



Confraternity of Saint James

# Bulletin

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**September 2008**

**No 103**

## About the *Bulletin*

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Cover picture:  
St James the Great  
Snitterfield, Warwickshire  
Photograph: Henryk Karas

# Editorial

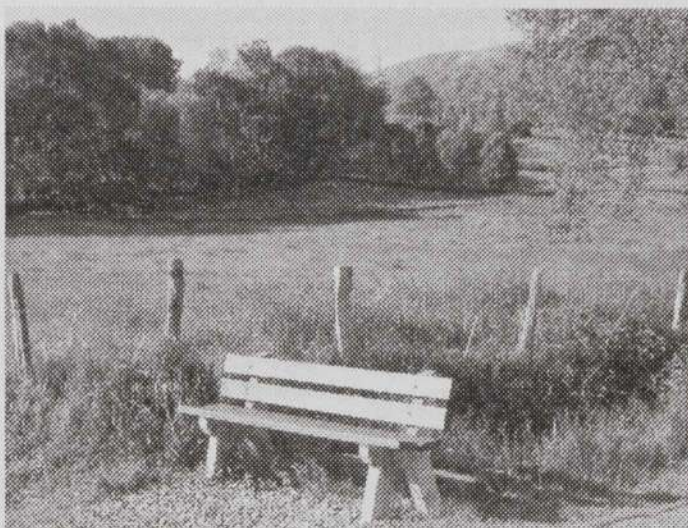
Gosia Brykczyńska

Earlier this summer I discovered the delights of St Arilda, a Saxon saint whose final resting place was Gloucester Cathedral, but who is venerated in Oldbury, in an old village church overlooking the massive and spectacular Severn estuary. Jane Bradshaw has written up an account of this year's pilgrimage and ceremonies which were attended by several CSJ members. A description of her life will appear in a later *Bulletin*. Later this summer I found myself in Monmouth, and this medieval Welsh border town boasts a superb Romanesque church (an architectural style which always makes me think back to the camino) adjacent to its early medieval bridge. In the rebuilt Victorian priory church of St Mary the Charles Kempe windows present a splendid depiction of St James and a fine representation of St Margaret, Queen of Scotland, the latter being a very rare occurrence indeed outside of Scotland. This church also has a modern icon of the great Welshman Saint Cadoc – with his little mouse – but that is a pilgrim tale for another rainy day. It does seem rather fitting therefore that in this *Bulletin* we also have an archival article about pilgrimages in Wales.

Saint James's Day this year was celebrated by some members of the CSJ in company with Mr Henryk Karaś, President of the Polish Association of St James the Apostle, in Warwickshire based around the old church of St James in Snitterfield and Sheila McGuirk has written up the weekend activities for this *Bulletin*. CSJ members in Scotland celebrated St James's Day in Edinburgh with our Chairman, while some London members gathered in the church of St James in Spanish Place for a special festive Mass.

The last saint to grace my summer was St Mary Magdalene. In the National Gallery in London is a beautiful painting by the Master of the Lehman Crucifixion (1370) of Mary Magdalene with the risen Christ – portrayed as a gardener, possibly painted by a Camadolese monk. It certainly is very meditative. It has recently been returned to its place in the gallery after an absence of several years. Seeing once again this medieval painting of this wonderful July saint put me in the best of moods to contemplate my next pilgrimage.

Just as this *Bulletin* will be going to the printers I will set out on my next pilgrimage. This year however I intend to do a smaller pilgrimage within the greater pilgrimage route, and thus together with two CSJ friends plan to walk from the shrine of St Mary Magdalene in Vézelay to the shrine of St Bernadette in Nevers. I count myself lucky that I live in a century in which such religious activities are permissible and such “shrine-hopping” is no longer frowned upon or even outlawed; for I genuinely enjoy finding out about saints and reading their lives and seeing where they lived and finding out how their cults developed and visiting their shrines. It is even more amazing therefore that so often this activity can be done while on pilgrimage to St James in Compostela. Indeed, it is my experience that all *my* pilgrimage roads eventually lead to Santiago, even if they start out as pilgrimage roads to lesser saints and take in long forgotten shrines.



This *Bulletin* has a somewhat overdue but still fascinating and very relevant account of the conference of the Association of Friends of the Caminos to Santiago, which met a year ago in Jaca, on the Aragonese route. Michael Hargreaves describes a modern annual pilgrimage from the landmark London church of St Martin-in-the-Fields to the shrine of St Thomas Becket in Canterbury; while Stuart Boichot - an agnostic - muses on his recent pilgrimage from Le Puy. But Judith Collin has no doubts about the spiritual nature of her camino! Finally Dermot Wynne recalls a moment of wonder and sheer magic that only the camino can deliver.

It is always a pleasure to recall our caminos and to reminisce – as pilgrims have done in this *Bulletin*, including remembering more fully the much missed Walter Ivens. Members will have the opportunity to reminisce further on 18 October at Loughton at the Returned Pilgrim Service – see CSJ Events. As Anne Smith points out –

*For a time, or perhaps longer  
We were surrounded by good will  
And history and being  
A part of something unusual.*

# Extracts from the 1986 pilgrimage diary of Walter Ivens

**Read at the Service of Thanksgiving for his life**

**28 May 2008**

...The camino is a living entity, like a tree, a flower or a thorn bush. Though it doesn't control the weather, it is in tune with the weather – the wind, the soft to searing sun, the rain, mists, fog and snow. Equally it is in tune with the local people along the way – their reception to the pilgrim, their attitude, their helpfulness. “*Que vayas bien, hijo.*” I have been addressed as *hijo* by several of the locals. Apart from being delighted at my age to be called *hijo*, how true it is – I am their son and what greater compliment can there be.

The camino has been very kind to me. It could have been terribly harsh – punctures, broken spokes, strained ankles or muscles, yet alone losing one's way physically and mentally.

...The sense of continuity of the Seasons, of nature and of procreation of all living things. Consoling, no doubt, to feel when we die that we give food to the worms and ashes to the earth. More satisfying in the knowledge that we live on in our children and we can cast our genes backwards and forwards to the beginning and end of humanity. So the Pilgrimage is like an ancient river with humans travelling it through the ages, and the desires, wants, thoughts and feelings are not really changed.

...That peace which passeth all understanding. Why does it pass all understanding? Why can't one logically evolve to that peace in a series of steps? Maybe one can as a guru, but I can't. It comes in sudden moments and it definitely does pass all understanding. It is surely God given, it is the linked opposite to energy – it is where the spirit relaxes, and its profoundness and depth balances the moments of soaring of the spirit. It is like a fledgling bird, one moment soaring, one moment swooping, and the Almighty spirit says, “OK”. Now rest awhile, and regain your strength”. It happens more frequently for me in these sorts of local churches used and loved and radiating the warmth of human life. It is wonderful to refresh oneself in this spiritual fountain and to be so grateful when it happens.

...Finally The camino is God's purpose. He sees, shapes and controls all that happens along the way and His companions, Jesus, Santiago, Domingo are always there to help you. Maybe one can get a glimpse of the deeper understanding of what it all means.

# The Feast of St James in Warwickshire

Sheila McGuirk

One of the objects of the Confraternity of Saint James is to identify, preserve and safeguard monuments and works of art in Britain connected with St James and the pilgrimage to Santiago. After it was founded in 1983 a research group



started to collect as much information as possible on churches of St James in Great Britain and depictions of the Apostle in other churches not specifically dedicated to him. In addition to the listings a separate guide has been published to the churches of St James in Leicestershire and last year a second county guide has been published by the Confraternity about St James in Warwickshire [available from the CSJ bookshop online, by phone or post]. On the cover of this latest guide is a picture of a scallop shell from a wall painting of St James as pilgrim which is in the church of St James the Great in Snitterfield, a small village between Warwick and Stratford. So it was fitting that a group of members spent St James's day in the Snitterfield area this year, to launch the Warwickshire booklet and to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Confraternity. This year the Confraternity has also published an anniversary celebration of the camino entitled *Roads to Santiago*\*; it is an anthology of reflections, pictures and "commonplaces" by 25 Confraternity members, including two contributions from the original six who founded the Confraternity and who were with us for the Warwickshire weekend.

The event started on Friday with a Eucharist in Snitterfield church attended by parishioners to celebrate their patronal festival and by a good number of Confraternity members who live in the area or

who, like Russell and me, had arranged to stay locally. An important element of the service was to commemorate those Confraternity members who had died in the previous 12 months and their names were read out by the Confraternity Secretary.

The next morning we all gathered together in the church again for a presentation on the pilgrimage to Santiago. Among the subjects was an account of a voyage in 1998 by sea from Plymouth to A Coruña, with all the mishaps which the weather imposes and which would have been routinely suffered by English pilgrims in the Middle Ages. Then Colin Jones dipped into the classic source text, the *Pilgrim's Guide* attributed to Aimery Picaud, which is in a manuscript known as the Codex Calixtinus. With us for the weekend was Henry Karas, the President of the Polish Confraternity of St James the Apostle and he gave a very interesting and informative illustrated talk about the Polish Association and how in a very short space of time it has revived and way-marked former pilgrim paths in south-west Poland which now link up with a sign-posted trail in East Germany. We then shared a "pilgrim's lunch" in the parish hall provided by the Parish Council.

On the Saturday afternoon Confraternity members visited nearby Warwick. Warwick is probably most famous nowadays for its castle, touted by its owners (the same group which owns Madame Tussaud's) as "Britain's Greatest Mediaeval Experience". But we were more interested in the beautiful collegiate church of St Mary, which rates five stars in Simon Jenkins' best 1,000 English churches compilation. It has a Norman crypt but the nave and tower had to be rebuilt after the great fire of Warwick in 1694. So it is not surprising that the rebuilt interior has that elegance and light which we usually associate with the beautiful Wren or City churches which rose from the devastation and desolation of London's great fire.

The Norman West Gate of the town was just beyond the house where Warwick's great fire started and the complex known as The Lord Leycester Hospital is a wonderfully preserved enclave of mediaeval houses right by the gate. We were fortunate to have a guided tour of the Hospital conducted by the Master himself, who regaled us with anecdotes of the history of the buildings, all the while claiming to know nothing of history and to just be a retired army officer!

The group of timber-framed buildings dates mainly from the late 14th century and for nearly 200 years was the home of Warwick's mediaeval Guilds. The Lord Leycester Hospital was never a medical establishment but was "a charitable institution for the housing and

maintenance of the needy, infirm or aged”, specifically old soldiers, founded in 1571 by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester to curry favour at court. At that time the Guildhall was partitioned into cubicles and facilities were pretty primitive.

The old Guildhall now houses the Regimental Museum of the West Midlands branch of the Queens Own Hussars and also the chair in which James 1 of England sat when he dined in the Great Hall (1617). The Bear and Ragged Staff, emblem of the Earls of Warwick was everywhere and the whole place reeked history! To help make ends meet the 600-year-old timber-framed Guildhall (built in 1450 by Neville the Kingmaker, Earl of Warwick) is available for civil ceremonies and the ancient Great Hall can be hired for banquets. Not surprisingly the location is also much in demand for filming, including a recent episode of Dr Who.

But our main objective in Warwick was to visit the chantry chapel of St James, which is part of the hospital and sits on top of the West Gate. The chapel has been in continuous use since 1383. Even now, prayers are said every weekday in the chapel by the Master of the Hospital and eight brethren, though not too early as there is still no artificial light and no heating in the chapel. Today Lord Leycester’s Hospital is still an independent charity providing a home for ex-Servicemen and their wives, though the demands of modern facilities and the exigencies of *Health and Safety* mean there is only room for eight brothers, not the original 22 for whom seats still exist in the Chapel.

We rounded off the visit in the Master’s Garden, a restored gem with formal and informal plantings, a gazebo, an old heated pineapple pit and an ornate vase reputed to have topped off the Nilometer of Luxor. Altogether, for about half the price, we felt we had had a much richer mediaeval experience than even Warwick Castle could offer.

Snitterfield is only 5 miles from Stratford and several Shakespearean associations are recorded; the Bard’s grandfather Richard was a parishioner from 1529 to his death around 1560. William’s father John was baptised in the font which still stands in the church and worshiped at Snitterfield until he left for Stratford in 1552. William’s uncle Henry was a farmer in Snitterfield all his life, though not apparently a model parishioner as he refused to pay the tithe and was excommunicated as a result in 1581!

In line with this connection between Snitterfield and Stratford those Confraternity members who stayed over the whole weekend walked along the path known as the Monarch’s Way from Snitterfield

to Stratford to attend Mass at St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church on Sunday morning.

The final Confraternity event of the weekend was a visit on Sunday afternoon to St David's church in Newbold-on-Stour. There we admired the stained glass window specially commissioned by Confraternity member Christabel Watson, who walked from Gibraltar to Santiago and on to A Coruña in 2004. This central lancet window in the west end, designed by architectural glass specialist Derek Hunt, incorporates images and references both to St David and to St James and the pilgrimage to Santiago, such as a map of Spain, a scallop shell, a field of stars. The pilgrim window adds grace and beauty to an otherwise modest church (1833) and it was a particular pleasure to visit it with the donor herself on hand to tell us all about it.

