



Confraternity of Saint James

Bulletin



June 2012

No 118



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Cover picture:
Statue of St. James,
sculpted by Jonathan Sells
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Editorial

Gosia Brykczyńska

As I am writing this editorial, on a rather unseasonally cool and wet Trinity Sunday afternoon, I am aware that no more than several kilometres south from my house, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II together with her family is slowly progressing down the river Thames on a specially adapted boat as part of the nation's celebrations in honour of her Diamond Jubilee. She is surrounded by hundreds of barges and boats of all shapes and sizes. To paraphrase the ancient poet, hers is truly a face that has launched a thousand ships... But fortunately for us this time, they have been launched in joy and celebration – so much so – that the ship which is leading the whole colourful flotilla down the river is equipped with a ring of eight specially commissioned new bells – each named after a member of the Royal Family and all pealing out in jubilation – throughout the entire seven mile course of the river parade. The bells are to eventually find their permanent home in the renovated city of London church, which is well known to CSJ members, namely St James Garlickhythe! The church's descriptor refers to the garlic traders who unloaded their wares from boats moored by the river bank down the hill from the church; which is situated appropriately enough on Upper Thames Street.

As a pilgrim association focused on the fisherman apostle whose martyred body was brought to rest in northwest Spain, following a lengthy sea voyage in a stone boat, events nautical and maritime are close to our hearts. Even the Camino Inglés, once the preferred route of the English pilgrim – starts at the northern Galician ports of La Coruña or El Ferrol. As the royal boat and flotilla passed under Blackfriars Bridge (which is but a stone's throw from our CSJ office, on Blackfriars Road), I am told the curtains in the CSJ office trembled – just a little bit – in excitement.

The feeling of being included and feeling special and valued is something that was at the heart of the thinking behind the newly launched Amigos project in May, in Santiago. Blessed during the Pilgrim Mass, by the Canon-in-Charge of pilgrims and the Rt. Revd. Bishop of Gibraltar, the project got off to a splendid start. You can read about it in this Bulletin and in more detail on Johnny Walker's excellent blog. John Walker also informs us about a most interesting and committed

hospitalera working on the Camino Inglés – Carmen; while Linda Henry recounts her adventures along another sea-hugging route, the Camino del Norte.

Sometimes our camino beginnings are not quite right and Robert Shaw reminds us that when this happens we have to simply go back and put the record straight. Nothing else will satisfy the pilgrim spirit within us. Meanwhile, life has a way of throwing surprises at us – and none as poignant as those surprises stemming from the emotions which we harbour and anchor in the depths of our souls. Let loose and un-moored these emotions often shock us; but like distant awkward relatives, they too belong to us and shape our hearts and have the unnerving habit of forcing us to confront ourselves – and often for the better. No doubt St James has something to do with it all, as Paul Murray discloses in his very personal account.

Finally, I could not help thinking as I watched the royal river pageant, that had this *fiesta* been occurring in Santiago de Compostela, not only would the bells of St James be pealing out their message of joy but the cathedral's *botafumeiro* would be swinging also. As it is, a Jubilee baby born in St Thomas' hospital (which shares the Thames waterfront with the Houses of Parliament and was therefore witness to the royal flotilla passing by), was named by his happy and proud parents – Santiago! I don't think we can hope for a better (pilgrim) conclusion to this happy June editorial. As Dermot Wynne notes in his article such are the stuff of dreams; and reaching Santiago Cathedral is the goal that urges us all onwards.

Enjoy a great St James's Day 2012 wherever you may be. To keep the maritime connections going the CSJ is organising a special St James's Day weekend in Portsmouth, while I will be in our *refugio* in Miraz and hope to report on my tour of duty in the September Bulletin. And now, to really get into a celebratory mood consider tackling the Bulletin's first crossword puzzle, provided by John Revell.

Camino del Norte – an alternative account of an alternative route

Linda Hendry

On 15 Sept 2010 after two nights on the ‘Pride of Bilbao’, I was lucky to be among the last of the few who could start my pilgrim-walk by stepping off the P&O ferry in the port of **Santurce**. At the time, nobody seemed to know if a new company would take on the route. In Portugalete I met my first pilgrims looking for the route out of town, two Germans and a French Canadian all about my age. My Spanish is not good but I understood a Spanish mum in the street to reassure her children that these eccentric-looking, dishevelled old people were pilgrims on their way to Santiago. The guys gave me many helpful tips like ‘look out for yellow arrows’, ‘drink before you get thirsty’ then I walked into the distance on a very nice footpath beside a cycle-way. After that were cement farm tracks and lastly sand where I had another ice cream to lower body temperature as locals told me ‘*albergue cinco minutos*’ and gestured along the dunes. Normal, wrapped, ice-lolly-style ice creams are available at the roadside so there was no need to take the rucksack off.

The first *albergue* was a new one at **Pobeña** where I was welcomed on the beach by a fast young Spanish pilgrim (third day from Irún) and the three other pilgrims who had passed me. The local café organised a three- course, multi-choice, ten euro pilgrim meal with seemingly limitless alcohol which was great fun. There were thirty of us in Pobeña including North American, South African and Italian pilgrims, twenty-four in bunks and the other six on the dining room/ kitchen floor with the cyclists’ bikes. Despite the strangeness of the bunks being so close together that they are effectively double beds and the young Spaniard and I nearly rolling into each other in the night, it was a fantastic start to the pilgrimage as breakfast was provided in the morning. I walked to **Castro Urdiales** in light rain along a delightful coastal path with interpretation boards about seaweed harvesting and other topics. Then I was helped along by an English speaking 68 year old ex-sailor who showed me a goat track of a short cut along the cliffs from his home. He also recommended we could get to Islares next morning by

walking on the beach at low tide which is what he does. I stayed in a 15 euro La Marina Pension out of a Merchant Ivory film with a view of the harbour because the *albergues* were closed. Here the Tourist Office gave me the fantastically helpful Cantabria leaflet for pilgrims and told me I could use the free internet in libraries (*bibliotecas*) but I went to a cyber cafe that was also a sweet shop.

The next day I bought a walking stick for protection against dogs (though I never needed it for that) and to help me get up hills. After an ancient cart track and a goat-pasture cliff walk, I reached **Islares** where there was another new refuge that had just opened after twelve-noon as the now heavy rain was soaking into my underpants. The Cameroonian *hospitalero* and I had a happy time speaking a mix of my school French and his rapidly expanding English. At Islares there is a campsite with a mini supermarket in the bar restaurant which sells individual portions of things like jam which I found handy for breakfast with last night's bread from dinner. Persuaded by an email posting that 'breakfast was difficult to find' I carried camping sachets of coffee from home and a selection of breakfast bars from Tesco and Lidl. These lasted me till the boat home but I'm not sure what sort of breakfast that person wanted, since plenty of breakfast products are available in Spanish supermarkets. Next I aimed for **Liendo** beside the sea, along the river, over the beautiful eucalyptus and heather clad **Mount La Magdalena**. Then, as I could not face waiting to find the key for the refuge, I ate lunch in its shade and walked up the next hill along the by-pass to **Laredo**. There is a particularly steep trip down to a church and up into Laredo itself, at the bottom of which a lovely lady whose house had an exquisitely carved door, gave me very welcome supplies of cool water. I stayed with the nuns of Trinity St Francis in a double bed *ensuite* with no external window from the bedroom but an internal one to watch goings-on on the stairs. This was one of the most historic places I've ever stayed in. Partly to see the cathedral, I went to the service. A lady, presumably with hot flushes, used her fan throughout the service – with a clack and clatter – in front of me. The walk along the prom to the ferry next day for **Santoña** was made long by my first indulgence in *churros* which are delicious but not the best thing to set you up for walking. Santoña was full of the multi regional cycle trials so I had difficulty finding the *albergue* which is set in wetlands. It was the only place where I stayed that had graffiti on the bunk-boards above our heads but it does seem to be used by school

kids. I went for a swim then looked for migrating spoonbills but don't think I saw them.

