Organised by the Cambridge group, contact wibs.anjo@uwclub.ne

Saturday 27 September Office Open Day

10.30am to 3.30pm. Bookshop and Library open for advice, sales and browsing.

Saturday 25 October Office Open Day

10.30am to 3.30pm. Bookshop and Library open for advice, sales and browsing.

Saturday 29 November Office Open Day & Lecture

10.30am to 3.30pm. Bookshop and Library open for advice, sales and browsing.

Saturday 29 November Storrs Lecture

4.0 pm Speaker Michael Bloomfield (tutor at the City Lit) on the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* and the 12th century pilgrimage.

Bankside Community Space, 18 Great Guildford Street, London SE1 OFD (a few minutes' walk from the Office), £5. It is helpful if you notify us that you hope to attend. There will be a meal at a local restaurant afterwards, please also indicate if you would like to join the group.

Other Events

Friday 3 October **Scottish Pilgrimage Gathering**

10-4.30pm, The Vine Conference Centre, 131 Garvock Hill, Dunfermline, KY11 4JU (10 mins from Dunfermline Station)

'Communing with Nature-environmental Perspectives on Pilgrimage', Fee incl lunch £30. Speakers include Prof Sam Berry (scientist and author); Chris Baines (Green Pilgrimage Network and broadcaster); Prof Richard Orasm (University of Stirling. This 2nd annual conference seeks to explore questions of the beneficial aspects of walking pilgrimage through engaging with the environment, faith questions, Scottish heritage and there will be workshops on developing new routes. Information and registration office@forthpilgrim.org, tel 01383 730056 by 26 September.

Saturday 4 October **Celebrating Pilgrimage in Canterbury**

A short programme of free talks and walks at The Beaney House of Art & Knowledge, High St.

Includes Guided walk to St Martin's Church and Eastbridge Hospital, Talk about Becket's shrine, Pilgrim Clinic (with CSJ help), work of Green Pilgrimage Network, view pilgrim artefacts. Evening showing of The Way. See poster on website for full details.

Sunday 5 October **Be a Pilgrim**

To mark the launch of www.pilgrimswaycanterbury.org

2pm Join pilgrims from Winchester, Southwark and Rochester to walk from Westgate Gardens. Walk with Archbishop of Canterbury to Cathedral

2-3pm hospitality in Cathedral precincts: tea and pilgrim loaf – free to green pilgrims with their own mug.

3.15pm Evensong. Cathedral open 4-5pm to visit shrine of Becket, Chapel of Our Lady Undercroft, Trinity Chapel. The new website is designed to help pilgrims, especially groups, plan pilgrimages by

informing them which churches have halls which might be available for sleeping and also other facilities for food and worship.

Saturday 1 November

Pilgrims to Rome

10.30am, St James's Church, Piccadilly, W1, Conference Room. Programme includes EGM – Vote on increasing the maximum number of members of the Steering Group

11.15 Alberto Alberti will speak about the Via Francigena del Sud (the route South from Rome for those continuing to the Holy Land) and its place in next year's pan-European pilgrimage Project "Pilgrims crossing Borders".

12.30 Giovanni Casselli will speak on his pioneering work in the British Library and on the road rediscovering the Via Francigena. 14.00 Finish

Please confirm that you will be coming to *pilgrimstoromesecretary@yahoo.com*

Sats 22 & 29 Nov, 6 & 13 Dec

Tributes to D Elias Valiña

A series of talks, walks and visits to mark the 25th anniversary of the death of D Elias Valina, (d. 11-12-98) who pioneered the revival of the Camino in the 1980s. These will take place in O Cebreiro, Samos, Melide and Santiago. For more information contact *office@csj.org.uk*

New Members

Information is provided for members' personal use only

London

Miss. S B Bitlloch 61 Elderton Road, London SE26 4EY	07854 800861
Mr. E L Davey 12a Harlesden Road, London NW10 2BX	07867 381350
Mr. F. Davis Flat 193 Taplow, Thurlow Street, Walworth, London SE17 2UL	020 7701 8493
Mr. P F Gorringe 7/38 Mirabelle Gardens, London E20 1BR	07754 096846
Ms. C R Holmes 37 Globe Road, London E1 4DY	07877 755767
Ms. E. Hopkins 211 Seely Road, London SW17 9RA	020 8769 0739
Mr. B M H Jarman 8b Hales Street, London SE8 4RB	07861 309819
Mrs. K. Norton 28 Wolsey Road, London N1 4QG	07932 038912
Mr. R H Schofield 109 Daws Lane, London NW7 4SJ	07802 737802
Ms. A. Woodhall Flat 39, Turner House, Erasmus Street, SW1P 4DZ	07814 683639