# Tales from the camino

even dogs love pilgrims

Dermot Wynne



I was awake but I hadn't opened my eyes and I could smell trouser denim and rucksack canvas just inches away from my nose. Not a beam of the dawn light penetrated the refuge shutters, but instinctively I knew it was very early, probably before 4 am. The four Brazilians – three women and one young man – were trying as hard as possible not to make too much noise in their preparation for the day's walk to Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees, but as so often happens to people who are trying to be quiet their rustlings and movements would have awoken the dead. The flashing of their torches and muted Portuguese comments only added to the surreal and claustrophobic feeling in the small dormitory room of the hostel. And what was that noise? Ouch! It was rain! I had had several weeks of idyllic cycling in gloriously warm sunshine. I knew, of course, that it couldn't last and that at some point I would have to get seriously wet, but it was always going to be a shock to the system. The rain was of the heavy, continual

and thunderous type. Stair rods. There didn't seem to be any deviation in the rate of fall as it hammered on every surface it hit. As my brain began to clear and my senses adjusted to the new day my first feelings were not, unusually, of my own programme but for the four young Brazilians who were minutes away from their departure and hard trek, via the chemin Napoléon, to Roncesvalles. I had spoken with them the previous evening and today was to be their first on the pilgrimage to Santiago. They were all young students from São Paulo and I felt sorry that their first day was to be one which would surely try every sinew of their endurance. They left and I relished another few minutes of warm and drowsy sleep in my excellent sleeping bag

I was now an experienced 'leaver' from refuges so it only took me a couple of minutes to prepare my few possessions. Although my panniers were supposed to be waterproof I had had the foresight to buy some small additional elasticated covers and their purchase was, as I was going to discover, one of the best pre-departure decisions I had made. I had only brought one pair of sandals with me so I knew that these were going to get soaked in minutes. I also knew that my waterproof jacket wasn't going to be of any real protection against the torrential downpour outside. Of course, I could have decided to remain in the refuge, but that would have been a very unpilgrimlike decision!

As I left the refuge the rain, obligingly, relented a little but the way ahead to the Pyrenees was as black as only black can be. The road was clear and I congratulated myself on not being a wimp and remaining in the refuge. A good decision, but the pay-off was going to be a soaking.

The road out of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port meanders for a few miles and then, imperceptibly, begins to rise. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, I couldn't get any idea of height because visibility was only a few metres. All the cycling was now being done in bottom gear – or should that be top gear – as the way ahead was one steep rise. I passed through a small village and an empty Customs Post. I was now in Spain and truly on the second half of my journey to Santiago. The rain was really heavy at this point and I abandoned all pretence of trying to remain dry. In spite of the climb and the weather I was really enjoying the challenge and the ride.

I had only met two cars on the road so when I turned a particularly steep bend and was confronted by a few hundred sheep ahead of me, I was a little surprised. The flock, shepherd and three dogs were just

in front and all going, as I was, towards Roncesvalles. I didn't think it was possible that anything could be slower than I was but the sheep were moving very slowly and filling the whole width of the road. The shepherd was obviously used to the journey and, as all good shepherds should be, was oblivious to everything except the well-being of his flock. His three dogs were very busy making sure that the sheep were going in the right direction. I slowed, got off my cycle, and kept a respectful distance behind and was very pleased to have the rural distraction.

I remained about thirty metres behind the flock and every now and then one of the dogs gave a little skip, turned his head, and gave me a not unkindly stare. Satisfied that I didn't pose any threat, or perhaps that I wasn't in need of help, he gave another little skip and returned to his shepherding work. This little scene was enacted twice. On the third occasion he obviously decided that I did need looking after so he detached himself from his work with the flock and came back to escort me. And there he remained. Every so often he would look up at me with eyes that must have been the kindest in the canine world. He seemed to be saying that there was no need for me to worry and that he would look after me and ensure that I wouldn't get lost. I have not doubt that his name was Pip, or the Spanish equivalent, but I called him James. We became friends for a few minutes of travelling time, but friends for life in memory.

# A pilgrim in a picture

Dick Watson

In the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge there is a painting by Jan Steen (1626-1679) entitled *Village Festival*. In many ways it is a typical example of the work of Steen, whose paintings often depict people enjoying themselves in inns, or smoke-filled rooms or, as in this case, outside. There are people at a trestle table, with a pewter pot and a ham; boys playing marbles; five villagers dancing in a ring; a man with a girl on his knee; a pig and two dogs in the road; a man on all fours, perhaps being sick. A woman with a baby on the back is reading from what looks like a bill of fare, with a tall man in brown, perhaps the landlord, gesturing to her to come in. In the background, not very distinctly, are a bridge and the village itself.

Almost unnoticed, towards the back of all the activity, is a pilgrim. A little child, sitting on one of the trestle tables, is pointing at him, as if to suggest that he is a stranger, or at least different from the others. He is drinking from a shallow dish, his lean and not very attractive face tilted back. He wears a brown tunic and coat, a pilgrim's hat with a scallop shell, and brown shoes. The scallop shell badge is on his coat, and he carries a staff.

The viewer is faced with some questions. What is the pilgrim doing in the middle of this huddle of humanity? Is Steen merely recording the fact that there were pilgrims passing through villages? Or is he trying to put across a message? Is the pilgrim, as the pointing child seems to suggest, different from all the others, who seem intent on merely enjoying themselves? Is he there to make some comment on a village life spent eating and drinking? Or did Steen put him there just as a figure in the scene, part of ordinary life, a sight that the villagers would see every day? Is he perhaps a marginal figure, or even a scrounger, counting on some hospitality? Or is he an emblem of the pilgrimage of life on which we are all bound?

I do not think it is possible to know the answers. It is evidence of pilgrims on the road in the Netherlands of the seventeenth century. But is it anything else? Do your readers have any suggestions?

Editor's note: Members can see the picture referred to by going to the website of The Fitzwilliam Museum or even better making a visit to Cambridge.

# Before I go

the pilgrim stops to contemplate his journey

Peter Neall

O when does the pilgrimage begin?

For a few it is before they set out.

For some it is on the road.

There are those whose beginning is only once the end is in sight.

And there are even some for whom it cannot begin  
until the walking is done.

Contemplating a pilgrimage is not preparing for a journey.

Preparing for a journey is choosing a destination:

- Santiago, Canterbury, Jerusalem or Rome
- looking at maps
- deciding where to start - home, Paris, Munich, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, Roncesvalles...

Preparing for a journey is choosing a route:

- Pamplona, Burgos, León...
- Biarritz, the train, St Jean...
- Madrid and Seville...

All roads lead to Santiago, only some constitute a pilgrimage.

Preparing a journey is packing carefully:

- a staff, a hat, a cloak, a srip, maybe even a scallop
- adding good socks, stout shoes,
- foot care, washing, shaving, medicine,
- watch, camera, reading, tickets

All the trappings between us and the experience.

Planning a journey is planning return.

Pilgrimage is different.

Contemplating a pilgrimage is hearing a call.

Contemplating a pilgrimage is being unable to silence that call,  
hearing it on every side:

- in the head,
- in the heart
- from the movies
- from books
- from friends

Once heard it does not go away,  
it can only be served.

Hearing the call:

- is an itch that cannot be scratched,
- a stone in the sock that refuses to be found,
- A crying baby that will not be silenced

Unless, unless, unless it is heard.

When the call is heard something changes.  
Forever.

Contemplating a pilgrimage means hearing the call.

Hearing the call means letting it seep into your bones,  
it is no longer separate from you, it is you.  
You and the call become one.

The call to pilgrimage is to hear the call of the beloved.

Hearing the call:

- is to know the Siren's song
- is dismissing reasons
- dropping logic

When the call is heard, it  
can only be answered with "I come".

Contemplating a pilgrimage is not to choose the destination.

It chooses you:

It could be the Taj Mahal - it's Santiago

It could be Angkor Wat - it's Santiago

It could be Uhuru - it's Santiago

It could be Suzdal - it's Santiago

It could be Rome - it's Santiago  
It could be Mount Athos - it's Santiago  
It could be Jerusalem - it's not!

The scallop has landed!  
I never noticed them before  
Now they are everywhere.

The scallop says 'come'.

Choosing the Pilgrimage means answering the call  
Choosing that you have been chosen.

I have steel knees - you have been chosen.

I am over 60 - you have been chosen.

I have no work - why do you think that is?

I don't speak Spanish - you have a month to learn enough.

I am too fat - tell me that in Santiago.

I am scared - good then it's serious.

I don't like dogs - take a big stick, select your staff .

I'll change - that is why you are going!

Choosing a Pilgrimage means considering the options.

I could fail - you could.

I could die - you could but it is not part of the plan.

I could be crippled - you could, and?

I could lose my wife - you could,  
but you are more likely to gain her.

I could end up poor - you'll manage.

I could be satisfied - imagine that, imagine that  
IMAGINE THAT!

# Some spiritual reflections from a camino retreat

Judith Collin

*Happy the pilgrims inspired by You with courage to make the ascents.*

I did feel inspired by God to make this pilgrimage. It had been one of those dreams that come and go, to walk part of the camino de Santiago, to Compostela, but courage had been lacking. Eventually I went to a Practical Pilgrim Day. There I met people who had walked the camino and my fears subsided. I realised that at long last I was ready to set out - and maybe in my 65<sup>th</sup> year - it was now or never. I had prepared as best I could, by taking advice from the Confraternity on equipment and practised walking with a packed rucksack. It was the favourable time.

That is how I found myself standing in the stern of the ferry that was to take me to Santander. As I stood watching, Plymouth receded over the horizon. I felt called to walk in the spirit of the four week Spiritual Exercises movement of St Ignatius of Loyola. I found it was easy to meditate on the *Principle and Foundation* as the ferry glided over the mercifully calm sea. To be surrounded by water as the last gleam of gold was replaced by a black velvet sky with sparkling stars was an experience of the immensity of God. *What is man that you should spare a thought for him?(Psalm 8)*. On the sea voyage and later on the bus from Santander to Burgos, which was to be my starting point, I was able to enter the process more fully, welcoming all that would help me and setting aside all that might hinder my progress. I knew I would be able to praise, reverence and serve God as I made the journey and I hoped to remain in balance in front of everything that lay ahead of me.

From Burgos the camino crosses the *meseta*, the flat high plain of central Spain. Although it's pretty flat the camino is hard and stony and not easy to walk on. It's very hot and there is little shade, ideal for first week meditations. I found the bare track a powerful symbol for the negative aspects of sinfulness. However there were many joys in other symbols along the way. From time to time I crossed over wonderful rivers, swift flowing, bouncing and chattering over stones. These were

little oases of green coolness, bright with yellow and green flowers. These rivers are used to irrigate the *meseta* transforming it into fertile and productive land. Likewise when I turn to God's life-giving waters, His love and mercy transform me. The waterways were crammed with frogs. What a chorus of croaks praising God, unmelodious, but I'm sure, beautiful to Him. The birdsong was loud as if the birds were trying to outdo the frogs; all giving God delight. I'm not sure if I'm a bird or a frog but whatever I am, I give Him delight; what an amazing thought! Suddenly a lizard, the brightest green you ever saw dashed across the path in front of me. I gave '*a shout of astonishment and profound love as I think how every created thing has not refused to keep me alive*' (*Spiritual Exercises* - 60).

The *meseta* goes on and on and on; no need for any penances! Sometimes I just walked at a good pace to get a few kilometres under my belt. At these times I found myself turning to intercessory prayer. If I know you, you were prayed for. And if I don't know you, you were prayed for also. As I moved into the second week I found the rhythmic trudging a great aid for meditation and the whole setting helped the imagination. It began to rain. It rained for two days and the flowers perked up, stood tall, purple, white cream pink, yellow, orange, red.

I reached León and had 311 kilometres to go, and considered it was time for a rest day. On the rest day I reflected on the journey so far, noticing how God was with me in the friendship of fellow pilgrims and the kindness of local people. There was the *señor* (an angel in disguise) who went out of his way to lead me back to the camino when I lost touch with it in Sahagún, and always, always, God in His creation. Life was simple but good. There was food and water, a bed for the night and even a hot shower. The prayer had been good and fruitful. I was able to renew commitments, to think about a few changes and find a few insights.

After León the *meseta* continued but the track was gentler and as you approach Astorga it gives way to softer green countryside. It was a time to wander through Galilee with Jesus and the disciples. From Astorga you begin to climb up to cross the Montes de León, the highest point on the Camino Francés. When I reached Rabanal it was still only midday. The sky was blue and it seemed a good time to make the crossing. On the way you pass the Cruz de Ferro, the tall iron cross that was a marker to show pilgrims where to cross the mountains. Traditionally you leave a stone that you bring from home at the foot. The cairn there is huge now. At least 9km to the next *albergue* so I

pressed on, still climbing towards the highest point. Then it started to snow and by the highest point it was nearly a white-out. This was my third week and I was on my own. The way-mark seemed to indicate a stretch along the road. It was a mistake - but a very safe mistake - as when I saw the track later I could see just how rough, boulder-strewn and slippery it was and it was tough enough on the road in those conditions! Was this a glimpse of the Way of the Cross? I meditated on all that Jesus did and endured for me. As I lost height, thankfully, the snow stopped and all I had to do was to keep going for a few more kilometres to the *albergue*.