Off to **Noja** up a track so appalling that it was funny. There was hardly any room to move in the gorse for the rucksack; but a fantastic view of the sea. Three German ladies going the other way were swearing profusely. Then a paddle along the beach with a Spanish pilgrim before meeting the 'Cake Nuns' of St Mary of Mercy. Do drop in and see them, they love to stamp pilgrims passports and they make lovely cake! This was a long day with disappearing arrows that caused me to get lost. It got hotter and hotter but I found an oasis in the form of a cool glass of water from the helpers of Ernesto in **Güemes** refuge. I listened to his lecture about the history of the camino with an American family, Spanish cyclist, and Colombian architect. We ate a fantastic supper and slept in a lovely wooden cabin until breakfast time.

I took the coastal cliff walk as recommended by Ernesto – once I found it – and swam and paddled along a long beach to the **Somo** ferry ride for Santander. This time I had company with wine, an Austrian and the Spaniard from the day before – who sat scarily close to the edge of the cliffs while I got sunburn due to not covering up in the sea breeze sun. Last night's American Mum age 82 and her two kids had organised a nine euro meal at the café down the road (but soon to close as it's not making money). The Santander amigos *albergue* was crowded and had mosquitos but 'Heigh ho!' – at least I had damp washing to cool down my sunburn. The two computers which were there could do with new keyboards – one has keys you can't read and the other has keys that don't produce letters!

Onwards by train to **Torrelavega** and bus to **Santillana del Mar** followed by a two or three kilometre walk to the amazing prehistoric wall-painting cave replica museum at Altamira. The great thing about museums is that they confiscate your pack and give out a little token which you carry instead. Back down to town and the Museo Jesus Otero *albergue* where there were only two of us; so we had an eight-bed room each and I had a quiet night. I don't actually mind mass snoring. It's isolated snoring that wakes me up. I was a bit sad that I was refused entrance, by the police, to the church service in this lovely but very touristy ancient town. There was a rumour in the Santander *albergue* that the Santillana *albergue* had no cooking or hot water facilities but it turned out that it had the usual microwave plus hot water on tap, showers and a nice covered outdoor '*sitootery*' as

we say in Scotland, where I probably got more mosquito bites. For six euros you stay in an area surrounded by deluxe multi starred hotels. At Cóbreces the next day, after some road travel and some rural walking, it looked like rain and I could not find the *albergue*, and so I went to the **Posada las Mañanitas** that had been advertising itself as pilgrim friendly. At thirty euros for dinner, bed and breakfast I'm not so sure – but the breakfast was very much local produce and seemed pretty limitless. Two Dutch pilgrims ate dinner with me and next morning a lonely German girl commented on not seeing any pilgrims but the German walkers at the next table said they had seen 'loads' on their way here from the Picos. I thought to myself 'If you won't stay in refuges you might not see pilgrims' but then I thought that maybe some of the people I had met at Pobeña had been on their way back from Santiago!

A part rainy walk and the day looked as if it would get worse, which it did several times so I moved onto the busy road to be close to bus shelters. **Comillas** Tourist Office put me straight on to the Gaudi Folly as well as the refuge and the library; but first a trip to the *farmacia* for some "bite stuff". I have nearly no Spanish so grateful thanks to the staff in that pharmacy and Tourist Offices for learning English. This refuge has character – hardly any double bunks, mainly single beds in a loft plus a 50c in the slot coffee machine and a tumble dryer. Here I met a Pole who recommended the supermarket double packs of rice pudding (which are nice) and my first other Brit was a repeat pilgrimage offender from Lincolnshire. Luckily I had sat down for the *Menú del Día* under an awning in the square before the heavens opened yet again. That is why this area is known as Green Spain! But the beds here were too soft – some pilgrims leaving to find a harder mattress elsewhere after they'd paid the *hospitalera* who'd left before they discovered the extreme softness.

Another rainy walk – pilgrims meet each other sheltering in bus shelters on the way out of town and a downpour at **San Vicente de la Barquera** where we hid in the bus station for a bit but the toilets were locked to the surprise of Spaniards getting off buses. As I didn't want to wait outside a probably closed refuge on top of a hill again, with maybe no shelter, I walked on to **Serdio** and was hosted to a free coffee in a drinking club. The *albergue* key was not being kept at the pub but hidden in the bench closest to the door on a 'Miss Kitty' key ring. The local ladies played Bingo downstairs while I read most of an Irish story I found there. Unfortunately *Menú del Día* was off in the village due

to staff shortages and we had to have *bocadillos* instead while tropical rain fell outside and reassuringly familiar football players were on TV. The English guy and I had the *albergue* to ourselves. He slept in a special separate section 'for snorers' after tipping me off about the fantastic vista to be found a few 100 yards up the track from the hostel.

I set out again next morning but met the train tracks at Peseus and succumbed to the 10:40am Feve 'toy-train ride' to **Llanes** where there is a tremendous cake shop and harbour reconstruction work; then walked on through **Playa del Poo** (pronounced Po) by the cliff paths to **Soleriu** where the hostel was closed for the season so back to Poo by road after the worst meal I had in the whole of Spain. The *albergue* at Llanes gives a 2 euro discount for pilgrims and seemed to be manned by a drunken Irishman, who turned out to be a relaxed pilgrim with blisters, who then ambled off to the local bar. Then a tired Swiss woman returning from Compostela thought that I was running the place – so it was a bit *Fawlty Towersish* until the owner appeared later! Lovely place with a fantastic back garden for lounging in.

After that I got the early morning train as a tourist to **Arriondas** and a bus up to the **Picos de Europa** at **Covadonga**, a holy site that is not as nice, in my opinion, as Montserrat and then on up to **Lagos** where there are toilets, a *museo*, a restaurant and a walker's refuge but I only found out about that later. The Arriondas Hostel behind the bus station suspected me of being about to smuggle other people into my room – perhaps for prostitution? This showed me how accepted and protected one is by being a pilgrim when you stay on the pilgrim routes, since they are used to anything and everything.

Down to **Oviedo** by train where the Tourist Office recommended I go straight back up to Santander as the next day would be a General Strike, a *huelga*. So I did head back on the train after I had a look around and after sending off postcards. Another lovely night in the Santander *albergue* which was a bit quieter and the café saved my life – by feeding me. The computers were fourteen hours ahead in credit due to people putting money in, then walking off in frustration as they were so slow! On the last day I had a lovely swim, a look round the town, palace and zoo before Pension Madrid for the last night – then onto the conveniently located Brittany Ferries boat for a choppy crossing back to Plymouth and the train back to Edinburgh on 1st October.

Camino People Series – Carmen, Hospitalera at Hospital de Bruma

John Walker

“In the old days I thought something wonderful would happen to me - now I believe that the most wonderful thing is that nothing wonderful happens. We are just as we are - nothing else - are we not wonderful enough? By only hearing the wind howl in the chimney, I am filled with all the harmony of music. By eating bread I am fed with the whole goodness and fullness of the earth. And when the silent mood comes, the calmness of immense seas and eternal spaces fills me...I know now that the things of greatest value can be had for the asking - that the centre of life is always near.” From ‘Soliloquies of a Hermit’ by Theodore Frances Powys

Before I first met Carmen I heard about her from other pilgrims. Good things. Pilgrims arrive at the *albergue* at Hospital de Bruma exhausted after walking 29kms to get there from Betanzos, including walking up the “hill”. Pilgrims describe the *albergue* as being among the best they have ever used. Carmen’s welcome and her efforts to make pilgrims comfortable have a lot to do with that. The albergue is situated at the bottom of the small hamlet of Hospital de Bruma which in medieval times did have a pilgrim hospital. It is 2kms from the nearest restaurant or shops which for a lot of pilgrims would be 2kms too far! Carmen has sorted out meal deliveries from a local restaurant and she is known to arrange for her husband the ever helpful Benino to drive pilgrims to the supermarket. I’ve met Carmen a few times and from the start she welcomed me with warmth and friendship. She has an open face with eyes that twinkle as she makes or enjoys a joke. I had explained to her about this blog project of mine – **Camino People** – and after we had packed for the day we hiked back down to Bruma from Meson do Vento to talk to Carmen. This was just like any other day. She got up at 8am and had hot chocolate with biscuits broken it to it as she does every day. Then she made her way to the *albergue* where three young pilgrims from Croatia had slept the night before. They wanted to walk to Santiago in one go and had left at dawn. The numbers are increasing she said. Sometimes they come in ones

or twos. Nowadays there are more groups. She pointed to a plaque on the wall commemorating the visit by 30 Irish people who had sailed to Ferrol by boat to walk to Santiago. The day after they left 40 more pilgrims arrived from Pais Vasco. They had fun fitting into the albergues 25 beds! We were sitting at the table in the kitchen/lounge of the *albergue* and I asked Carmen how long she had been here. Although she knew exactly what I meant her eyes twinkled as she said "Fifty-three years." Seeing my astonishment she explained that she and her three brothers had been born in that very building which had been home to her family for three generations. Eventually she married a local boy, Benino, from Meson do Vento and they got another larger house in Bruma and her parents moved in with her. The family abandoned the house in the mid 1970's. They decided to donate the house to the *Ayuntamiento* who converted it into the albergue with Carmen appointed as first hospitalera in 1999. "Was she pleased with it?" Her pride is obvious. "I'm delighted."