Home Counties

Mr. M L Abbott Avery, Easebourne Lane, Midhurst, W. Sussex GU29 9AZ	01730 814857
Mrs. M. Doherty Windmill Farm Cottage, Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5JW	01892 519330
Ms. A M Fean 14 Blandford Avenue, Whitton, Twickenham, Middx. TW2 6HS	020 8894 2883
Mrs. A. Francis 50 Sheppey Close, Crawley, W. Sussex RH11 9HB	07804 678287
Ms. C M Furlong 4 Webbs Meadow, Great Gransden, Sandy, Beds. SG19 3BL	01767 677227
Mr. M. Hazell 9 Donovan Close, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9DF	07565 303777
Mr C J Le Baigue 2 Newmans Close, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 3PL	01843 604124
Mr. M. Pickup 131 Ware Road, Hertford, Herts. SG13 7EE	07854 799130
Ms. J M Robinson 5 Springfield Court, Hadham Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM23 2QJ	01279 423701

Mrs. S. Torp 01798 812876
Juniper Cottage, Mill Road, West Chiltington
W. Sussex RH20 2PY

South & South-West

Miss. K. Gebuhr 07902 122649
Flat 5, 164 High Street, Southampton
Hants. SO14 2BT

Mrs. A. Gillum-Webb 01420 511060
Tynings, Kite Hill, Selborne, Hants. GU34 3LA

Mrs. B. Livingstone 01929 425002
11 Ballard Estate, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1QZ

Mr. & Mrs B E Matheson 01840 230322
Glencove, Dizzard, Bude, Cornwall EX23 0NX

Wales

Mr. P. Munt-Davies 01646 636468
Haf House, Trewarren Road, St. Ishmaels Haverfordwest,
Pembrokeshire SA62 3SY

Mr. L. Neville 07956 576732
Faenol, Conwy Road, Dolwyd, Conwy LL28 5HR

Mr. C J C Twigg 01874 711413
Church House, Church Sreet, Talgarth,
nr. Brecon, Powys LD3 0BL

Midlands

Gp. Capt. J G Eaton 01285 657557
37 Oaklands, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1FA

Mr. J F Hennigan 07463 796845
2 Basingwerke Court, Hayfield, Derbyshire

Mr. M J Henshaw 01452 303070
11a Cheltenham Road, Gloucester, Glos. GL2 0JE

Mr. A P Jolly 07580 274638
98 New Spring Street, Birmingham
W. Midlands B18 7LZ

Mr. J J A Molyneux 07791 706436
10 Kingsmede Avenue, Chesterfield
Derbyshire S40 3EG

Ms. L. Patterson 07949 593465
35 Nover Wood Drive, Fownhope
Herefordshire HR1 4PN

Mr. & Mrs. D. Yates 01902 754404
15 Codsall Road, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton
W. Midlands WV6 9EE

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15 Codsall Road, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton
W. Midlands WV6 9EE

North of England

Mr. B. Barnes-Davis 01539 732402
35 Blea Tarn Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7NA

Mr. & Mrs. G A Clarke 01539 735976
95 Serpentine Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4PD

Dr. & Mrs. M. Fallon Flat 1b, Ullet Walk, Liverpool, Merseyside L17 1AR	07935 217955
Mr. C. Farquharson 7 Elm Lodge, Hopton Road, Dursley GL11 5PB	01453 549125
Rev. M J McCormick S. Leo's Parish, Lickers Lane, Whiston, Merseyside L35 3PN	01514 266582
Mrs. C D Ramos-Violante 15 Binchester Court, Ingleby, Barwick Stockton-on-Tees, Tyne & Wear TS17 5LY	07429 949141
Ms. N M Stopford 82 Brighton Terrace Road, Crookes, Sheffield S10 1 NU	07779 374066
Mr. C. Tinsley 4 Bellwood, Westhoughton, Bolton Lancs. BL5 2RT	01942 811765

Scotland

Dr. R. de Soldenhoff 42 Drummond Place, Edinburgh EH3 6NR	01315 567979
Mr. D. McGinnes 16 Fenwick Drive, Hamilton S. Lanarkshire ML3 7YG	07540 198970
Mr. D. Owen 12 Arbuckle Street, Kilmarnock, E. Ayrshire KA1 3AY	01563 525768

Northern Ireland

Mr. J. McKelvey 30 Carwood Park, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT36 5JU	07719 762843
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Europe

Mr. M K Jackson Cx358x, Poco Do Vale, Santo Estevao Tavira, 8800-503 Portugal	0035 1962 917243
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North America

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Australia

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Local Group Contacts

Bristol and South-West	Liz Crean	<u>thecreans@btinternet.com</u> 0117 973 4502
Cambridge	Jo Wibberley	<u>wibs.anjo@uwclub.net</u>
Norwich/ E Anglia	Diana Alston	<u>dalston999@gmail.com</u>
Wessex	Carole Vose	<u>carole.vose@btinternet.com</u>
West Midlands	Dave Jones	<u>d-jones56@sky.com</u> 077132 49661
Devon	Valerie Brighton	<u>camigos@countrysidematters.org.uk</u>

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gosia.brykczynska@talktalk.net

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thecreans@btinternet.com

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