The next day, refreshed by ten hours of deep sleep, I set off to wander gently to Ponferrada. It was a lovely sunny spring-like day. The birds were singing their hearts out and the flowers were dancing in the breeze, many of them Roses of Sharon with the five 'wounds'. There was a clear blue sky with the snow on the mountains behind me glinting in the sun; a real Resurrection morning. I felt I had moved into the fourth week, and yes, I had. Just beyond Ponferrada I passed the 200km marker. The countryside was completely different now with vineyards and orchards, flowers and blossom. The weather was good and I was able to take the high route from Villafranca del Bierzo which was a paradise of wild flowers and heathers. There were panoramic views, mountains all around, pure joy. As I walked I was able to simply *be* in the moment, and I looked down at my boots, dusty and worn, ...*Left, Right, Left, Right...* I only have this step, this moment. There were more mountains to cross but no snow this time. At the top, O Cebreiro was in a cloud, reminiscent of another cloud - *The Cloud of the Unknowing* - and again this reinforced for me '*the moment*'. I couldn't see behind, I couldn't see ahead.

Then on to Sarria and the last 100km. There was a noticeable influx of new pilgrims. The camino stays the same for all, but each pilgrim makes their own unique camino. The weather was wonderful, amazingly for Galicia, no rain. At Portomarín the water was so still that the town was perfectly reflected in it. Can I be a reflection of Jesus for others? Each morning the early mist hid the path ahead and the path behind - just this moment - the past is past, with the future unknown; I only have *now*. As I walked my gratitude grew, for all the blessings of the camino, for all the blessings in my life.

So the end approaches. Is it the end? No, it doesn't end, my camino goes on. Here is the marker stone at the edge of Santiago and one joyful and grateful pilgrim. I headed for Monte del Gozo to spend the

night there, poised to walk into the cathedral the next day. I pondered all the many and varied experiences, Pooh sticks with fellow pilgrim Yost, octopus and Rebeiro wine with Geraldine, doing an English 'party piece' in an *albergue*, falling over a piece of street furniture in León, countless encounters and sharings with other pilgrims – such as with Donizetti in a bar in tiny Morgade, or with Alfonso who gave me a pilgrim shell, and so many, many more. On other pilgrimages it was the final destination place that was important; on this one it was the journey. Thank you for all this, Lord, and for the insights that came to me, particularly 'the present moment' *Take Lord and receive....*

Next day it was raining (*de nada*, it's nothing). The walk into Santiago was quite short. All too soon it was over, *compostela* collected, St James hugged, the Pilgrim Mass at noon.

But was it over? The following day I took the bus to Finisterre, the end of the world. It was misty! At the foot of the Cross there, I placed a stone from the camino then picked up another stone to bring home. I turned, not to go back but to go on walking *my camino*.

# Notes from the Via Podensis

an agnostic's view

Stuart Boichot



According to legend, St James the Apostle journeyed to Spain on a relatively unsuccessful evangelical mission prior to his martyrdom in Jerusalem in 44AD. Subsequently, his body was somehow miraculously carried by sea to the shores of Galicia where the remains were discovered and positively identified after an interval of 750 years and without the aid of DNA testing or any other forensic science. Thereafter those remains were enshrined at Compostela, St James was declared patron saint of Spain and the phenomenon of the Camino de Santiago began, aided by people such as Bishop Godescalc of Le Puy who made one of the first recorded pilgrimages from Le Puy-en-Velay to Compostela in 951AD.

For those modern thinkers who subscribe to the view that we are in urgent need of a secular revolution to overthrow the irrational and woolly ideas embodied in religion, where better to begin than the Way of St James? After all this is a phenomenon with more than a thousand years of history, rooted in nothing more than legend and yet currently

enjoying the most extraordinary renaissance. And where does it fit in the context of the modern church, faced as it is with the task of making itself relevant to the world while grappling with such prosaic issues as moral vacuums, sexuality and the role of women? All this I pondered as my wife and I, Catholic and agnostic respectively, made our way along the Via Podensis, following Bishop Godescalc's route from Le Puy-en-Velay to Cahors. To be sure we are both passionate walkers and had already made the journey from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to Compostela, but why had we chosen to return to France and by our very presence contribute to the perpetuation of the camino?

I was by no means sure of the answer when we arrived by train at Le Puy on a wet and windy evening at the end of April. I had the same sense of concern and uncertainty as when we had first set out on the camino. My reservations seemed justified when we were immediately faced with a challenge over accommodation. Having decided to use the *gîtes d'étape*, the nearest French alternative to the Spanish *refugios*, our request for a bed at the first one in Le Puy was met with the response - '*complet*'. The equivalent word in Spain would have meant 'don't worry, although we are full we will find you a place on the floor if necessary' but in France it means 'no room at the inn and not my problem *monsieur*'. So we romped uphill to another *gîte* adjacent to the cathedral, only to receive the same answer. And likewise at the Seminary. Our fourth attempt at a youth hostel was I am pleased to say, successful. We had overlooked the fact that the French have lately discovered *le long week-end* in a big way. Belatedly we realised that our journey coincided with breaks for May Day, the end of the Second World War and Pentecost. Moreover the Via Podensis follows the route of the very popular long distance path - the GR65 - so there would be many people competing for limited accommodation during the first few days.

The following night we were reassured to find a quiet *gîte* outside Monistrol, followed by a very cold night in the attic of an ancient farmhouse at La Roch-de-Lajo. Lulled into a false sense of security, on the fourth night we were forced into a hotel in Aumont Aubrac due to all other accommodation in the village being taken, while the next night our proposed halt at Nasbinals was thwarted by the whole village being '*complet*'. This led to a lengthy discussion with a helpful but harassed chap in the Nasbinals tourist office followed by a further nine kilometre hike through the mountains to another cold room high up in a 14<sup>th</sup>-century tower. Thereafter we did what everyone else was doing,

acquired a telephone card and booked our beds one or two nights in advance, although we never entirely convinced ourselves that this was consistent with the spirit of the camino. For all this, the standards of food and accommodation in these places were pretty satisfactory. If there was nowhere to eat locally then a prepared meal was normally available at the *gîte*. Departure in the morning was usually not at first light as is common in Spain, but at a more civilised hour and generally after a decent breakfast.

Our only other significant reservation on the journey concerned the availability of water. Surprisingly, we found that there were long stretches where drinkable water was hard to come by. Water supplies were either not functioning or were marked with those ominous words '*eau non-potable*'. This was in contrast with our memories of Spain where water along the way did not seem to be a problem, perhaps because the latter take a more robust view of what is or isn't *potable*. Sadly we also have to report that asking the locals for a refill does not always meet with success and may result in responses that are best left unreported.

Needless to say, these issues fade into insignificance when compared with the many wonderful experiences along the way. This route attracted us because it presented a challenging journey through a relatively unknown part of rural France that has changed little in 300 years. It comprised three distinct phases, firstly a four-day traverse of the wide open spaces of the Massif Central from Le Puy through the mountains of the Margeride and Aubrac to the valley of the River Lot. Then a five-day hike up and down the steep valleys that feed the River Lot and finally, three days to the ancient town of Cahors through the stunted oak forests that cover the immense and lonely limestone plateaus of the Causse. While the region around Le Puy may be unknown to the average outsider including me, it is easily accessible with a quick flight to Paris, TGV to St Etienne and then cross the platform for the local train to the start point. Likewise the return from Cahors is pretty straightforward with the option of train to Paris or Toulouse. We chose the latter with easy transfer between Toulouse station and the airport for a flight to Bristol.

Our fellow walkers were mainly middle-aged, predominantly French with a sprinkling of Germans, Austrians, Dutch and Belgians – although they never achieved the level of cultural diversity that we had found in Spain. Surprisingly perhaps, we met no other British walkers and in this respect it should be noted that while the *lingua franca* in

Spain tends to default to English, in France it is most definitely French, so anyone planning to head this way should brush up on the old school lessons and be prepared to mangle the language.

And what remains are vivid gems of memories such as trekking through snow showers on the way up to the heights of La Margeride; the profusion of wild daffodils on the moors of the Montagnes d'Aubrac; the extraordinary transition from winter to spring as we made our way during the course of a day from the heights of the mountains down to the Lot Valley; tip-toeing through the small village of Sénergues as complete outsiders while most of the inhabitants were gathered in the square solemnly awaiting the arrival of a funeral cortège; rolling along in perfect conditions of warmth, clear skies and a following breeze, through the forests of the Causse de Limogne with Bunyan's pilgrim hymn ringing in my head; the cheerful welcome from the farmer in the somewhat snooty village of Aubrac, who provided food and shelter amid bales of straw in an ancient, ramshackle barn and in return simply for a donation of one's own choosing; the ladies in the church at St Côme d'Olt welcoming pilgrims with a drink and a biscuit and likewise the ladies of Cahors stationed in a small building across the Pont Louis Philippe dispensing information and encouragement to all callers; the incongruous experience after nine days in an ancient rustic world, of diverting from the route into the air-conditioned hangar of a place that is Leclerc's hypermarket on the heights above Figeac.

Of course there is much evidence of the Christian heritage of St James along the camino, in the wayside crosses, ancient chapels and churches and other old buildings established for the welfare and support of the pilgrims. But it is all history. As on much of the Spanish route, it was as if the modern church had pulled out and gone elsewhere, leaving today's pilgrims to their own devices. Perhaps modern travellers are more focused on the challenge and the experience rather than the religious and less in need of the support of the church. Nevertheless my wife was moved to search out the church from time to time, succeeding at St Côme d'Olt, Cajarc and Cahors in finding an occasional Mass usually conducted by an elderly priest with a small congregation of similarly aged parishioners. The notable exception to this was at the great Abbey of Foy which stands in the ancient village of Conques, hidden in a wooded cleft cut deep into the surrounding plateau. Here we were met with a splendidly warm and unconditional welcome from the monks and the volunteers at the Abbey. Whatever one's religious inclination, this opportunity should

not be missed. Both the accommodation and dinner and breakfast shared with our fellow pilgrims, were memorable. As for the spiritual side, there were three services in the abbey during our brief stay including a well attended pilgrims blessing, not to mention an eclectic and enthusiastic organ recital after dinner that ranged from Bach to the House of the Rising Sun.



And after all that while I still cannot work out what the modern church is about, I am in no doubt as to why we return to the camino. The transitory irritations and clutter of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century melt away as we become attuned to the simple, timeless rhythms of the camino. Then there is the constant reminder from the ubiquitous monuments and symbols of St James - that for over a thousand years, generations long forgotten have passed this way before us. We share in and contribute to the spirit of the camino with all those unknown predecessors, both through a common objective - to meet the challenges of the moment and make progress by one means or another towards Compostela - and through the experience of the trail beneath our feet, the glories of the constantly changing landscape, coping with the physical and mental exertion and the ever present vagaries of the weather. So in conclusion yes, to walk the camino may be a wildly irrational undertaking by current standards, but what better justification than that could one ever find for doing such a thing!

# Foro Jacobeo Europeo

Conference of the Federación de Asociaciones de Amigos de Caminos de Santiago. – September 2007 – Jaca, Aragón,

Robert Sellick

**H**ow do a couple of hundred pilgrims get on together when they are motionless for three days? It was an interesting experience, outside the conference hall they thronged, milled, strolled and reunited happily together. However, seated in the auditorium facing a stage of guest speakers and chairperson they became restless at having to follow an agenda. Their energy bubbled, comments flew, the agenda buckled, and the president intervened more than once. Finally equal rights for everyone to speak were negotiated, and roaming mikes passed back and forth.

The conference celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Federación de Asociaciones de Amigos de Caminos de Santiago founded in Jaca, the Pyrenean city on the Aragon section of the Camino Francés. I found the recent past of the camino fascinating. Fortunately, as a recently fledged pilgrim, I was glad to be under the wing and wisdom of Confraternity Chair, William Griffiths. He diplomatically stated the Confraternity's position in several debates, as well as singing a rousing solo in Jaca cathedral.

## Rediscovery

Back in 1987, the Camino Francés' dense network of albergues and refugios was non-existent. Rabanal de Camino was an abandoned village. The Foro Europeo Jacobeo unveiled an exhibition about a village priest, Padre Elias Valiña, appointed in 1959 to the parish that included O Cebreiro, an abandoned village on a peak where the camino passes into Galicia. He remained there for 30 years. He fought to have the village restored as an ancient monument. He realised its significance on the little used Camino de Santiago. He developed a passion for the camino, studied it for his PhD, walked it, mapped it, sign-posted it, reinvented the pilgrim credencial, and campaigned for it. He is widely acknowledged as the person responsible for its

renaissance. What was a trickle in 1987, grew to become an annual tide of pilgrims. Elias Valiña led the conference that founded the Federación of Asociaciones of Amigos of Caminos de Santiago.