She explained that the kitchen is largely the same although there are more doors and windows now. The *albergue* retains the traditional Galician oven where her grandmother and mother cooked. She said that she seen a lot of changes in the Camino Inglés over the 10 years.

There are more. The way-marking is better. But her experience of the pilgrims has always been good. A big change has been the introduction of a 3 euro charge instead of the previous donation system. She said there is less income now! Another big change is that they provide disposable sheets and pillowcases. Even after the passage of time she remembers one pilgrim from some years before, a woman from Ferrol who was very ill. She was determined to make the pilgrimage to Santiago and walked two days of 40kms each simply praying "let me arrive". The albergue is open 365 days of the year and is left unlocked. After cleaning up in the mornings Carmen goes home for lunch at 1pm. She laughed when she said this and admitted her lunchtime is most un-Spanish. At home she makes lunch for her parents and Benino. They usually have soup or pasta to start followed by meat. Unlike most Galicians they don't eat a lot of fish although her favourite meal reserved for wedding anniversaries and birthdays is sea food. "Every day." She repeated for emphasis, "Every day, Benino goes to play cards with his friends." But they both make sure they are around at 5pm when the pilgrims start to arrive. After they get settled in with their *credenciales* stamped Carmen makes sure they have food or know how to get it. In the evening before supper they tend to their chickens, rabbits and vegetables – all for the pot. Then she usually watches some

television before going to bed early. “Then I get up next day and do it all again” she concludes, without a scintilla of discontent. As we left I felt very privileged to have seen into her life a little. Whether or not she had ever been outside of Bruma or outside of Spain was a question I left unasked. No matter the answer, I suspect she has far more serenity than a lot of world travellers.

Editor's Note: Reprinted here by kind permission of John Walker, Santiago. For more such stories please look up: www.johnniewalker-santiago.blogspot.com



Reconciliation on the Camino

Paul Murray

My story dates back to the night after the feast of Saint James in 2006 when I was coming to the end of my second stint as a warden in the CSJ's *refugio* Gaucelmo in Rabanal. I shared my hospitalero duties that summer with Gilbert Cabergs from Belgium and we had managed to keep the barn open, despite being short handed, for most of the two weeks to cope with the high numbers of pilgrims. A sudden drop in *peregrinos* on this particular day meant there were pilgrims only in the main dormitory and Gilbert and I eagerly looked forward to a slightly more relaxing evening.

I had heard from Angela at the Tesín *refugio* lower down the Calle Real that she had welcomed three generations of a Japanese family that morning. They were a most unusual combination of a grandmother, a



Paul Murray is on the left on the photo

young mother and her two young sons, both aged under ten. Angela had explained that they had planned to attend vespers and compline in the church. It struck me that here was the opportunity for me to bury, once and for all, my demons which had stretched back to my youth. My late father's love for his fellow man had never quite extended to the Japanese following his three and a half years' incarceration firstly in Changi in Singapore and then in three more prisoner-of-war camps on Japan's main northern island of Hokkaido. My attitude to the Japanese until that summer evening in the Montes de León, whilst never remotely hostile, could best be described as indifferent and I vividly recalled, for example, shunning groups of their teachers when they visited the school where I worked, ironically as a modern languages' teacher, for twenty five years. The idea began growing on me that, at the very least, I could show them some hospitality by inviting them to view our refugio.

Sure enough they emerged from the pilgrim blessing at compline to chat with the monks outside their retreat house just before sunset and readily accepted our invitation for a short tour of the wonderful sanctuary which is the *refugio*. The mother was the only English speaker and dutifully translated my explanations into Japanese for her offspring and her mother as we toured first the welcoming reception area, then the cosy barn with the bunks neatly arrayed for the next pilgrim arrivals and finally the *huerta* where the two young boys no longer had to endure tales of 1073 and all that when Alfonso VI granted a charter to the hermit Gaucelmo to build a refuge further up the mountain at Foncebadón. They screamed in sheer delight as they ran round the plum trees and played catch by the pilgrim benches.

All too quickly, the guided tour came to an end and I resolved that I would unburden to the mother the shame of my fifty two years of indifference towards her nation. As the little group stood on the cobble stones in the street at Gaucelmo's entrance, I blurted out the words to her that my father had been a POW during the Second World War. I shall never forget the initial look of terror that came over her face and I remain convinced to this day that she thought I was going to enact some physical retribution on her. I quickly moved to reassure her, kissing her on both cheeks, bowing and saying – *Sayanara*. She must have explained what I had said to her mother but the incredible emotion of these cathartic moments precludes any memories for me of this. Gilbert, who had been watching the whole scene unfold, immediately encouraged me to watch the little group as they approached the corner of the street to return down

the hill to Tesín's and, sure enough, they turned back to wave goodbye and respond to my waves.

Gilbert, meantime, turned to preparing the kitchen for breakfast while I sobbed inconsolably at the door of the refugio. He then, in his usual sensitive way, judged that the time was right to give me the pilgrim nationalities and stats for the day to fill in.

After I turned in for the night, I tried to listen to Spanish KISS FM for company on my radio headset but my tears persisted until the wee small hours, tears of sadness thinking of my deceased father, tears of shame at my years of indifference towards the Japanese and the initial anguish I had caused one particular family a few hours before, and finally tears of relief that I could now get on with the rest of my life and treat the Japanese with the respect that all nationalities deserve on this earth. I had thought that the family might have called the next morning as they walked up the Calle Real on their ascent to the Cruz de Ferro but, on reflection, the raw emotions of the events of the night before probably made that unlikely.

And a final footnote. I just knew from the first words of Padre Javier's sermon at Sunday Mass a few days later that the theme for his homily was going to be reconciliation.

Of which dreams are made

Dermot Wynne

The majority of people can recall exactly where they were and exactly what they were doing at certain very important times in either their lives or important times in the historical sense. The deaths of President Kennedy and Princess Diana are well-known modern examples in the latter case. In the former; and personal sense, it's not surprising that each pilgrim will have very vivid memories of their arrival in Santiago. They will probably have spent years in thinking about a pilgrimage, several months in detailed preparations and again several months of physical endeavour on the pilgrimage itself. So by the time they reach the Plaza del Obradoiro it will clearly be a moment to savour and remember.

I had read that as you clear the last hill before the city of Santiago you can see the three spires of the Cathedral. Somehow I had missed the usual road and found myself on a motorway section which, although going in the general direction of the city, meant that I couldn't see the spires. I received several blasts from the horns of passing motorists, but these were not the welcome toot-toots that I had been used to, but more the you-stupid-fool-for-being-on-the-motorway type of blast. Finally I switched into orienteering mode, escaped the dreaded motorway, and found myself in the saner but still busy outskirts of the city. Although it wasn't 7am, unusually for me, my first thought was not breakfast but the Plaza del Obradoiro where I had to see the cathedral. As I wheeled my bicycle through the ancient streets, the granite buildings deadened the noise of the outside world and my body complied with and was quietened by the medieval pace of life. As I entered the Plaza del Obradoiro I was, for one split second, the only person in the square and it took me a few moments to realise that I had arrived. As I stood in the centre of the Plaza I was expecting something to happen, but of course that would have been vainglory and not the defining event that in some wild moment I thought might occur!

I have a vivid memory of a time, when I was a young boy, when sweet rationing came to an end. On one day you were restricted, if my memory serves me correctly, to a 1/4lb of sweets per week. On the next day you could, if you had the money, buy the entire stock of sweets in the shop. When I was in Molinaseca I met a fellow pilgrim, Harry, who had lived most of his life in Bermuda but had been born in Portugal.