## **Caminos**

The conference agenda followed the pattern of Elias Valiña's mission. Mirroring his study of the caminos leading to Santiago, various speakers presented paths from more distant departure points in Europe, the Via Tolosana, Voie de Puy, Via Appia, a route from Tallin, Estonia. To alleviate pressure on the Camino Francés, details of other Spanish caminos, Plata, Ebro, Madrid, Mozarabe, Portugués, Norté and Inglés, were given. The audience became a little restless with tour-guide style. They were here to debate more fundamental issues that Elias Valiña had laboured with to ensure the camino was rediscovered – the way marking, albergues, credenciales, hospitaleros, infrastructure.

## **Signage**

The yellow arrow once erratically painted by Elias throughout the route has become synonymous with the camino, accompanied by the scallop shell adopted as the European endorsement of the camino's monumental heritage. However the arrow and scallop have both multiplied and evolved, by the d-i-y enthusiastically adopted by local Asociaciones de Amigos signing the Camino. Now a European policy proposes the adoption of the universal red and white way-marks of GR long distance paths. The fear is that the renowned yellow arrow might be abolished. The Foro pledged to campaign for the yellow arrow. There were shades of doubt about leaving signage of caminos to town councils as they tend to divert the route to benefit local tourism, economic and construction priorities.

## **Infrastructure**

In Elias Valiña's terms, this was really a means of saving some of the abandoned villages on the camino from depopulation. There is no doubt that the growing flow on the camino has restored life to some villages, with shops, bars, albergues, churches and monuments sustained. Concerns have shifted now to saturation and protection. The growing Camino Francés infrastructure using private and state investment is perhaps detrimental to the tranquillity of the route, residents, architecture, landscape and nature. The preference appeared

to be on limiting growth on the Camino Francés and improving provision of facilities on the other caminos to attract pilgrims. However, well controlled development of the Camino Francés services is needed where routes converge closer to Galicia.

## **Hospitaleros**

A key role for many Asociaciones de Amigos is to provide volunteer hospitaleros or manage albergues. There are several volunteer recruitment channels that the albergues use. There was active debate about the process, requirements and training provided to the hospitaleros. One recruitment group provides weekend training courses that their volunteers are expected to take. Other channels provide different materials and induction. It was agreed that training & orientation for hospitaleros is key to keeping up a consistent quality and spirit of welcome for pilgrims. However views differed as each albergue has its own customs. The hospitalero's knowledge and sensitivity is vital to offer a warm welcome to a pilgrim.

## **Albergues**

The number and type of albergues has multiplied in the last twenty years. Initially there were rudimentary shelters, now there are numerous examples of well-restored ancient buildings and exciting contemporary designs. The number of municipal albergues increases as funds for rural development become available. In other places investment by private owners has restored small communities. Private albergues generally provide slightly better facilities. The Foro called for more openness and accountability as to how the donations or fees from pilgrims are used. A proposal was made to establish a Fundación de Hospitales.

## **Credenciales**

Elias Valiña revived the credencial based on its antecedents of a passport to allow safe passage along the camino and care at the hundreds of hospitals and albergues. Its reappearance in the 1980s inspired by Federación de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino has been very successful and thousands are issued annually. However the initial design has now spawned many derivations. The Santiago church authorities have proposed rationalisation to one type of credencial to be issued only by them. From 2009 onwards only this credencial would be recognised in applications for Compostellas.

Asociaciones de Amigos both in Spain and abroad are very concerned. The Confraternity of St. James issues its own unique credencial, approved by the Santiago authorities, as do associations in Holland, Ireland, Italy and so forth. The Confraternity has objected to the single credencial. Meanwhile some Asociaciones that manage albergues found that so many types of credencial to be confusing. Often pilgrim details such as place and date of departure were missing. Also credenciales are now widely available leading to misuse, such as tourists stopping for stamps without walking, or use of a credencial to access cheap accommodation. There was a call for stricter controls for issuing credenciales. For instance some copies are sold by shops, rather than issued by asociaciones or at cathedrals en route.

The Santiago church authorities' proposal to be the sole point of issue would raise serious problems, as it probably could not cope with issuing thousands annually. Nor would it be easy for foreign pilgrims to obtain the credencial before departure. Careful application of the criteria is needed prior to issuing a person with a pilgrim credencial. The asociaciones wish to continue this responsibility, and many already provide orientation to prepare pilgrims for the camino. \*

## **Tourism**

A somewhat different perspective of the Camino Francés was presented by Galicia's Director of Tourism, who underlined the importance of the camino to Galicia's historical and environmental wealth. It is a major attraction for both national and international visitors. The Director recently attended a tourism convention in Japan where the camino was promoted as Galicia's main tourism product. The Xunta de Galicia continues to invest in the camino, improving the paths, signage and albergue provision.

Participants disliked the use of the camino as a tourism product, particularly as the Director also identified 'pilgrim congestion' in Santiago. The camino has exceeded its optimum capacity. Pilgrims feel outnumbered by tourists, both walkers and visitors. This has dissipated the meaning of 'pilgrim'. Spiritual and religious motives need clearer definition.

## **Celebration**

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Federación and its return to Jaca was celebrated. The mayor of Jaca attended the conference and invited the pilgrims to the magnificent citadel for an evening of wine, tapas

and folk music. The following night Jaca cathedral sheltered delegates from the rain in a candlelit requiem for pilgrims, with a performance of verse and song, resonating in the cavernous darkness.

On Sunday morning participants ascended into the mists of the Somport Pass to visit the shrine of Virgen del Pilar where pilgrim hymns were sung in French and Spanish and flowers laid at her shrine on an outcrop high above the French and Spanish valleys. A short scramble down the mountain the group reached the ruins of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Hospital de Santa Cristina – one of the most important on the Camino Francés/Aragonés given its location high in the perilous Pyrenees. The pilgrims descended to Canfranc church for mass, followed by a parting lunch.

Further information from: [www.jacajacobeo.com](http://www.jacajacobeo.com)

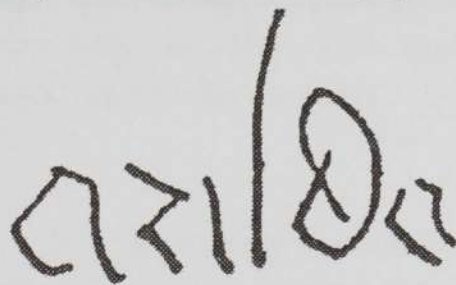
\* The Confraternity has been assured by the Pilgrim Office of Santiago Cathedral that credenciales issued outside Spain by the Confraternity and other overseas Associations will be recognised as acceptable proof of pilgrimage.

# St Arilda of Oldbury on Severn, Gloucestershire

Jane Bradshaw

If books of saints mention St Arilda at all they say she is the patron saint of Oldbury on the Hill, Gloucestershire. This is quite true but she is also the patron saint of Oldbury on Severn, which recently reverted to Gloucestershire after twenty-one years in Avon. These are the only two churches dedicated to this saint but there are three other extant memorials to her.

The first is on the reredos of the Lady Chapel of Gloucester Cathedral, the pre-Dissolution Benedictine Abbey of St Peter. This reredos is now, alas, only a framework of empty niches which originally held the statues of three major and thirty-six minor saints [1]. The central niche of the three minor ones on the extreme south edge once held a statue of St Arilda, and the mason's aide-memoire can still be seen scratched into the stone (see illustration). She has also been identified, less certainly in a light in the east window of the Lady Chapel. The glass in this window is made up of fragments of the pre-Dissolution stained glass windows. Rushforth [2] identifies St Arilda as sharing a light with St Lawrence, to whom Didmarton church, the neighbouring church to Oldbury on the Hill, is dedicated.



*Mason's mark on reredos of Lady Chapel, Gloucester Cathedral.*

The second memorial to her is a hymn and a collect for her feast which are written 'in a late thirteenth century hand' [3] on the flyleaf of a book which belonged to Thomas Bredon, abbot of Gloucester from 1224 to 1228. This book passed to the library of Hereford Cathedral after the Dissolution, where it is now in the Chained Library. St Arilda appears in the English Benedictine liturgical Kalendars as 'virgin and martyr' with a feast day on 20 July [4]. The hymn and collect have been transcribed and translated for use at Oldbury on Severn. Here is the (a rather free) translation:

*O Mother Church, today proclaim  
The honour of St Arild's name.  
And grant that we may have a share  
In that great sound of praise and prayer.*

*With flesh unstained and pure of mind,  
Untouched by sin of humankind,  
Your mind was turned to Christ above,  
On him alone you fixed your love.*

*She gave her life to Christ below  
And in his strength she smote the foe.  
Three times she fought the power of sin  
And walked with Christ made pure within.*

*O bride of Christ, O virgin wise,  
The world was worthless in your eyes.  
You now in heaven's eternal light  
Are clothed in robes of glory bright.*

*O maid whose bones in Gloucester rest,  
By whom all Gloucester folk are blest,  
Help us in sorrow here below,  
And then the joys of heaven bestow.*

*O Arild, of this holy place  
The guardian, and our hope of grace,  
O Mother, hear your children's prayer,  
That we the peace of Heaven may share.*

*Pray now for us to Christ your Lord,  
Whom by the angels is adored,  
That we at last with you may come  
To greet Him in our heavenly home.*

*O God, you have adorned the virginity of St Arild with the high  
dignity of martyrdom, and you have made this place holy by  
her death: by her prayers grant us forgiveness, and to this place  
perpetual safety, through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

So who was St Arilda or Arildis, or plain Saxon Arild? From the hymn we deduce that she was a virgin consecrated to God (verses 2, 3 and 4); that she 'three times...fought the power of sin', though what this means we are not told; and that she is buried in Gloucester, where she is a guardian of 'this monastery' (verse 6 - the translation is rather free here to allow for the hymn to be sung at Oldbury). The Kalendars tell us she was a virgin martyr. Her name in the form Arild is Anglo-Saxon, connected

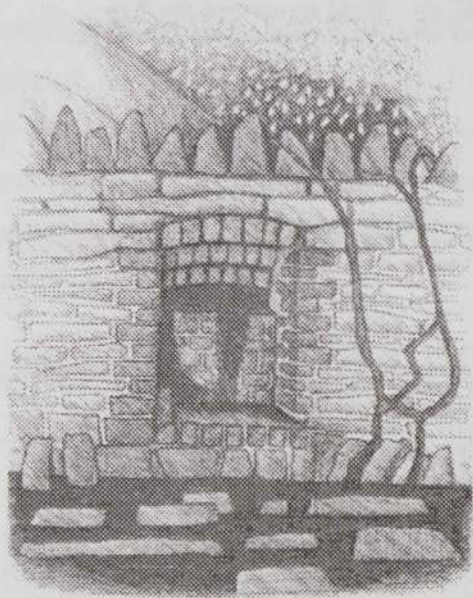
with the name Hilda which means battle maiden.

John Leland, the sixteenth-century traveller and writer, gives us some more information gathered during his visit to Gloucester Abbey. He tells us that St Arilda, 'martyred at Kington by Thornbury [and] translated to this monastery had done many miracles,' and that she was martyred 'by one Muncius, a tyrant who cut off her head because she would not consent to lie with him' [5]. Kington near Thornbury is now in the parish of Oldbury on Severn (which itself was once a chapel of ease to Thornbury church), and here we find the third memorial to St Arilda: her well. A local tradition that the water runs red with her blood is well-founded, as the stones in the well's outflow are stained red, not with the iron associated with chalybeate springs [6], but with a freshwater alga rejoicing in the name of *Hildebrandia rivularis*.

While willing to be corrected, and admitting that much of the following is guesswork, I would suggest that St Arilda was a consecrated virgin who, at some time before the Norman Conquest and perhaps even before the Anglo-Saxon invasions, lived by the well at Kington where she was martyred. Her body was then removed to the hilltop at Oldbury on Severn where the church dedicated to her now stands. A circular churchyard here indicates an ancient holy site, and Roman remains dug up there point to a possible pre-Christian origin, particularly as the hill itself has always been a navigation mark for shipping in the river. After the founding of St Peter's Abbey in the early part of the eleventh century and the later Norman Conquest the Benedictine monks there, following the policy of centralisation encouraged by the Normans (and probably with an eye to the prestige of the abbey), had her body removed to Gloucester and enshrined in the crypt there. We know from later records that at the Dissolution all the bones buried in the crypt were gathered together and placed in one of the crypt side-chapels, being transferred in the early twentieth century to an unmarked grave in the cathedral precincts.

The late rector of Oldbury on Severn, the Rev Norman Stocks, instituted the custom of singing St Arilda's hymn in the church on the Sunday nearest to her feast day. Since 1986 Oldbury Village History Group has walked from the church to her well on 20 July where the hymn is sung and the collect said, and the proceedings conclude with a picnic. I should add that the well is on private land, with no right of access. The landowner is always most co-operative with the history group's visitation, but is not altogether enthusiastic about the prospect of a large number of visitors.