Over a picnic lunch he told me that he had decided to undertake the pilgrimage to straighten out his life. Although he didn't go into detail I was left with the impression that he had some business and personal problems, but more seriously he had a heart condition which meant that he had to change his lifestyle. The pilgrimage was to be a breathing space in his life in which to take stock and then go forward more happily. As I cycled out of Santiago towards the airport - this time on the right road - I met several pilgrims arriving. I said hello to a party of Americans whom I had first met in Portomarín. And then I met Harry, my Portuguese-Bermudian friend. I was so pleased to see him again and looking in such good form because the last time we parted he had a 20km walk, mostly uphill, to the next refuge in the full heat of the June day. I wondered at the time if it was wise for someone with a serious heart problem to expose themselves to such cruel conditions. I had thought about him on several occasions since our parting and hoped that he would not end up in hospital. As we parted and waved goodbye to each other Harry could see the three spires of the Cathedral. He had a broad grin across his sunburnt face as he took another firm stride towards his goal. Medical condition or not, nothing was going to cheat him ofç

There is a poem entitled "Go Pilgrim" which comes from a book of French hours.

The first few lines are as follows: *Go Pilgrim, pursue thy quest. Go on the path, may nothing stop thee! Take your share of the sun and your share of the dust. . .*

Well, I had gone. I had taken the path and I had not allowed anything to stop me. Most certainly I had had my share of the sun and my share of the dust. Also I had had my share of the dream.

Along the Camino Primitivo

*...Melide heralds a change of life
and pace on this pilgrimage.
Here there are crowds
All heading westward.
Some with heads bowed down
Concerned now only with food and rest.
Some with a spring in their step
Their sole concern their destination,
Santiago de Compostela.
And this stranger pilgrim,
Drifting down from off the Primitivo,
Is unknown to all, who
Have found companions and friends
On the long road from Roncesvalles
And beyond.
Here in Melide the pilgrim refuge
Is full, with those who made
An early start on the Camino Francés.
A friendly bar owner points the pilgrim
To a lodging house,
Where he is first through the door.
Followed quickly by two youngsters
And many more, all wanting beds.
“You wait your turn!” is the reply
to a strident demand, in broken English
from the back of the crowd. I wonder,
Will there be an orderly queue
At the gates of paradise?
Or will we walk straight in
Knowing that we are home?*

Extract from a poem by Terrence Brighton, 2010

Unfinished Business in 2011

Robert Shaw

Towards the end of May 2010 I walked into Santiago de Compostela together with my wife, Teresa, and Anthony, a close friend for 50 years. But after the barest minimum of formalities, including collecting our *Compostela*, “hugging the apostle” in the cathedral, and being interviewed by Spanish TV – which seemed to think there were relatively few English participants on the camino – we were on the plane back to England and to our jobs and families.

Spiritually and physically we were in pretty good shape, but I was left with a small but growing niggle. This was, that although we had finished the walk in Santiago de Compostela, with more than enough kilometres under our feet and rubber stamps on our *credenciales* to satisfy the Pilgrim Office, I could not convince myself that we had actually started it properly. All right, we had left our house on the north coast of Cornwall carrying small pieces of local slate (what we call *Killas*, and mine is now deposited on a Santiago Cathedral window sill) and we had walked the Saints’ Way from Padstow to Fowey, whence many medieval pilgrims had left by sea towards Europe and the camino, from under the scallop-shell canopy on the old Customs House. However, with limited time available from a job that had to be got back for, we had only actually walked the Camino Francés westwards from León.

What was increasingly nagging me was not having done that one long day over the Pyrenees. I felt that until I had walked the Route Napoleon, that symbolic 28km between St Jean-Pied-de-Port and Roncesvalles – the high pass over the Pyrenees is the focus of most of the major camino routes from across Europe – my *Compostela* was probably achieved under somewhat false pretences. Additionally, over the intervening year we had lost, or were in danger of losing, far too many close friends. Even the old friend with whom we walked into Santiago de Compostela last May had become very ill. So it seemed as though something had to be done.

Which is how 11 September 2011 found two of the original three of us leaving St Jean-Pied-de-Port before 8am. Dawn was breaking pink in the eastern horizon as we strode determinedly up the hill out of town. We gradually left the settlements behind, though we reckoned there seemed

to be rather a lot of vehicle traffic for something little better than a track. It was a fine morning as we looked back down onto the layers of cloud still covering the valley.

The camino office in St Jean-Pied-de-Port on the previous afternoon, had forewarned us that it would be an eight-hour walk, whilst the landlady where we stayed had looked us up and down and forecast six hours. The gradient out of town is quite relentless so we were pacing ourselves. We passed several other walkers, in turn we were passed by a few younger and heartier types and by several people on bikes – though we later met them again pushing their ironwork slowly uphill. And there were just a few walkers coming towards us, which is counter-intuitive for the camino, but then this section of the camino is also a non-directional French *Grand Randonnée*.

At the first water tap there is a large notice which appears to be official and which instructs people to walk in single file and not to pick mushrooms. In that there were no mushrooms and, for most of the 28 km you could have several people walking abreast without hazard, this seemed a most curious order.

Orisson was a pleasant surprise, with an endless view, draught lager, a rubber stamp and a toilet break, but there was no time to be lost. As the kilometres passed, the trees became more sparse and eventually disappeared. There were many raptors up in the sky, wheeling round. They were too far away to identify accurately, but we speculated idly that they might be vultures snatching exhausted pilgrims away for lunch; and they seemed only to hunt in odd-numbered groups, of three, five or seven. Maybe this was just a coincidence.

The air was full of cowbells and sheep bells. It is common practice in these parts for farmers to leave their animals up on the high mountain pasture through the summer, with occasional inspection visits or paying locals to keep an eye on them. They walk them back down to the valley in late September. The land hereabouts is publicly owned and summer grazing rights are inexpensive. There were numerous ponies loose on the moorland, less stocky and shaggy than on Dartmoor or in the New Forest, and several foals.

As the day progressed, we were fortunate that the sky became somewhat overcast or it would have been too hot. However, when we sat to eat our picnic beside that cairn where the camino veers off to the right, there was a downright chilly wind. The white-van-man who marks the nationality of passing pilgrims on his car door with a felt-tip pen was delighted that we have offered him the first Polish tick of the

day – a truthful statement in every way except strict fact, in that Teresa is London-Polish.

We came across a whole row of little vans parked alongside the trail, with a group of locals with gun and hunting horn. However, we heard only two shots throughout the day, so there cannot be much up there still remaining to be slaughtered.

The watershed and the national boundary are marked somewhat half-heartedly. One stone forewarns of 765kms to Saint Jacques de Compostelle, whilst another nearby proclaims Navarra, or Nafarroa. And there is the cattle grid, presumably to deter Spanish animals from defecting to France, or vice-versa. After another most welcome water tap, we were in Spain and there was suddenly waymark overkill. So many new wooden posts, carefully engraved, numbered and painted, but why? We could see three or four at a time ahead of us so there was little danger of becoming lost, even if fog were to descend. The Lepoeder waymark post proclaimed its height as 1429 metres, quite impressive as we started our climb from St Jean that morning at only 200 metres. But why exactly is the post wrapped with a spiral of barbed wire? I suppose it gives the cows something to scratch themselves against.

So with a last look sideways at the breathtaking view to the east of the Pyrenean peaks disappearing into the distance, it was downhill into Spain. The landscape becomes softer; there are trees again with beech woods hanging on steep hillsides. There are signs of recent repair works to the path surface, with caterpillar tractor scars on the stones and grass. We passed a modern refuge hut, open and very little vandalised; and we were now definitely on the way downhill.

Yesterday, at the camino office in St Jean-Pied-de-Port, we had been told to divert from the official route at Post 79, because the track downhill through the woods was too steep after that. This had meant little to us then but, at Post 79 it all became clear and we duly did what we had been told and veered off downhill to the right. A couple of young Teutons, going the other way, assured us we were on the right track.

Lots of zigging and zagging steeply downhill on roads and on paths with – as the local leaflet said – short-cutting across the air-pin (sic) bends, eventually brought us to the Chapelle d'Ibañeta. This was locked, apparently abandoned, and possibly a distant relative of some of the brutally modern ecclesiastical buildings I run across in my day-job. From Ibañeta, the track runs parallel with the road down through woodlands and finally the massive structure of Roncesvalles Abbey comes into

sight. It had been just about seven hours of walking.