The well is now enclosed in a cistern (see illustration), from which



the water is piped to the small group of farms and cottages nearby. This water was passed as fit for dairying some years ago, and the Village History Group has drunk it for the last nine years with (so far!) no ill effects. The outflow from the cistern forms pools where the 'blood' is found under the shade of a group of trees, which probably encourages the alga, since it is only found in fresh water of a particular temperature. The stream runs on as the 'Pool Brook' to form the boundary between Oldbury and Thornbury parishes.

What of Oldbury on the Hill? This is now a 'redundant church' of great charm and interest. Why it is dedicated to St Arilda is uncertain. It is some twenty miles from St Arilda's Well and Oldbury on Severn. Could it have been a resting-place for the saint's bones on the journey to Gloucester? It seems slightly out of the way. Or was the farm - for it is hardly more than one farm - established by villagers from Oldbury on Severn, who took the memory of their patron saint with them and dedicated their new church, the oldest part of which, according to Verey [7], is fourteenth century to her? Both theories have been suggested, but neither seems capable of proof.

There are plenty of questions left unanswered, and I should be grateful for any helpful suggestions. Meanwhile it seems, St Arilda has kept her vows to God, survived one or even one and a half thousand years, and is still going strong at Oldbury on Severn.

See also St Arild's Hymn, *Source 5* (New Series).

1. Welander, W., (1991); *The History, Art and Architecture of Gloucester Cathedral*, Appendix VIII, pp. 464-5. Alan Sutton.
2. *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucester Archaeological Society*, 43.
3. Letter to the author from Miss J. Williams, Hereford Cathedral Librarian, 29 July 1993.
4. Wormald, F. (Ed.), (1943-4); 'English Benedictine Kalendars after 1100', *Henry Bradshaw Soc.*, 81, vol. ii, pp. 41-2.
5. Toulmin-Smith, L. (Ed.), (1907-13); *The Itinerary of John Leland*, (5 vols.), ii 60, v 156. London.
6. Bord, Janet & Colin, (1985); *Sacred Waters: Holy Wells and Water Lore in Britain and Ireland*, pp. 105-7, 207. Paladin.
7. Verey, D., (1974); *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire: The Cotswolds*, p. 351. Penguin.

# The Connection at St Martin's

## Pilgrimage to Canterbury

Michael Hargreaves

May 2008 was the 18<sup>th</sup> annual pilgrimage from St Martin-in-the-Fields in central London to Canterbury. It bears witness to the pull of pilgrimage, to the strength of its renewal. It is a pilgrimage in distinctly English tones. There was the sequence of teas provided by church ladies. There was the carefully crafted organisation, in the way that the Confraternity's Refugio Gaucelmo is a beacon of order after the fun and chaos of the Spanish *refugios*. It was a verdant walk through a gallery of churches: St John's in multi-ethnic Lewisham; high Victorian neo-Gothic in well-heeled Chislehurst; West Kingsdown's hung tiles and medieval wall paintings; quiet Hollingbourne at the foot of the Downs. The stand-out perhaps was Boughton Aluph, where a fire had been lit in the south porch hearth. Coming in from the wind and rain it was as welcome for us as it must have been for the medieval pilgrims who gathered to form a large enough band to feel safe crossing the wooded hills before Canterbury.

St Martin's pilgrimage has its origins in fund-raising for The Connection at St Martin, the church's project with homeless people. The route goes from St Martin's, over Hungerford Bridge, past Southwark Cathedral and Tabard Yard to the shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury. We finished with a service in the crypt at Canterbury. Never have I heard *To be a Pilgrim* belted out with such gusto and joy, many eyes less than dry. Finally we laid flowers at the grave of Dick Shepherd, vicar of St Martin's and later Dean at Canterbury, who in the 1920s first opened St Martin's crypt to the unemployed and homeless.

The pilgrimage lasts four days over the late May bank holiday, leaving from Trafalgar Square on the Friday and reaching Canterbury on Monday afternoon. With the heavy rain it was a surprisingly tough 73 miles, even though our bags were carried in a van. Over the years Roger Shaljean and his team have established and nurtured relationships with a range of churches and communities so we slept on church floors, in church halls, and at the wonderful priory at Aylesford.

The challenge of finding enough floor space and showers means walkers are limited to a hundred but the pilgrimage touches many more. High in honour are the support team, not least the three female podiatrists who tended strains and blisters and enabled many of us to complete the journey. As we approached Canterbury numbers were swelled by more of the community at St Martin's, by friends, partners, and children.

### **Building Community**

At a number of levels the pilgrimage is about creating community. We walked in teams of seven or eight who walk at a similar pace. We were a mixed bag brought together by the pilgrimage – people who have been on the streets, members of St Martin's congregation, its choir, volunteers and workers with the homeless, a sprinkling of veterans of the way to St James. There were also the church congregations and two families who provided tea, cakes, shelter and loos. At some stage they'd got involved, were kept on the pilgrimage's contact list, and, one sensed, looked forward to the annual visit of the pilgrimage caravan. I thought of the sense you still get sometimes in Spain that people see the pilgrims passing as a blessing, going to Santiago not just for themselves but for those staying at home.

At Aylesford we were graced with a service of blessing by the Prior. There was also very good stew with dumplings and a general knowledge quiz set by Peter, who alone has done all the eighteen pilgrimages. At Charing we put on a concert evening of songs, poems and stories. Two of our number - Fred from Australia and Anne - weren't finishing at Canterbury but going much further, using the pilgrimage to find their way out of London and continuing on to Rome and Assisi.

The strong emphasis on weaving a community is perhaps no accident, and may come unconsciously out of the work of St Martin's with people on the streets. If a family breaks down or someone is made redundant the other links that bind us - friends, relationships, home - can also fall away. St Martin's works to help people rebuild those links.

I feel touched and deeply grateful to the team at St Martin's and to the many friends I made on the way – some with very different experiences from my privileged life – for the chance to join their community and through it to learn more about pilgrimage. Yet St Martin's has to work hard to accommodate its numbers and cannot take more because of accommodation limitations.

## **The Future of the London to Canterbury Route?**

The pilgrim route – the most important one in England - follows Chaucer from London to the shrine of St Thomas. Canterbury itself is a focus of pilgrim routes – from London, from Winchester – and so to Rome along the *via francigena*. The wonderful church at Barfreston was a stop before Dover and further on pilgrims joined the route from Northern France.

In some ways the improvised quality of St Martin's pilgrimage is one of its glories - the make do, the kindness of so many volunteers. But it does limit numbers and finding accommodation as an individual pilgrim along this route would be challenging and expensive. The Confraternity will be walking from London to Canterbury in 2009\*\*. Should this lovely path be more strongly promoted as a pilgrimage route, including as a way out of England to Santiago and Rome? What might be done to promote the hostels and refuges that are needed to turn the potential of London to Canterbury as a great pilgrimage route into a reality?

To make a donation to The Connection at St Martin's or to find out more visit [smitf-pilgrimage.org.uk](http://smitf-pilgrimage.org.uk). Anne's blog of her pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi can be found at [www.walk2rome.com](http://www.walk2rome.com).

\*\* Offers are needed to help with the organisation of a pilgrimage along the Pilgrim's Way (MM)

# Pilgrimage in September

Anne Smith

*In Galicia now the apple trees,  
Loaded, stoop over the camino.  
Sometimes the pilgrims catch a whiff  
Of wasp-rotted cider.*

*In the morning the sun shines  
Between tall straight trees  
And mist hangs over the valleys, so that  
They look like lakes.*

*At waymarks and old stone crosses  
Pilgrims record their progress,  
Decorating them with stones  
Or flowers, or huge pinecones.*

*Along the way – the camino –  
Pilgrims mill clumsily round bars  
Shedding their loads, laughing 'Buen camino!'  
And resting their feet.*

*In small white country churches  
They pause to reflect and to have  
The pilgrim passports stamped  
To prove their credentials.*

*The way leads the pilgrims at last  
To the gold and stone cathedral  
To the pilgrim Mass; they queue to give  
St James the traditional hug.*

*If they are lucky they see  
The huge censer swing across the transept  
Controlled by eight priests.  
They are filled with achievement and love.*

*The huge parador, hotel for the rich,  
Has a pilgrim dining room  
Below stairs, but each meal  
They feed pilgrims free.*

*You can go to the roof  
Of the cathedral, where you can see  
Where in former times  
Pilgrims burned the clothes*

*In which they had travelled.  
A practical move no doubt  
But also a symbol for them  
Of a new beginning.*

*We too, as we watch new arrivals  
With backpacks and sore feet,  
Or greet old friends who came in with us,  
Know that we are changed.*

*For a time, or perhaps longer  
We were surrounded by good will  
And history and being  
A part of something unusual.*

*Santiago – St James – how lucky we were  
You came to lovely Galicia  
And gave us the experience  
Of your camino.*

October 2007

## Pilgrimage in Wales

### Some Recent Publications

Peter Robins

**S**ens a mwg ail Sain Siam yw' (Here is the incense and smoke of another St James) wrote a 15th-century poet of St Davids, and in the hierarchy of medieval pilgrimage it was indeed the equivalent of Santiago, two journeys to both cities being equal to one to Rome. Bardsey Island (Ynys Enlli in Welsh) at the other end of the west coast of Wales, known as the Rome of Wales, was one rung down, three pilgrimages there being equivalent of one to Rome, but had the big advantage of having not one but 20,000 saints buried there. Wales's other major destination, the well of St Winefride (various spellings) at the eponymous Holywell is unique in Britain for remaining an active shrine throughout the Reformation up to the present day; where else in Britain except possibly in Walsingham do B&Bs advertise 'Pilgrims Welcome'?

A cursory glance at a map of Wales shows hundreds of Llan place-names, a llan being an enclosure set up by a holy man or woman. Most of these are of ancient origin, and many were pilgrim destinations, as were the high crosses and the holy wells, of which there are literally hundreds, many of pre-Christian origin. Link these together and you're well on the way to working out a route pilgrims may well have taken. In addition, the remoteness of many of these sites and the sparse population of much of Wales means that a fair amount of the medieval infrastructure is still around (albeit decayed and neglected) for those who seek it out, and plausible pilgrim roads of yore are, for those who want to explore them, either footpaths or only minor lanes with little traffic.

I have recently been doing just that, and by one of those strange coincidences a flurry of books has recently been published to help me do so. Foremost among these is undoubtedly *Pilgrimage: A Welsh Perspective* by Terry John & Mona Rees (Gomer Press, 2002, £14.95). This thoroughly recommendable and copiously illustrated book is in three parts: a general introduction to pilgrimage (much of this will

not be new to fans of the camino); a discussion of the main shrines, relics and sites in Wales; and (my especial interest) an exploration of the routes that pilgrims would have taken, along the north coast to Bardsey, the south coast to St Davids, and across Wales connecting Holywell with St Davids. There is a wealth of information in this book, most of it I'm sure unknown even to Confraternity members with an interest in pilgrimage, let alone the general public. How many know, for example, that the old Welsh name for the Milky Way was Hynt Sant Ialm - St James's Way? There is an extensive bibliography, as befits this well-researched book.

Another interesting book is *Every Pilgrim's Guide to Celtic Britain and Ireland* by Andrew Jones (Canterbury Press, 2002, £9.99). Though in a very different style to John & Rees - it is a small pocketbook where the other is a larger-format, more academic work - this also however, contains a wealth of information. Though it is not only about Wales, the author is Rural Dean for the Llyn peninsula and Rector of several parish churches on the Bardsey pilgrim routes, so has an especial interest in that area, in fact is involved with an organisation called Dilyn Dewi (Following David) which organises pilgrimages with an emphasis on Welsh Celtic tradition (see [www.dilyndewi.co.uk](http://www.dilyndewi.co.uk)). The book lists the main pilgrim destinations in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, plus some in England (though the Celtic aspect of some of these is rather unclear), combining details of the historical and remaining evidence, practical advice, and discussions of the spiritual aspect of pilgrimage and its relevance to the modern world.

*Holy Ways of Wales* by Jim Green (Y Lolfa, 2000, £6.95), on the other hand, is a disappointment. Despite the promising title and some nice photos, it is rather lightweight with too much of the text listing the main roads - even in a couple of places the motorway - to take from place to place. Anyone who thinks the M4 is a 'holy way' clearly has a different understanding of the term from mine!

For several years now, the Saints and Stones project ([www.saintsandstones.com](http://www.saintsandstones.com)) in Pembrokeshire has been developing the old pilgrimage routes to St Davids. Tourism and rural development have of course played a role in this, but it is essentially a church-based project, so is not simply the standard tourist fare of listing interesting churches. The routes have been opened/blessed by the bishop and involve what they call a 'ministry of welcome': making sure that the churches on the routes are not only open but also provide such things as tea-making facilities and even a dog-bowl! There is also a yearly pilgrimage along

part of one of the routes. A series of leaflets have been published and now these have been consolidated into a book *Saints and Stones* by Damian Walford Davies & Anne Eastham (Gomer Press, 2002, £7.95). This is also well illustrated, but as a guidebook it is rather bulky for carrying around. Although some of the route descriptions involve walking, for the most part the assumption is that people travel around by car. I shall be lobbying for a second phase to the project with way-marked walking routes for those of us who think pilgrimage is something you do on foot! Confraternity members will be pleased to note that a photo of a (re-) dedication of a holy well clearly shows that two of the children present are carrying scallop shells.

Also from Gomer Press (busy people!) is *I Know Another Way: from Tintern to Saint Davids* edited by Jon Gower (2002, £9.95), which is published as a memorial to Robin Reeves, the late editor of the *New Welsh Review*, who was interested in reviving a pilgrimage-walking route across South Wales. Six writers who knew Robin walked a section across the country from Tintern Abbey, and contribute a chapter on their section. According to the blurb, this is an 'ancient pilgrim route', but it's not one John & Rees or a medieval reader would recognise. The first writer, Jim Perrin, whose religion seems to be the Labour movement, goes from Tintern to Llandaff via Tredegar, so he can enthuse about Aneurin Bevan. Much of his contribution is a tirade against anyone who is of a different persuasion. 'Ancient pilgrim route'? I think not. The last contributor, Christine Evans, does not even walk, but travels mostly by car. Her section though is for me easily the best and the only one which takes much interest in the medieval mindset and its concentration on redemption through visiting shrines and other holy places. Perhaps her affinity comes from her spending part of each year on Bardsey. I too hope that a walking route across South Wales can be revived, but I sincerely hope it isn't this one!

An interesting modern revival is the shrine of St Melangell at Pennant Melangell in a remote valley north of Lake Vyrnwy, restored in the 1990s and linked with a cancer-counselling centre. A small retreat should be open by the time you read this. A way-marked walking route called Pererindod Melangell (Melangell Pilgrimage), linking Glyndwr's Way National Trail, was recently opened by Powys County Council, and a small guidebook in Welsh and English is available from local tourist offices or from the Council offices at Llandrindod (£2.95). This route too isn't very convincing as a pilgrimage trail, but see the excellent website at [www.st-melangell.co.uk](http://www.st-melangell.co.uk) for further details

on church and path.

Though not recently published, the definitive work on wells is *The Holy Wells of Wales* by Francis Jones (University of Wales Press, 1954, paperback edition 1992, £9.99); hard to imagine there's anything more to say on the subject. One snag is there are no grid references, so matching the descriptions to the wells marked on OS maps can be hard.

Finally, something completely different. A fine exponent of the Welsh triple harp is the playing of Llio Rhydderch, who lives near another atmospheric holy site, Penmon in Anglesey. Her last two CDs, *Melangell* and *Enlli*, were inspired by the pilgrimage to the respective places, and the latter even includes a DVD with video coverage of the pilgrim route to Enlli. See her website at [www.lliorhydderch.com](http://www.lliorhydderch.com) for more details and some samples.

I am setting up a website myself, ([www.peterrobins.co.uk/wales](http://www.peterrobins.co.uk/wales)) with suggestions for walking routes in North Wales; definitely a work still in progress. You start off thinking there is little of interest, and end up thinking every little hamlet has something relevant. All suggestions and comments are welcome.

# Book Review

## **A Traveler's Highway to Heaven**

William J Bonville, SynrgEbooks, Davenport, Florida 2007

ISBN 978 0 7443 361 1, 400pp, softback, \$24.95

It is an engaging title, *A Traveler's Highway to Heaven*, and the introduction sparkles with promise: a car-based exploration into the history and culture of northern Spain. Although the itinerary follows the Camino, the focus is not primarily on pilgrimage but on the region's identity: "the place and its people remain at the heart of what this book is about". Ambitious - especially when you discover the history extends from pre-Roman to ETA, while the heritage includes art, architecture, legend and lifestyle.

With such a wide canvas, the need for an editor is crucial. In this respect, however, *Highway to Heaven* seems to have missed out. An editor would have eliminated spelling mistakes, not *collegiata*, *capella*, *santo cruz*, *Ventura Rodrigues*... but *colegiata*, *capilla*, *santa cruz*, *Ventura Rodriguez*... The list is considerable. Similarly an editor would have avoided inconsistencies choosing, for example, either Charlemagne or King Charles, Moorkiller or Moorslayer, and would have dealt with infelicitous sentences like "atop is a globe sporting a seated lion atop". And an editor would have corrected errors such as the frequent confusion between autonomous community and province, and the statement that sight-seeing kilometres added up -say 8km in Burgos plus 5km in Logrono plus... qualify for a "compostela". Not true: the final 100km on foot rule (or 200km by bike) still applies.

Does this level of carelessness matter? I believe it does in that it undermines confidence both in the author and his text.

The book is aimed at people who wish to cover the Camino route by car -because of limited, time, restricted mobility, or simply because that's the way they like to travel. There are comprehensive route-finding instructions plus wise advice to use hotels just outside a city rather than in its centre. But it is then suggested that travellers go into the city for their sightseeing session, by car. Why not take a bus? Much less hassle.

The author is commendably conscientious in describing the Camino's many monuments, though some commentaries are more in-depth than others, and decorative detail is often summarised

as “fancy” or even as “gaudy/poetic nonsense”. A glossary reminds readers of key historic and architectural terms and there are 16 photos. Sadly, these are more grey than black and white: the south portal of Santa Maria la Real (Sanguesa), for instance, loses its intricate carving in a shadowy blur.

No index? No contact details for recommended hotels? No map? And no bibliography. If William Bonville *had* compiled a booklist he might have reconsidered his claim that, for traditional pilgrims, there is only one book “that provides reliable instructions ...The Pilgrim Route to Compostela (Robertson McCarta)” [out of print]. The Confraternity’s website could introduce him to several such books.

*Highway to Heaven* may have its shortcomings, but the author’s enthusiasm for his subject is never in question. And there are magic moments when he communicates that enthusiasm. His excitement at standing on the Roman road at Cirauqui is contagious; his description of Leon’s ethereal cathedral as being “held high by a crew of angels” enchants; and his appreciation of Diego Gelmiraz - “he did for Compostela what Pericles did for Athens” -would have pleased the ambitious archbishop greatly.

CATHERINE DELL

# Refugio Gaucelmo News

Graham Scholes

## Hospitaleros

June	Priscilla McGowen, Michael Krier and Graham Scholes Brendan & Anne Nolan and Peter & Kathleen McKenny
July	David & Cathie Garcia, Callie Hemmings and Daphne Hnatiuk Dugald & Betty Macdougall and Gene & Rosann McCullough
August	Keith & Claire Taylor, Joanne Brandenburg and Daphne Hnatiuk Gilbert Cabergs, Stewart Bliss, Diane Maxon and Pat Watterson

June saw the huerta looking more akin to a meadow, two feet deep in grass and wild flowers. The cutting equipment, owned by a villager who was contracted to maintain cutting the grass, had broken down. It was agreed to buy a lawnmower and ask the volunteer hospitaleros if they could manage the maintenance of the huerta. A suitable petrol engine lawnmower was purchased and the task of cutting down the long grass with a scythe began before the lawnmower was able to start work. (See before and after images below).



Additional bench seats for under the pergola and a large plastic picnic table to replace the damaged wooden table in the patio area were also bought to improve the facilities for the pilgrims.

Pilgrim numbers during June and July were unseasonably low, with the need to open the barn restricted to very few occasions. The low pilgrim numbers staying at Gaucelmo, especially the Spanish pilgrims, was not unique as it was a general trend for each refugio in Rabanal and indeed the whole of the Camino Francés route. One possible reason was that it was due to the very poor wet weather experienced along the camino, especially around the Pyrenees in the spring, resulting in a number of injuries from falls on the slippery footpaths around Roncesvalles. The local papers in León were suggesting that

tourist numbers were 15% down on last year's figures.

July saw the arrival of 15 French scouts (3 leaders and 12 scouts) staying at Gaucelmo for 7 days at a request from the monks next door. They set up 5 tents in the huerta and kept themselves mostly to themselves, except that they were using the outside sinks for washing their pots and pans at times when pilgrims were wanting the use of the sinks. Also, having been asked to clean the entrance toilets and shower areas after their use, the cleanliness of young boy scouts didn't live up to Gaucelmo standards. Probably the most annoying aspect of their visit was that as the leaders and elder scouts went on expeditions around the area, most of the younger ones stayed in the huerta playing football and rugby – not really an environment in which to give other pilgrims visitors some peace and quiet!

Rosann McCullough, who works with her husband Gene with the American confraternity, had the pleasant task of welcoming and registering four American pilgrims at Gaucelmo, Rosann having previously sent them their pilgrim passports.

Special thanks to Daphne Hnatiuk who stepped in at the last minute and volunteer as hospitalera for the first two weeks in August even though she had already worked for the first two weeks in July.

During early August the numbers of pilgrims increased to their normal volumes and temporary tents were set up in the huerta to cope with the influx.

Thank you to all volunteer hospitaleros for their help in supporting the CSJ and the pilgrims. If you feel as though you would like to volunteer for the role of hospitalero/a at Gaucelmo, a list is now being assembled of prospective hospitaleros for 2010, the next holy year. If you would like to know more about the role, or wish to volunteer, please contact the hospitalero coordinator, via e-mail at [r-wardens@csj.org.uk](mailto:r-wardens@csj.org.uk)

# Members' Page

## **Congratulations**

Three new 19-year-old members of CSJ walked from Le Puy to Santiago this summer and raised £1000 for the repair of the roof at St Paul's church in Winchester. Philip Seal (the rector's son) and friends Julian Perlmutter and Patrick McKearney walked for 10 weeks and said "The whole way of life, with your possessions on your back and moving from place to place was a refreshing change. That was definitely the high point."

## **More Congratulations**

Gareth Thomas, who has given up his teaching job in Canterbury to start training for ordination as a catholic priest, walked from Worcester to London to Newhaven and then through France via Dieppe, picking up the Paris route in Chartres. He kept a very entertaining blog throughout which can be read on <http://whizz-kidz-pilgrim.blogspot.com/> He carried with him a replica of the staff buried alongside the Worcester Pilgrim and found in 1986, which probably belonged to Robert Sutton, a wealthy dyer, and one time mayor of Worcester, who certainly made the pilgrimage in c 1423 and was buried in his pilgrim clothing and well worn boots. Gareth raised over £2500 for Whizzkidz. He is currently cycling to Rome along the *Via Francigena* where he will begin his studies in late September.

## **From John Hatfield – Slide Librarian**

Planning to give a talk about your pilgrimage?

Why not use the CSJ Slide Library to help you?

Did you know that the CSJ's growing collection of over 3300 slides, available to UK members, covers not only the Camino Francés, but also the other main routes in France and Spain?

Please give at least a month's notice so that a catalogue can be sent to you and your choice made. As soon as I hear from you, I can reserve the slides and despatch them two weeks before your talk.

I can be contacted at: 9 Vicary Way, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0EJ; tel: 01622 757814

Digitally inclined members: please note that you are welcome to use the images in the CSJ Picture Gallery [www.csj.org.uk/gallery](http://www.csj.org.uk/gallery)

# From the Secretary's Notebook

Marion Marples

## **Ruby Milnes RIP 1991-2008**

Members who attended the 2005 AGM will be shocked to hear of the death of Ruby Milnes, at the age of 17, who came with her parents Al and David and her brothers and sisters hot from the camino to share their experience of making a family pilgrimage. Ruby, a creative and singular young person, was killed in an accident at York racecourse, as she cycled home from York College.

## **CSJ Honorary President**

On 25 July we learnt that HE The Count of Casa Miranda had handed in his papers at the Court of St James. We warmly thank him for his support during his tenure as Ambassador and look forward to welcoming his successor in due course.

## **Members under 30**

I have sent an email to all 46 members under 30 to ask if they would like to have someone to coordinate a conversation between them or arrange a meeting. If you are in this age group and did not receive an email please let me know!

## **AGM**

Next year the AGM will be on Saturday 31 January. It has been suggested that we should try and make a small exhibition of all the work that has been achieved at Miraz. If you have photos you would like to contribute from a Working party, a stay at the refuge as pilgrim or hospitalero/a or the opening ceremony please let Colin Jones [pacharan@btinternet.com](mailto:pacharan@btinternet.com) know to avoid too much duplication.

## **From the Treasurer**

The Corporate Governance Committee is forming an "Investment Sub-Committee" to review and make recommendations of how best to invest our bank balances. We are looking for 2 members with recent experience of corporate finance and the like to help us in this task. We envisage 2 meetings a year. If you would like to make a contribution, please contact Tony Ward, Alison Thorp or the office for

further information - see back cover for contact details

## **New Books**

In the Bookshop we shall shortly be stocking

- *The Roads to Santiago* by Derry Brabbs, Frances Lincoln Publishers, 256pp, £30, a new coffee-table book of photographs of the four French routes as well as the Camino Francés by a well known photographer.