We found Roncesvalles very busy, with many more people than we have actually seen *en route*. Where have they all come from? Maybe they have taken the “softer” option through Valcarlos and Arneguy. There was a queue to check-in for a bed, which we joined although only to get our *credenciales* stamped. Across the courtyard is the church – interesting as modern-ish architecture – and wouldn’t it be good to have had time to sit, through Evensong or Vespers or whatever, but we still had one more journey to make today, though not before visiting the hotel bar for a celebratory drink and a chance to sit and let our leg joints seize up. The barman not only told me he could summon a taxi, but that there was one here already which would return us to St Jean Pied-de-Port. Taxi-man had a people carrier and he had other clients lined up already, but was happy to wait whilst we enjoyed our beer.

Finally, we piled into the shared taxi for the journey back, which took all of 35 minutes along the road (and seems to cost the proverbial “*un bras et une jambe*”) and we were at our small hotel in time to bathe before dinner. And I think I may now have filled that lacuna from last year’s walk.

The Launch of the Amigos Project, Santiago 16 May 2012: Bread of Heaven and Danny Boy

Marion Marples, Gosia Brykczyńska, John Walker and
others

As reported in Bulletin 117, this spring, The Irish Society of Friends of St James and the CSJ together with the Pilgrim Office of Santiago Cathedral and under the watchful eye of John Rafferty, together launched the new *Santiago Amigos Project*, otherwise known as the project of 'A Hundred Thousand Welcomes'. Gosia Brykczyńska and Marion Marples attended the official launch and blessing of the project on behalf of CSJ, while Padraig McSweeney and Laraine O'Connell represented our partners The Irish Society of Friends of St James.

The project came about as a result of the perceived need to personalise and increase the pilgrimage experience in Santiago itself. The last Santiago Holy Year in 2010 highlighted areas where a more spiritual/pastoral dimension and personalised approach to pilgrims could be beneficial and as a small first step towards achieving this goal the Hundred Thousand Welcomes project, referred to now as the Amigos Project, was born. Aimed primarily at English speaking pilgrims, two volunteers help welcome and greet pilgrims during the busiest times of the day, as the pilgrims come to the Pilgrims' office to collect their hard won *Compostela*.

Those of us lucky enough to be present at the Pilgrim Mass when the Amigos Project was launched donned our newly acquired blue Amigos T-shirts having first met Don Augustin Dosil, chairman of the Archicofradia (a religious organisation in Santiago supporting the work of the Cathedral and Pilgrim Office). He reminded us that the work the Amigos are now doing is a direct descendant of the work of the foundation of the first pilgrim hospital in Santiago, which in earlier times cared for destitute pilgrims arriving at the Apostle's shrine.

In the cathedral we had privileged seating inside the altar rails. The Bishop of Gibraltar, the Right Reverend Ralph Heskett, a Redemptorist priest and until fairly recently parish priest of St Mary's Clapham, presided at the 12 noon Pilgrim Mass together with Don Jenaro, the Canon-in-Charge of Pilgrims, and in charge of the Pilgrim Office. Don Jenaro read the gospel and preached – welcoming the project itself. After

the Mass, the swinging of the *Botafumeiro* provided a fitting climax and the Bishop and Don Jenaro stepped forward and said:

“We are delighted to be here today to celebrate this new service where pilgrim volunteers are coming to live and work in Santiago to serve their fellow pilgrims. The pilgrim organisations in the United Kingdom and Ireland are to be congratulated for supporting this initiative. The first volunteers appropriately called ‘Amigos’ are here with us today in their distinctive blue T-shirts – on behalf of all of the pilgrims who will be welcomed by them to this great city I offer our warmest thanks for all of the work they do.

“Father God we ask your blessing on these pilgrim volunteers who have come to Santiago to serve their fellow pilgrims. We ask you to strengthen them in faith as they work each day in the Pilgrims’ Office providing a warm welcome and information to all pilgrims who have travelled to honour the tomb of the Apostle Santiago.” A resounding “AMEN” sounded in the Cathedral. The organist, our friend Joaquin Barreira played the tunes of *Danny Boy* and *Guide me O thou great Redeemer* in honour of the project!



We then all set off for a pilgrim lunch in the Amigos flat, located across the valley from the Seminario Menor. The flat has a one double and two single bedrooms, a lounge, kitchen and bathroom. Bishop Ralph proceeded to bless the new accommodation and more speeches were made. Later in the evening John Walker generously invited all the representatives present, Amigos and several English speaking pilgrims to an excellent meal at a restaurant in the new town. More congratulations, thanks, and speeches were shared and we even ended with singing 'Should auld acquaintance...' having first shared a traditional Galician Queimada with dimmed lights. However, rather than the usual words which are proclaimed at this time to ward off evil spirits one of the guests read a poem which was much more in keeping with the day. It ended a great day perfectly:

*The rain is lashing down again
But still the Pilgrims come
Some have walked for 30 days
And rarely seen the sun.*

*Others travelled shorter ways
To reach this mighty place
Tired, strained or battered legs
And blisters slowed their pace.*

*But an overwhelming thought engulfed
Their mind to force them on
The pain will stay just a short while
But the joy will linger on.*

*So to the square, the pilgrim makes
And sits or lies and stares
And feels the pulse of a million hearts
Who have also stood, just there.*

*The tall facade of the Cathedral now
Begins to draw the Pilgrim's mind
A tear descends from a weary eye
As the memories remind. . .*

*. . . But the journey isn't quite complete
Another place in sight
Across the Praza das Praterias
Then slightly to the right*

*Just through the arch and up the stairs
The journey meets its end
That final stamp and acknowledgement
From that last Camino friend.*

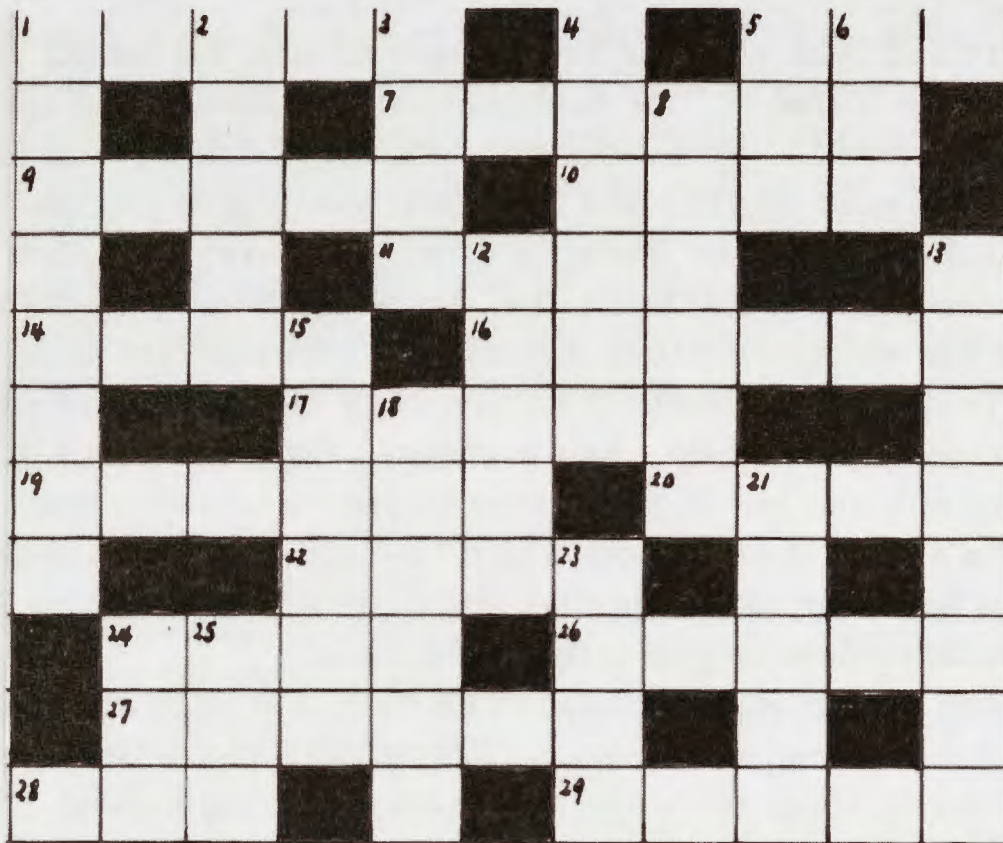
Larry and Sean were the first Amigos to start the project rolling. It really was a case of, “the Scotsman the Englishman and Irishman went into a pub. . .” as John Walker helped them settle in. Both Amigos were experienced pilgrims and their understanding of pilgrims’ needs combined with their own talents for empathy and communication made them ideal first Amigos. In the first two weeks of the project the two amigos had welcomed 10,000 pilgrims! As John Rafferty notes in his blog, “In the last two weeks there have been instances where pilgrims have needed practical help – how to change a flight, how to get in touch urgently with another pilgrim, where to print a boarding card, where to buy a SIM card and so on. There have also been instances where pilgrims have been in tears just because of the kind words of an Amigo congratulating them on getting their *Compostela*.”

Finally, as John Rafferty noted in his blog, it must be said that Don Jenaro has gone out of his way to welcome the Amigos. He had clearly been thinking about this project. Without prompting he said, “On the Way pilgrims greet each other with “*buen camino!*” now when they arrive in Santiago they have fellow pilgrims greeting them with “welcome and congratulations!”

For a full report on the first weeks of the Amigos Service see: www.johnnie-walker.santiago.blogspot.co.uk

Pilgrim Crossword

set by John Revell



Across

- 1 Galician monastery on the Camino (also a Greek island)
- 5 Diocese – observe!
- 7 Welcome pilgrim halt, but not before the sun is above the yard-arm!
- 9 CSJ haven
- 10 Dance with a backward glance
- 11 There's nothing odd about this!
- 14 Expel
- 16 Attack
- 17 Speed
- 19 It's round – and around the Puente la Reina are
- 20 Monsieur Descartes to his friends
- 22 Not for Rolling Stones!
- 24 The song of Roland is one such
- 26 Follow
- 27 Sister (anagram)
- 28 Companion to neither
- 29 Gregorian chant south of Burgos

Down

- 1 One of Chaucer's pilgrims, who might call on you!
- 2 Something looked for along the way, or in company with Mr Spencer!
- 3 Extent
- 4 Most unadorned
- 5 Herself personally
- 6 Slippery customer
- 8 An English *botafumeiro*
- 12 Saves (anagram)
- 13 Dormitory companions, or supporters of SNCF or RENFE!
- 15 A liquid starter from Reading to Southampton
- 18 A type of bomb
- 21 Support for art
- 23 What the sun does west of Finisterre
- 24 An abbreviated professional
- 25 In Gray's Elegy where was the lowing herd in relation to the lea?

Refugio Gaucelmo News

Julie Davies

2012 Hospitaleros

June

Roisin and Vincent Cowley (UK), Susan Boyle (IRL), Leo and Marina Bolsius (Netherlands), Victoria Wallace (UK)

July

Kelly Zavotka (USA), Christina Wilson (IRL), Pat Chambers (UK), Elizabeth Miller (USA), Gene and Rosann McCullough (USA), Betty and Dugald McDougall (UK)

August

Marga van Ree (Netherlands), Gilbert Cabergs (Belguim), Deirdre Kennedy (IRL), Mary Harnett (IRL)

A Cold New Beginning!

It was a pleasure and a relief to the Working Party (Dave Arthur, Dick Crean and Alison Raju) that there was no smell of damp when Refugio Gaucelmo's front door was opened after a long winter. Refugio Gaucelmo had survived the winter intact. It was just as well as the weather that followed was atrocious. Initially *Hospitaleros* were bathed in sunshine. It was t-shirts and breakfast on the patio weather. Conditions however, can change quite rapidly around Rabanal del Camino. The change brought snow followed by rain and bitterly cold winds which brought the temperature to below zero. T-shirts were packed away and fleeces dusted off. The *hospitaleros* dug deep and braved it with good grace.

Pilgrims arrived cold, wet, and desperate for a place to rest and recover from the elements. Hot showers and the wood burning stove were replenishers of spirits. The wood burning stove was continually alight and became the focal point for afternoon tea and contemplations.

The weather has an impact on the number of pilgrims who stay at Refugio Gaucelmo. Many who would have walked on to Foncebadón opted to stay with us instead, especially when they heard that 20cms of snow had been recorded further ahead. The comments in the Visitors Book indicate what a haven and a sanctuary pilgrims found Gaucelmo to be. Even the bed bugs weren't put off by the cold and several cases have already been treated.



Averil Jones with Oscar and Connie Lopez from the Philippines at Miraz

Refugio Miraz News

Richard Jefferies, Chair of Miraz Subcommittee

Our thanks are due to the following hospitaleros:

Ted & Averil Jones, Colin Jones, Priscilla White, Pat Chambers, Maggie Cartridge, David Lynn, Pat & Martyn Singleton, Ken Spittal, Vivienne Ryan-MacMahon

The Fiesta is over!

A year ago in June 2011, the restored refuge was blessed and fully operational. A significant investment has been made to provide extra facilities for pilgrims. Since that time, the picture of Spain has changed with high unemployment especially in the young and immigrants. As an *anglosajon*, I expected that there would be the normal snags in the building to address, even resorting to the contract clauses should that be really necessary. However Galicia is different in 2012. Our lead builder has laid off most of his staff and has personally to travel 100 kilometres each day to work. The Xacobeo, our main sponsor, has lost its impact and finances. So our attitudes have changed as far as the building is concerned and we are learning to come to terms with the tough economic plight of the nation. There is a feeling that pilgrims are starting to expect more hospitality (particularly the young ones). Behaviour is changing and wardens are sensitive to the new picture new picture.

However perhaps Miraz is isolated and insulated from the pain in Spain. Changes are happening there on the ground. About 3km before Miraz a new restaurant has opened. Meals start at 1pm (closed Sundays). That's good news. This means pilgrims can have a good lunch before arriving at the refuge. So we no longer sell a supply of provisions. . It also means that pilgrims do not have to carry as much food. Indeed in Pilar's bar at Miraz it may be possible to get a *bocadillo*.

March arrived in Miraz to some really good weather, not usual at that time of the year,: the first two weeks were really sunny and the last ten days had rain on and off coupled with some freezing weather. One pilgrim's washing even froze to the line and the even the attic was used on a rainy day So the investment in heating and the woodstove has proved helpful. By contrast Averil and Ted Jones, on three occasions during their

stay, watched helicopters and a plane come over the refuge to scoop water into a tank to put out forest fires .

On a practical level, the old payphone has been removed. a cooker hood installed ; the gates to the drive have been fixed; a new fridge is in place. A new insurance policy has been established.

The garden remains a priority for 2012. A pilgrim rose has been planted by Priscilla White and we encourage members to support us in this development. The apple trees planted by Keith and Maureen Young have survived changes in the garden, yet will require attention throughout the year.

Compliments are still made about the Refuge providing the spirit of the camino. This story illustrates our ethos and credibility. "At the beginning of April, a gentleman and his wife, from the Philippines, came to have a look around the refugio and to ask us about how it was set up. We showed him around and gave him a card with the CSJ address and web site on so that he could get in touch if he wanted to. He told us that they wanted to do part of the walk, and that some of his 8 children and many grandchildren may be walking too, some of whom called in after he left, just to say hello. We told them during the conversation that the refugio was run on donations and when he left he put a donation in the box although no-one stayed the night. When we opened the box he had left us a donation of 100 Euros! Thanks be to Saint James!"

The average number of pilgrims staying in May is 12 each night, although last Saturday numbers reached 21. The majority of pilgrims are Spanish and German. However, Miraz has welcomed during the last week pilgrims from Greece, Finland, Singapore as well as a New Zealand couple. We have now established a Facebook called *Refugio de Miraz*. This is proving popular to cybernauts and is a good source of up to date photographs of pilgrims in Galicia. Our main contacts come from the UK, Poland, USA and Spain.

Members' Page

From Julie Davies

Quite a few Koreans have been amongst the pilgrims staying at Refugio Gaucelmo in the early spring of this year. They wrote in the *Comment Book* in a beautiful flowing style. Alison Raju – the *hospitalera* at the time and CSJ guide-writer – has not yet added Korean to the many languages she knows. She was however, able to find a Korean who had lived in Dublin to decipher the messages. All very positive and full of admiration and praise for what Refugio Gaucelmo was offering. Two of the Koreans had married in St Jean-Pied-de-Port in March and were on their honeymoon! What a lovely way to begin their lives together – walking the camino!

From Mary Remnant

Is there anyone in the CSJ who plays the accordion? If so, please contact me on 020 7352 5181.

From Judith Carpenter

While traversing the camino in appalling weather, I put together this rendition of the famous WWI song. It was taken up by my pilgrim companions as they walked along. I am now sharing it with you.

It's a long way to Santiago, it's a long way to go.
It's a long way to Santiago, to find the God we know.
Goodbye all our doubting,
Goodbye dread and fear.
Yes, it's a long, long way to Santiago,
But our God's right *here* !

Ed Note: *I am aware of several "camino" versions of this song – are there any more poets out there willing to share their librettos with us?*

Obituaries

Adrie Dik

I was very shocked to learn of the untimely death of Adrie Dik, who welcomed us so generously and warmly both in Utrecht last autumn and also in Aachen in February when we met her again. She and her co-chairman Joost Bol showed real pilgrim warmth as they introduced and kept in line all the speakers at the International Conference in Utrecht. The Dutch Association will sorely miss her skills and we truly mourn a new friend who we did not really have time to get to know better. She was planning to meet up with us in Poland at the next international conference and to continue the new friendship! She died while on pilgrimage between Le Puy and St-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Her sympathetic and empathetic nature meant she was well loved by those she met in person and through the pages of the *Jacobsstaff* - the magazine of the Nederlands Genootschap van Sint Jacob. For more information – in Dutch – see www.santiago.nl

MARION MARPLES

Thomas Joyce 1937-2011

Tom walked the Vía de la Plata in the autumn of 2009, taking six weeks off from his busy retirement job as a gardener. A farmer's son, historian and nature lover, he was entranced by his camino adventures, entertaining his family with photographs and an extensive diary. Having chosen Mérida as his starting point because he feared the heat of Salamanca, he always hoped to return to complete this camino and to explore other routes. He died peacefully at home after struggling with kidney cancer for less than a year.

TANYA JOYCE

Robert Walker 1930-2012

Bob made two pilgrimages to Santiago, both by bicycle, and has since spoken about the pilgrim routes to University of the Third Age and WEA audiences, usually complementing his own pictures with slides from the CSJ library. He took part in the CSJ's 1993 Holy Year Pilgrimage, cycling from Winchester to Canterbury, in a group led

by Terence Morris with other notable members such as Bettina Selby and Howard Nelson. He also assisted in the move from the old office at Talbot Yard and even helped the Secretary sort out some domestic plumbing problems.

MARION MARPLES

Pamela Bacon 1931 - 2011

Pamela Bacon was one of the most memorable people in the Confraternity. She was a person of so many parts, who, in spite of her different illnesses, achieved far more than many much stronger people.

She was born Pamela May O'Bryen Horsford in Dublin in 1931, her mother being a violinist and her father an officer in the Leicestershire Regiment of the army, which involved much travelling. Her uncle was the eminent Professor Walter Starkie whose book *The Road to Santiago* describes how he played his violin on the pilgrimage and heard much music from local people as he went. His sister was the formidable Dr Enid Starkie who taught French at Somerville College, Oxford.

For most of her life Pamela lived at Chalfont St Peter in Buckinghamshire. She spent her last school years there at the Holy Cross Convent where she later taught history, having studied it at Exeter and London universities. For a time she then worked at the Foreign Office, before marrying the Air Force officer Stephen Bacon in the local Carmelite Church of St Joseph. They had two daughters, Catherine and Susanna and three grandchildren, who gave them much delight.

Among Pamela's numerous activities only a few can be mentioned here. After teaching she became actively involved in local government and the welfare of the community and became a County Councillor. She wrote many articles about the history of the place and planned to have a map made of the area as represented in the Domesday Book. She also wrote a history of the Carmelites in England.

Sport was one of her favourite activities. She played cricket (being one of the first lady members of the M.C.C.), hockey and netball for the county, besides being an enthusiastic supporter of Arsenal.

Music was another of her great occupations. She sang in several choirs, including those of St Joseph's Church, the Windsor and Eton Choral Society and Dr Mary Berry's Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge. It was with that choir that she went to Santiago in 1995, singing in the many beautiful churches along the way and sometimes turning



the handle of my organistrum. After that she, together with Mike and Jane Bradshaw, joined the Confraternity of Saint James and they became valuable members of our own choir.

Her life's work was acknowledged by an invitation to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party, where she looked magnificent in a wheelchair pushed by her husband Stephen, and the Queen was very glad to meet her.

The tributes to her can be summed up by the Right Honourable Cheryl Gillan, the Member of Parliament for Chesham and Amersham: "A true inspiration, Pam was totally enthusiastic and a wonderful lady who will be missed greatly. I really valued her friendship and the wise advice she gave. Pam Bacon always had the welfare of her community, her village and her county at the heart of everything she did."

Cheryl Gillan also gave the eulogy at the funeral which Liz Keay and I were privileged to go to at St Joseph's Church. The Requiem Mass was celebrated by Father Anthony Parsons, OCD, the church choir and members of the Windsor and Eton Choral Society were directed by Paul McCarthy, and solos by Mozart, JS Bach and César Franck were sung by Dame Emma Kirkby. The organists were Matt Condon and Anthony Bevan. *Missa de Angelis* was joined by the congregation who also sang the hymns including *I vow to thee my country* which so represented Pamela's life. Finally, Paul McCarthy and Anthony Bevan sang *In Paradisum* for her reward in heaven.

I am most grateful to Catharine Morton for much information about her mother.

MARY REMNANT

Book Reviews

The Long Road: My Journey on the Camino Francés

Peter Campbell, 2010, available from www.blurb.com, 116pp

This is a book of mainly black and white photographs recording the journey of Australian Peter Campbell who walked in stages from Aubrac to Santiago between 2003 and 2008. I think the title is misleading; part of the Le Puy route in France is also covered.

The photographs are accompanied by an account of the route, with anecdotes about the people and the way.

Peter includes a couple of unusual side visits: he has some rest days in Ponferrada with a painful leg, so he took a taxi to Santiago de Peñalba to visit this mountain village with Mozarabic arches in the church. He is advised to stop walking but continues and manages to finish triumphantly in Santiago.

MARION MARPLES

Camino Journeys: with Almis Simans

ISBN 9780957896840 CD Rom

1. France: Le Puy-Conques
2. Spain Leon-Santiago

At first sight I wondered why anyone would want to buy this CD Ebook as it covered only sections of two major routes.

But the quality of the information and the excellent photographs persuaded me that this is a useful tool for those wanting to know more in preparation for their pilgrimage.

Each section contains historical and cultural information, kit lists, height profiles, maps, places to visit and those excellent evocative photos.

As the group depicted was walking before 1 April Refugio Gaucelmo in Rabanal was closed, but I was startled to learn that Aimery Picaud had stayed in the former parish house! (there is no evidence of this and he may well have not even existed).

In Part 1: France there is additional information on travelling via Paris to Le Puy and an add-on trip to Rocamadour from Conques. In Part 2: Spain there is a good section on what to do for a few days in Santiago.

Available from www.goodwalkingbooks.com or from the CSJ £12.50. plus postage. (total weight is 60g)

MARION MARPLES

From the Secretary's Notebook

Marion Marples

St James's Way

Now we have published the Guidebook (£5 for CSJ members, £6.50 from the CSJ bookshop) we can take this project further.

1. Development:

We would like to establish a working group to develop the CSJ's St James Way from Reading to Southampton. There are three areas of expertise needed:

- developing camino-related waymarking and implementing this, possibly in conjunction with the East Berks and Hampshire Ramblers.
- developing availability of pilgrim-type accommodation, possibly with the Countryside Officers of the County Councils and Dioceses of Winchester and Portsmouth.
- promotion as pilgrim route to churches and local attractions, including local papers and websites; a dedicated page on the CSJ website.

2. Walk 2013:

Organiser is needed for an international walking pilgrimage in 2013, for CSJ members and others, from Reading to Southampton, with back up for luggage transport and pilgrim style accommodation (church halls etc). Date to be confirmed but possibly in May. We know that our pilgrim friends in Normandy and in Holland are eager to join us. So please step forward if you would like to mastermind what we know will be a wonderful experience, walking in beautiful English countryside.

We (25 French and 25 CSJ members) walked the route in 1996 with friends from the Pyrénées-Atlantiques from Southampton to Reading, with a boat trip to Marlow to see the Hand of St James and returning by foot along the Thames Path to Reading, so there is experience and expertise to contribute to the planning process.

Volunteers

We always seem to be asking for volunteers! It was good to have two new returned pilgrims helping at the April Open Day – Chris Showell and Peter Evans alongside veterans Tom Barton and Janet Richardson who does a wonderful job keeping everyone supplied with drinks. One or two more

Saturday Open Day and Thursday volunteers would be useful - who can be trained to cope with financial/credit card transactions and membership as well as the questions from aspiring pilgrims.

New Pilgrims' Office Website

The Pilgrims' Office website *peregrinossantiago.es* sets out the functions and policies of the Pilgrims Office and the services provided to pilgrims. An interesting feature is the daily number of pilgrims receiving their *Compostelas*, as well as full statistics since 2004. The English section has been improved by a native English speaker. German, French and Italian versions will follow soon.

Crossing the Pyrenees

The CSJ's advice has always been to ask at the Accueil Saint-Jacques about the weather forecast and advisability of taking the high level Route Napoleon on the way to Roncesvalles. It has been pointed out that the personnel of the Accueil are themselves volunteers and may not always have the best information. So it is recommended to try and take advice from a local person if possible, to check the French and Spanish weather sites and to act as responsibly as possible.

Practical Advice for Pilgrims

1. *Notes for Walkers*: this is a new edition of The Walking Pilgrim. It includes all the practical advice from the CSJ website and from the 'yellow pages' from the Pilgrim Guide to the Camino Francés. And it still only costs £1.50.
2. Member Judith Carpenter has kindly sent in her 4pp training schedule, developed with an osteopath, Martin Grundy. Available in exchange for an email to office@csj.org.uk or for a stamped addressed envelope.

Pilgrim Research Project

Dr Joanne Benham Rennick and Dr Maureen T. B. Drysdale are two Canadian scholars conducting research on pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago. They are trying to learn more about the various benefits associated with this experience and would really appreciate your participation whether you are planning to walk the Camino, are currently walking it, or have already walked it. They have developed an online survey that can be completed in approximately 30 minutes (currently available in English and French). The survey will remain open until September 2012.

If you are interested and/or would like further information, please follow the survey link: <http://questionpro.com/t/AC6RAZNQj3>

Camino Travel Center (sic) reborn

The Camino Travel Center was set up four years ago by Ivar Rekve in Santiago, to help pilgrims as they arrive in Santiago. The business closed two years ago but has now been relaunched by David Ares and Wiktoria Grygierzec, offering a range of services. These include accommodation and transport booking services to all pilgrims who require a 'more comfortable and organised way' of walking the Camino. They can also help bigger groups to prebook their accommodation in private "albergues". The email is contact@caminotravelcenter.com www.caminotravelcenter.com. R/ República de El Salvador 28 dcha, Entreplanta – Businessworks, 15701 Santiago de Compostela

Camino Documentary Follow Up

Lydia Smith has updated us about this major project. She writes:

I am happy to report that the film continues to progress. After two and a half years, we have raised enough funds to begin editing the pilgrims' stories. By the end of August, we expect to have both a 90-minute theatrical version as well as a 60-minute television version edited together. However, we will still need more funds to finish these two versions in their entirety (compose and record music, sound mix, colour correction, etc).

We would also so appreciate any and all outreach you can do to your members to let them know of our existence. We want pilgrims to know this film is being made possible solely by donations from individuals and pilgrim associations.

CSJ Events

Sat 23 June

Open House in Amersham

postponed until September

Weds 18, Thurs 19 July

Walk St James Way

Explore the CSJ's new St James Way and walk along St James Way/Millennium Footpath trail from Alresford to Portsmouth via Southwick Priory. Contact Tony Morwood Leyland for details amleyland@live.co.uk or phone the Office.

Friday 20-Saturday 21 July

**St James in
Portsmouth & Winchester**

(provisional programme)

Fri-6pm –Evening Prayer in Portsmouth Cathedral followed by Pilgrim Service

Dinner together in restaurant

Sat –am visit to Garrison Church and site of pilgrim hospital; walk to old port of Portsmouth

Train to Winchester –visit to St James Cemetery (site of medieval church of St James Romsey Road) and St Mary Magdalen's Leper Hospital, where a pilgrim burial has recently been excavated.

Wednesday 25 July

St James's Day

7pm Mass at St James Church, Spanish Place, 22 George Street, London W1U 3QY followed by a Reception at the church. All welcome! (see Other Events for other services for St James's Patronal Festivals.)

Sat 26 August–Fri 28 Sept

Camino Portugués

Colin Jones will be walking from Lisbon from 26 August. He will be joined in Porto by Dave Jones (no relation) on 13/14 September. They will then walk to Santiago to arrive c 26/7/8 September/. This is not a guided pilgrimage but members are invited to accompany them for any section. Each person is responsible for their own travel arrangements and accommodation. For more information contact Colin on pacharan@btinternet.com

Sat 29 September**Office Open Day**

Office and Library open for sale of publications, browsing, meeting other pilgrims for advice and encouragement.

Sat 27 October**Returned Pilgrims Gathering**

A chance to share and reflect experiences for 2012 pilgrims. To be held at St James's Priory, Bristol (the oldest church in Bristol). Please bring any poetry, music, spiritual; reading you found useful on your camino. There is a cafe at the Priory or bring a picnic to share. Please register with office@csj.org.uk if you hope to come.

Fri 23 November**Miraz Meal**

Celebrate another pilgrim year at Refugio de Peregrinos de Miraz at a Galician restaurant in Clapham, cost c£20 per head.

Sat 24 November**Office Open Day**

Office and Library open for sale of publications, browsing, meeting other pilgrims for advice and encouragement.

Sat 24 Nov or 1 Dec tbc**Storrs Lecture**

Other Events

Friday 20 July

St Arilda Day

CELEBRATION IN OLDBURY ON SEVERN NEAR BRISTOL

7 p.m.: Walk to the saint's well from the church (just over 1 mile) for the singing of Saint Arilda's hymn. Bring a picnic and good footwear. Further details from Jane Bradshaw: tel. 01454 413199, email bradshaw@uwclub.net.

St James Day celebrations

Sunday 23 July

10.30am, Patronal Festival at St James Garlickhythe, London EC4 (N end of Southwark Bridge), followed by a parish lunch (book in advance on 020 7329 3632)

Wednesday 25 July

Solemn Mass

7pm Patronal Festival at St James Church, Spanish Place, London W1U 3QY followed by a Reception. We hope to see some CSJ members there.

Wednesday 25 July

Fromista Concert

Pilgrims on the Camino Francés this summer may like to know that there is going to be a celebration concert in the most beautiful and well restored Romanesque Church of San Martin in Fromista, near Carrión des los Condes. Door open at 6pm for concert at 7pm.

This is being arranged by the artist-in-residence. Future hopes for this halfway point on the camino include a Camino Artes to run between 1 June and 15 September, specialising in medieval music. See www.caminoguitars.com

Sunday 29 July

Patronal Festival

11am Eucharist, St James Piccadilly, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 0LL

Fri 5 - Sun 7 October

Pilgrimage and Shrines

Weekend School on the nature and practice of Christian pilgrimage in medieval Europe concerning the cult of the saints, shrines, relics, miracles and the reasons for pilgrimage including penance and healing. The course will include the most famous sites at Jerusalem, Rome and Compostela and also the major English medieval cult sites of Our Lady at Walsingham, Thomas a Becket at Canterbury and the Shrine of the Holy Blood at Hailes.

Also includes the literature of medieval pilgrimage in particular Chaucer's Canterbury Tales which superbly depicts its social context. Visit to Hailes Abbey.

Tutors Dr Geoff Doel and Dr Fran Doel.

Farncombe Estate is between Broadway and Chipping Campden in the Cotswolds, train to Evesham or Moreton-in-Marsh. More details <http://farncombeestate.com> or phone 0333 456 8580.

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Information is provided for members' use only.

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