Other new books:

- Kevin A Codd: *To the Field of Stars: A Pilgrim's Journey to Santiago de Compostela*, Eerdmans publishing, USA, 271pp, £9.99, an excellent and reflective account of the pilgrimage of an American priest
- 25th Anniversary Scallop shell pendant: a hand made in Cornwall clay scallop shell, glazed in white, on a cord for wearing. Approx 60mm wide. Inscribed on the reverse: 1983 CSJ25 2008, £5
- Paul Chinn, Babette Gallard: *Lightfoot Guide to the via Francigena: Canterbury to the Great St Bernard*, 1030km, 216pp, Pilgrimage Publications £23.99
- *Lightfoot Guide to the via Francigena: Great St Bernard to Rome*, 942km, 222pp, Pilgrimage Publications £23.99

## **Voie Littorale**

The 165km Voie Littorale now has a cycle route all the way - most of this is covered in an excellent leaflet (in full colour, clear symbols for campsites/info etc, english and french, very good maps) called 'Les Pistes Cyclables de Gironde' available from [tourisme@gironde.fr](mailto:tourisme@gironde.fr) tel: 05 56 52 61 40

## **Bed Bugs**

There have been reports recently of bed bug problems at Hontanas, El Burgo Ranero, Tardajos, St Juan, Hornillos, Fromista and Finisterre. The Federación de Amigos has suggested that there should be a close down for a week in the winter for all refuges to be fumigated. We wait for news.

## Vézelay route wardens in 2009

**M**any CSJ Members, having completed the Camino or other pilgrim routes, wish to give something back to the movement. A number of possibilities arise, including that of serving as wardens at a refugio. Over the last 13 years, some have given their time at the Refugio Gaucelmo at Rabanal del Camino and more recently at Miraz and at the two small refuges on the Vézelay Route, at Corbigny and Sorges.

In 2009 Les Amis et Pèlerins de Saint Jacques de la Voie de Vézelay (APSJV) will be looking to staff 5 refuges. In addition to Corbigny, Bouzais (5km SSW of St.Amand-Montrond), and Sorges (near Perigueux) there are the more recently opened refuges at La Coquille in the Dordogne and Saint-Ferme in the Gironde.

If you speak good French, the opportunity of being a warden, or *hospitalier*, at one of these four small, recently developed hostels at Corbigny, Sorges, Bouzay or at La Coquille, on the "Voie de Vézelay", is a possibility. These refuges usually accommodate around six pilgrims. The season runs from 15 March to 15 October.

Since 2000, the enthusiastic and dedicated APSJV have way marked the historic pilgrim route from Vézelay to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Though based in Perigord, Monique Chassain monitors all the activities on the route and she is often at the Vézelay Office to welcome pilgrims.

For pilgrims, the Vézelay route is a "Route de Solitude" as yet unspoiled by commercialism. The aim of the APSJV is to keep it that way. In 2006 over 1000 pilgrims were recorded as coming down that route to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port.

In 2006, the CSJ has collaborated with them so that several of our members have served as wardens for two weeks each, at the refuges at Corbigny, on the Southern branch out of Vézelay and at Sorges, a day's march short of Perigueux. They have all returned speaking of their warm experiences there.

If this opportunity appeals to you, John Hatfield, (9 Vicary Way, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0EJ, 01622 757814) will be happy to give you background information, after which you may wish to contact Monique Chassain to negotiate, in French, the possibilities and to arrange dates for your *hospitalier* sojourn.

Contact: Amis et Pèlerins de Saint Jacques de la Voie de Vézelay 24 Rue Saint Pierre, 89450 Vézelay Tel: 0033 3 86 32 38 11 email: [contact@amis-saint-jacques-de-compostelle.asso.fr](mailto:contact@amis-saint-jacques-de-compostelle.asso.fr)

# CSJ Events

## **Saturday 27 September**

## **Office Open Day**

10.30am-3.30pm Office and Library and Bookshop open for enquiries, browsing and purchasing. 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY

## **Saturday 18 October**

## **Returned Pilgrim Service**

Meet 10.30am Loughton Methodist Church, 260 High Road, Loughton IG10 1RB, (10 mins from Loughton station on the Central Line, Epping branch) for a 2hr walk in Epping Forest, led by local historian Dr Chris Pond.

12.30pm Bring & Share Lunch in church hall

1.45pm-2.30pm A Time to Share: a chance to talk about your pilgrimage experience

2.45pm Pilgrim Service in church, Pilgrimage Reflection by 2008 pilgrim Revd Tony Morling. PLEASE bring with you, or preferably send in, any suggestions for readings, hymns or prayers which sustained you on your pilgrimage to *office@csj.org.uk*

Tea and depart.

If any returned pilgrim could play the piano/organ please let us know.

## **Saturday 25 October**

## **Office Open Day**

10.30am-3.30pm Office and Library and Bookshop open for enquiries, browsing and purchasing. 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY

## **Sat 22 November**

## **Open Day & Storrs Lecture**

10.30am-3.30pm Office and Library and Bookshop open for enquiries, browsing and purchasing. 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY

3.30pm **Storrs Lecture** in the John Marshall Hall, Christ Church, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY

‘Criticising and defending pilgrimage in the early Middle Ages’: Prof Dame Jinty Nelson (King’s College London) 3.30pm, £5

There will be a meal at a nearby restaurant at 6pm

## **Sunday 23 November**

## **25 Years Celebration**

2pm **Service of Thanksgiving for 25 years**, St Mary's Church, Clapham, 8 Clapham Park Road, London SW4 7AP (at South exit from Clapham Common tube station, Northern line). Featuring Dr Mary Remnant and the CSJ Choir.

3pm **Anniversary Menu *del Peregrino* Meal** at La Terraza, 27/31 Bedford Road, London SW4 7SH. This is a Galician restaurant to remind us all of our pilgrimages. Cost of meal: £25 including wine.

Guests invited include Joaquin Barreira Pereira, the organist of Santiago Cathedral, who will play at the service; Ivar Revke and his wife from Santiago [www.pilgrimage-to-compostela.com](http://www.pilgrimage-to-compostela.com)

## **Wednesday 26 November**

## **Lecture Recital**

**The Musical Road to Santiago:** following the 15<sup>th</sup> c route of the Servite priest Fr Hermann König von Vach, OSM. With CSJ Choir and illustrated by coloured slides and medieval instruments. Servite Church (Small hall), 264 Fulham Road, SW10 9EL (nearly opposite the Chelsea & Westminster hospital). Price £5 in aid of church restoration funds.

## **Saturday 31 January**

## **AGM & Party**

St Alban's Centre, Baldwin's Gardens, London EC1

Performance of *One day I'll go to Compostelle* with Marie Céline Lachaud of Paris 'an hour of cheerful reminiscence and allegory' -*Church Times*.

## **Tuesday 12-Tuesday 19 May**

## **Pilgrimage**

### **A Northern Routes Pilgrimage to Santiago**

To be led by Fr Colin Jones.

Group flies from Stansted to Asturias airport, one night and day in Oviedo, guided tour of the cathedral and opportunity to visit some of the Pre-Romanic churches.

Coach journey to follow the Camino del Norte from Aviles to Ribadeo, Mondoñedo to Sobrado for 3 nights. From here a day exploring Miraz and the surrounding area, a day visit to Lugo and O Cebreiro. Then 2 nights in Santiago at a central hotel. Pilgrimage Eucharist in the cathedral as well as Pilgrim Mass (Botafumeiro booked!). return flight Santiago to Stansted.

Price for twin rooms: £739 ph, includes breakfast and dinner, local Guides in Oviedo and Santiago. Single room supplement £112. Travel insurance £27.

To book a place please send completed booking form (from Pax Travel) with £90 deposit and insurance premium if required. Price will be held until 31 October (then fuel supplement may be payable).

Organised by Pax Travel, 152-6 Kentish Town Road, London NW1 9QB, 020 7485 3003, [info@paxtravel.co.uk](mailto:info@paxtravel.co.uk), [www.paxtravel.co.uk](http://www.paxtravel.co.uk)

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Information is for members' use only.

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**T**he editors of our guides are always keen to receive feedback. If you have recently been on any part of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, have used one of the guides listed below, and wish to pass on the benefit of your experience to those who may come after you, please contact the relevant author/s:

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- 4 *Los Caminos del Norte* Eric Walker, 4 Gawthorpe Avenue, BINGLEY, West Yorkshire BD16 4DG  
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- 5 *Camino Portugués* New edition forthcoming
- 6 *Madrid to Sahagún* Marigold Fox, 19 Maple Way, ROYSTON, Hertfordshire SG8 7DH  
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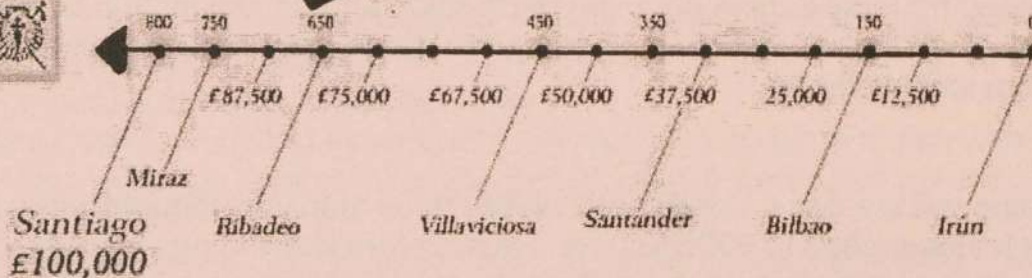
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How has the *gaitero* progressed?



*Appeal Total* **£80,237 - THANK YOU**

- Miraz Development
- ¡Que Aproveche! - for Christmas?
- Help Needed
- Sponsor-a-Week

## \*\*\* *Miraz Development News* \*\*\*

### Waiting Time

Plans for extending the accommodation at Miraz were drawn up earlier in the year, and since the building is owned by the Lugo Diocese we needed the Bishop's agreement to the plans before we were able to apply for outline planning permission. Unfortunately the then Bishop of Lugo retired and we had to wait for the appointment and settling in of his successor.

### Meeting the Bishop of Lugo

Colin Jones, CSJ Vice-Chairman and the Miraz Co-Ordinator, has now had a 1½ hour meeting with Bishop of Lugo. He found him to be "charming, and very astute" and he wanted to know all about the CSJ, its aims and philosophy, how it's run, how the refuge was set up, etc. The Bishop has in the past, worked in Santiago, welcoming pilgrims to the cathedral. He is very much in favour of the refuge and keen to promote pilgrims and pilgrimage. He appreciates the complexities of the refuge's situation within the village and its relationship with the local community. He is most interested in the "bigger picture" concerning pilgrims and their pastoral care and is considering a strategy for the future. Colin and the Miraz Steering Group have been pleased to prepare some proposals for him as requested.

### Permissions

The Bishop was pleased to give verbal permission for CSJ to continue with the building works at Miraz and arrangements are currently being made for him to make a low-key visit to see the refuge for himself and to meet some pilgrims. This is likely to be towards the end of September when Colin will also be there. In the meantime, the plans have been submitted for local outline planning permission and assuming that is granted, then the details such as type of windows, heating, etc can be finalised and some quotes obtained from local builders.

### Funding

A new building will involve a significantly higher price than was thought when the appeal was first launched in 2005 and we are therefore likely to need to attract funds from third parties to supplement the generosity of CSJ members. The Spanish Cultural Attaché, (whom we met at the Spanish Embassy Reception for Miraz), has been helpful and enabled us to obtain a list of Spanish companies and organisations operating in the UK, in the hope that we may find some sponsors. We shall also apply for grants from trusts in the UK which may support projects in Spain.

Maureen Young is planning to meet the Head of the Xacobeo in Santiago to discuss equivalent sources of funds in Spain. In the early 1990s, the CSJ applied for, and won, the *Valina* prize awarded annually by the *Xunta*, and used the funds to replace the roof at Rabanal. Another application will be made shortly and, if successful, the prize of €15,000 would be allocated to Miraz.

## \*\*\* *Miraz Contacts* \*\*\*

If you have any suggestions, offers or comments, please contact the following by email or via the office

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## \*\*\* *The Miraz Appeal* \*\*\*

History - In May 2005, the Bishop of Lugo gave us use of the *Casa Rectoral* (priest's house) in the village of Miraz in Galicia, to provide a pilgrim *refugio*. Whilst structurally sound, the building needed to be renovated, equipped and perhaps extended, if pilgrim numbers justified it. We originally aimed to raise £100,000 to cover both these and future running and maintenance costs.

### *\*\* How you can help \*\**

#### *\* Sponsor-a-Week \**

This scheme was introduced in the early days of Refugio Gaucelmo to allow pilgrims to support and keep in touch with events in Rabanal by sponsoring-a-week for £50 (or £25 if you share with a friend). You can also sponsor-a-week at Miraz and you will receive a letter from the *hospitaleros* telling you the pilgrim news for your week, and know that you are helping pilgrims too. For the first time, Miraz will be also be open to pilgrims through most of this winter into 2009 so there are spare weeks still available for you to sponsor. *Please use the form on page 8, or contact Alison Thorp*  
email: [alison.thorp@virgin.net](mailto:alison.thorp@virgin.net) or Tel: +44 - (0)1372-274398 for more details.

#### *\* Meet other New and Returned Pilgrims \**

How? - by organising a local gathering

Why? - to exchange your experiences or pass on advice to those who are still only thinking about going to Santiago.

Where? - a local pub, restaurant, your home

What about Food? - supplied by venue or ask everyone to bring a dish with them

Who? - local members. Just send us the details of your event and we will circulate members in your area.

Cost ? - up to you depending on your choice of venue. Plus a donation / contribution towards the Miraz Appeal.

#### *\* For Sale in aid of the Appeal \**

"!Que Aproveche!" - see page 4

"My Camino - a Personal Pilgrimage" - see page 7

Miraz Mugs - see page 7

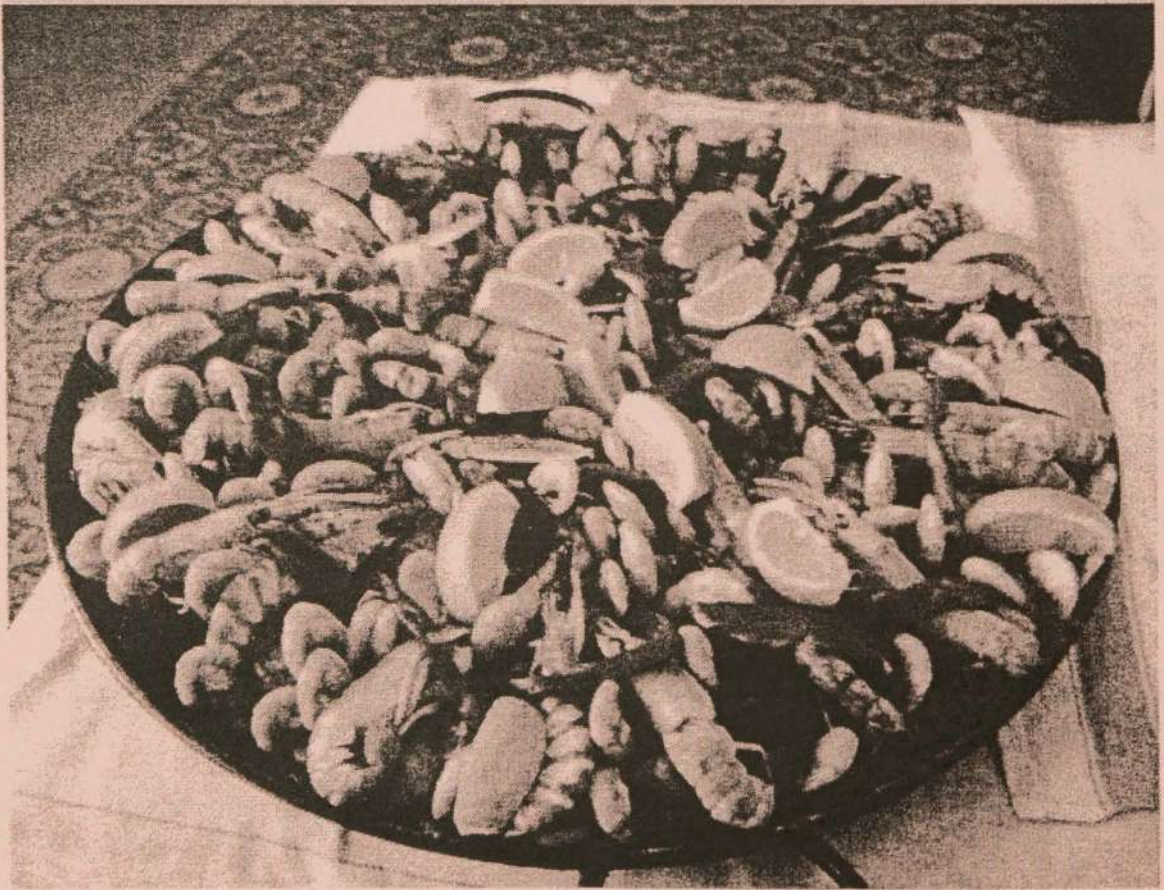
### \*\*\* *Thank You* \*\*\*

We are equally grateful for ALL donations, of every size and kind. Even the smallest amounts quickly add up to a considerable sum and have made a big difference to the current amazing total of over £80,000

People have found many ways to contribute e.g, by giving talks, showing films, leading walks, making pendants, selling artwork as well as simply making a donation (sometimes in memory of past members).

# *¡Que aproveche!*

Recipes from Spain



**Confraternity of Saint James**

## \*\*\* *For the Pilgrim who has Everything* \*\*\*

Over 60 mouth-watering Spanish recipes contributed by CSJ members.

Something to suit every taste.

Whether feeding just yourself or unlimited numbers of *peregrinos* in a *refugio*!

Some simple - and a few not quite so simple.

There are sections on Drinks, Tapas & Starters, Salads, Soups, Vegetarian dishes, Fish & Shellfish, Chicken, Beef, Lamb, Pork, Ham & Sausage, Puddings & Cakes.

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With food quotations.

Over 100 copies already sold !

Cost: £6.50 plus p&p

*Please order using the form on page 8, or via the CSJ website Bookshop.*

~~~~~

Here's a simple taster :-

### **Green Bean Stew**

**Ingredients:**

- 6 tsp oil
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 small onion
- 3 tsp tomato sauce
- 1 tsp breadcrumbs
- 1.5 kg young green beans
- 3 potatoes
- salt
- 1 cup stock.

#### **Method:**

Slice the garlic and onion and brown in a pan.

Slice the beans and potatoes and add to pan and then cook on a slow heat for 10 minutes.

Next, mix the bread-crumbs, tomato sauce and salt and add the stock.

Put in the pan with the onion mixture and cook for ten minutes or until tender.

Combine the ingredients, season with salt to taste and serve.

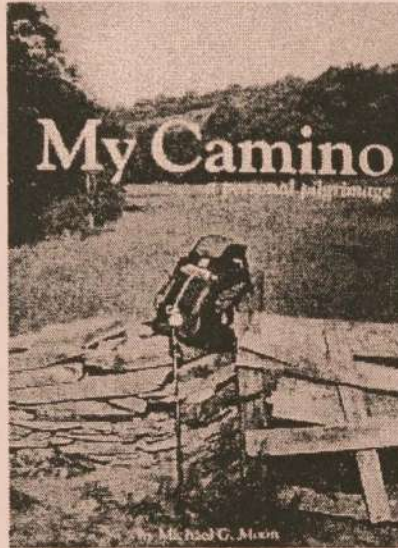
**Serves:** 6 – 8

*NB: We hear that the above recipe was recently prepared by our chairman when hospitalier at Corbigny and was much appreciated by visiting pilgrims (and no doubt accompanied by a little local wine?)*

## *\*Other Offers\**

Please order using the form on page 8,  
or via the CSJ website Bookshop at [www.csj.org.uk](http://www.csj.org.uk)

### *"My Camino : a personal pilgrimage"*

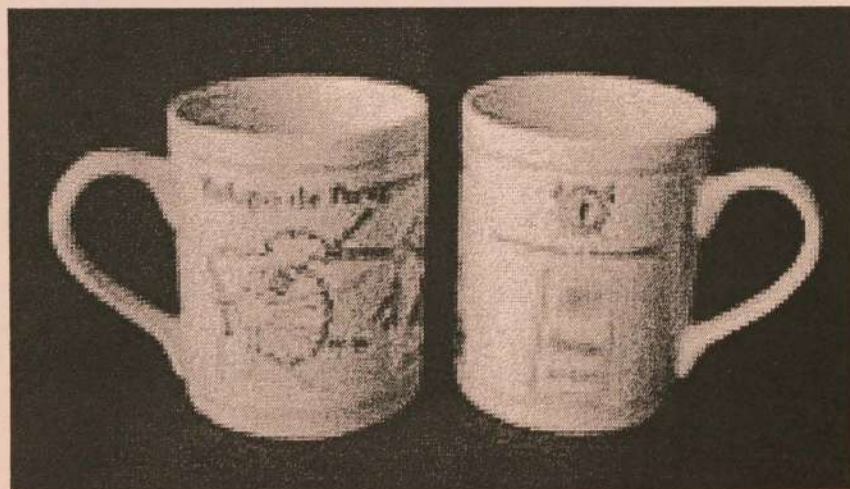


Michael Moon's book following in the footsteps of his ancestor who walked from St Jean-de-Pied-de-Port to Santiago in 1280AD. Many colour photos.

£6.50 per copy to Miraz.

Cost: £12.99 + p&p

### *Miraz Mugs*



Cost: £5 + p&p

## Refugio de Peregrinos de Miraz – Nationalities of Pilgrims

|                    | 2005       | 2006        | 2007        | 2008                   | Total       |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
|                    | 21 weeks   | 34 weeks    | 36 weeks    | 25 wks<br>to 26<br>Aug |             |
| Andorra            | 5          | -           | -           | 0                      | <b>5</b>    |
| Argentina          | 2          | 3           | -           | 5                      | <b>10</b>   |
| Austria            | 31         | 61          | 64          | 47                     | <b>203</b>  |
| Australia          | 3          | 5           | 5           | 5                      | <b>18</b>   |
| Belgium            | 53         | 9           | 12          | 20                     | <b>94</b>   |
| Brazil             | -          | -           | 9           | 3                      | <b>12</b>   |
| Canada             | 4          | 7           | 16          | 13                     | <b>40</b>   |
| Czech Republic     | 3          | 9           | 35          | 26                     | <b>73</b>   |
| Denmark            | 2          | 11          | 20          | 13                     | <b>46</b>   |
| Estonia            | -          | 4           | 12          | 8                      | <b>24</b>   |
| Finland            | 3          | -           | 7           | 2                      | <b>12</b>   |
| France             | 30         | 45          | 74          | 81                     | <b>230</b>  |
| Georgia            | 1          | -           | -           | 33                     | <b>34</b>   |
| Germany            | 140        | 232         | 373         | 350                    | <b>1095</b> |
| Hungary            | -          | 5           | 10          | 13                     | <b>28</b>   |
| Ireland            | 3          | 11          | 8           | 8                      | <b>30</b>   |
| Italy              | 13         | 37          | 58          | 51                     | <b>159</b>  |
| Korea              | 1          | 1           | 1           | 3                      | <b>6</b>    |
| Mexico             | 5          | 7           | 5           | 1                      | <b>18</b>   |
| Netherlands        | 6          | 11          | 23          | 16                     | <b>56</b>   |
| Poland             | 10         | 5           | 26          | 72                     | <b>113</b>  |
| Portugal           | 8          | 15          | -           | 11                     | <b>34</b>   |
| Russia             | 1          | 1           | 1           | 5                      | <b>8</b>    |
| Slovakia           | 2          | -           | 7           | 0                      | <b>9</b>    |
| South Africa       | 2          | 6           | 3           | 8                      | <b>19</b>   |
| Spain              | 543        | 754         | 719         | 581                    | <b>2597</b> |
| Sweden             | 1          | 3           | 5           | 7                      | <b>16</b>   |
| Switzerland        | 7          | 9           | 34          | 35                     | <b>85</b>   |
| UK                 | 5          | 41          | 30          | 33                     | <b>109</b>  |
| Ukraine            | 3          | -           | 1           | 6                      | <b>10</b>   |
| Uruguay            | -          | 1           | 2           | 0                      | <b>3</b>    |
| USA                | 11         | 21          | 21          | 17                     | <b>70</b>   |
| 21 Other countries | 4          | 11          | 14          | 23                     | <b>52</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>902</b> | <b>1325</b> | <b>1595</b> | <b>1496</b>            | <b>5318</b> |

## Order & / or Donations Form

CSJ Member no. (if known) .....

Name .....

Address .....

Tel or email address : .....

☐ I wish to order :-

(a) ----- copy/ies of *¡Que Aproveche !* - cost £6.50 each  
+ P&P : UK £1.00, EU £1.50, ROW £2.50 per copy -----

(b) ----- copy/ies of "My Camino" - cost £12.99 each  
+ P&P : UK £1.00, EU £2.20, ROW £3.95 per copy -----

(c) ----- Miraz Mugs - cost £5.00 each  
+ P&P : UK £1.68, EU £2.80, ROW £4.40 per mug -----

☐ I wish to help pilgrims at Miraz by sponsoring the  
week shown below for £50 (or part week for £25) -----

(Date) .....

☐ I wish to make a donation to the Miraz Appeal

Total £

### Payment

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to "CSJ - Miraz Appeal"

☐ I authorise the CSJ to charge my credit card as follows  
(NB: Credit cards will be charged *actual* postage)

Visa / Mastercard Number - - - - / - - - - / - - - - / - - - -

Expiry Date - - / - - Security Code - - -

Signed .....

Date:.....

Please send the completed form to :

CSJ - Miraz Appeal, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY