



Confraternity of Saint James

Bulletin



March 2015

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About the *Bulletin*

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Proofreader	Liz Crean
Production Editor	Liz Keay
Production Coordinator	Marion Marples

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Cover photograph:
St James mosaic,
Fouviere, Lyons

Editorial

Gosia Brykczyńska

Spring is a time of enormous and evident change in nature. As the Jesuit poet Hopkins noted, *“Nothing is so beautiful as Spring – When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush.”* While the transition from winter may be slow and incremental – barely perceptible on a daily basis – there can be no doubt about the difference between the deep mid-winter and a bright and breezy April day. So it is with the many changes within the CSJ.

Changes are currently afoot which will be enormous and which will usher in a new look and a new feel to the CSJ – which this year is 32 years old and decidedly entering middle-age. Although the changes will be felt deeply by the membership, they will not alter the CSJ’s passion for all things camino and all things connected with St James.

Firstly, after many years as our secretary, Marion will be retiring and advertisements have already been put out for a new post-holder. Although it is obvious that Marion will be a hard (if not impossible) act to follow, the new person in post will bring to the position a fresh set of eyes, ideas and vigour. In the next (June 2015) Bulletin, there will be a full tribute to Marion and information about how the CSJ plans to celebrate and mark the occasion.

Meanwhile, not only will the post of secretary change hands, but there will also be changes in the publications team. Ela Frankiewicz will be replacing Liz Key as the Bulletin electronics wizard, and we wish Liz all the best as she sets off to finish her pilgrimage to Rome – an epic walk in stages, of several years duration. This is also a good moment to thank Liz for stepping in and taking over James Hatts’ job four years ago. Finally, the post of Bulletin Editor will also have changed hands by the end of this year. So there will be several noticeable changes at the CSJ headquarters! Luckily, the Chairman remains the same and this year’s group of new Trustees have been voted in and approved.

All these planned changes, on top of a newly installed website, call for much reflection but also optimism. The CSJ is a small membership-based charity – more akin to a movement than a corporation – and all these changes, although in the short term unsettling, in the greater scheme of things are both necessary and inevitable if we are to

continue to successfully support pilgrims and promote the camino to Santiago de Compostela.

Let us embrace the changes wholeheartedly and put on them our collective stamp of approval, via the website, Bulletin, Facebook and directly through the office. Get in touch with the CSJ and each other – by attending CSJ events, looking at the website, following us on Facebook and Twitter, by communicating with members; and above all else by continuing to walk your camino paths.

In this Bulletin we have David Wesson reminiscing about the beginnings of Refugio Gaucelmo, and Paul Smith reflecting on the *Camino Primitivo*; Rafael Canseco Gómez finding connections between art and the pilgrimage and Steve Altman recalling his own camino in the footsteps of the pilgrimage undertaken by St Francis – while Helen Willson tells us about an unusual pilgrimage path in Southern France; finally Fr Gerard Postlethwaite informs us of changes in Santiago that will warm our souls, soothing and re-invigorating our pilgrim hearts.

. . . . Meanwhile, in the next few weeks, continue to enjoy the greening of spring and the Easter celebrations, wherever you may be. Start pulling out of your cupboards your walking gear and start planning this year's pilgrimage. As Edna St V Millay remarked, it clearly "*... is not enough that yearly, down this hill, April comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.*" There must be some other good reason for Spring-time, and I wonder what it may be. Perhaps to make change-overs more pleasant?

*It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,
April
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.*

Chairman's Report 2015

Colin Jones

In the panorama of the Camino de Santiago the city of Burgos occupies a very special place. Half way from Roncesvalles to Santiago, it affords the pilgrim an opportunity to reflect on the days that have been, while the stages ahead still hold a sense of mystery and excitement.

As the venue for the Spanish Federation's Tenth International Congress it was an inspiring choice which was reflected in the Conference theme, "The Camino de Santiago – Camino in evolution". Of particular interest were the discussions around the history and future of hospitality in the caminos. The magisterial opening address laid the foundations for further reflection on the current state of the pilgrimage and the possibilities that lie ahead for the various caminos to Santiago. In her address Prof. Adeline Rucquoi (entitled rather graphically, *The Camino – Evolution, Regression – Stagnation*), pointed out that the pilgrimage has always been in a state of evolution bringing both change and continuity. It is possible to discern a pattern within this story of change and continuity. This pattern, repeated several times in history of the caminos, begins with a growth on the numbers of pilgrims to Santiago. This growth elicits a free and generous response of hospitality whether from religious orders, parishes, individuals, confraternities or more recently Amigos associations. This period of hospitality is followed by increased regulation and control by governments, the Church authorities, or tourist boards in order to safeguard both pilgrims and citizens. Authorities tend to view as ramshackle the generosity of the enthusiast. This period of control usually is the signal for, or even the cause of, in the decline in popularity of the pilgrimage which idles awaiting the next period of rediscovery. In short, while Santiago as the goal is constant, how and why people become pilgrims is constantly changing.

We can see this century's old pattern being repeated in our own time but at a much accelerated pace. As the number of pilgrims grew from the 1980s, so individuals, parishes and town halls offer their hospitality in an often ad hoc matter, a house welcomed pilgrims here, a village offered an empty house there. In the last decade numbers have been so overwhelming that Spain's autonomous communities

have had to plan and direct camino hospitality if all are to be safely cared for. Whether the popularity of the camino will continue to grow or whether it will fall off is an open question which, only time can answer.

The reason I have outlined this process is because it is possible to see the same pattern with regard the CSJ itself. Outwardly, it appears constant – we have an office, pilgrim guides and our AGM, where we see albeit briefly familiar faces. Yet, even though we continue to be a Confraternity, as an organisation we have evolved. The small band of enthusiastic even visionary, returned pilgrims has become a charity that runs two albergues, prepares pilgrims for the camino, promotes the camino wherever possible, and yes even has the latest in web sites.

All this leads me to 2015 and perhaps one of the significant changes in our 32 years of being a confraternity.

In the panorama of the Confraternity, our secretary holds a key position. She has been an important strand of continuity in the story of the CSJ. However, the time has come for change. This summer, Marion our Secretary has decided that she will retire. I will invite Gosia as Vice Chairman to offer a tribute and appreciation of Marion and her contribution to the CSJ, to our Confraternity. Marion is irreplaceable. The trustees recognise that every aspect of our work will be touched by her retirement. Acknowledging this, I would like to outline how the trustees plan for the CSJ's immediate future. The first step will be to decide if the current work of Secretary can be performed by one person or whether it needs to be divided into two posts. Once that decision has been made, a job specification will be drawn up, and the post or posts advertised. If there are candidates of the right calibre we would hope to appoint by early June. Interesting times, but the camino is always interesting.

Founding Legends And A Sense Of Identity

Paul Aidan Smith

A brief Asturian odyssey

The CSJ guide's introduction to the *Camino Primitivo* mentions the saying: *whoever goes to Saint James and not to the Saviour, visits the servant and ignores the master*. I must be a bad pilgrim as I've twice been to Santiago but only just got round to paying my respects at Oviedo!

In November 2014 my wife and I went on a 5-day trip to Oviedo to visit our son who is spending his Spanish language year at university there attending courses in the history faculty. As we spent time with him we explored both Oviedo and the Asturian region east of its capital, including Covadonga. We also tried the local cider and some of the regional dishes. I was curious about the connections with the Saviour that the cathedral has and what the *Cámara Santa* was all about.

The cathedral is dedicated to San Salvador (The Holy Saviour) rather than any particular saint. Digital hearing sticks lead the visitor round a tour route, though the content of the guide over-eggs the catechetical side of things and can be overly detailed especially going through the cathedral museum. However, the explanations are especially helpful when approaching and then viewing the *Cámara Santa*. Therein lie the relics that perhaps express the heart of Asturian(nay Spanish) spiritual identity. The chamber contains treasures associated with the Asturian monarchy: the Cross of the Angels, Victory Cross, Agate Box (containing Jerusalem relics) and a large reliquary containing Oviedo's version of the Shroud. These highly symbolic treasures present both associations with Christ and the origins of the Kingdom of Asturias. I understood now why pilgrims felt the urge to pay their respects here, many of them taking a detour on their way westwards to Santiago.

But it was during our visit to Covadonga, up in the foothills of the Cantabrian mountains, that I began to discover more of the significance of the history and cultural identity of Asturias, and its connections not only with Santiago but the rest of Spain. This mountainous region remained free of Moorish hegemony when practically the whole of the Iberian Peninsula was under Muslim rule. Pelayo, a Visigothic nobleman, is credited with the beginnings



Basilica of Santa Maria de Covadonga

of resistance to the Moors and the origins of the Reconquista. Before a battle in the early 8th Century he and his few companions prayed to the Virgin in a cave and managed to resist the considerable forces sent by the local Arab ruler. That proved an inspiration which developed into independent kingdoms in the north and emboldened those who wanted to live in a Christian society. Gradually over the ensuing 800 years Moorish influence waned and the idea of a Christian Spain took deep hold of the Iberian people.

It struck me that nowadays Covadonga has been developed into a whole “visitor experience”. The roads winding up through the attractive countryside (signposted in brown from the coastal motorway) are smooth and wide. Countless restaurants, cafes and *sidrerias* line the route. At Covadonga itself, there is ample parking and solid ancillary buildings surround a striking basilica completed in 1901 and dedicated to Santa Maria la Real de Covadonga, neo-Romanesque in style. The visitor can pay their respects at the rock grotto chapel, view the contents of the museum, or find souvenirs and be refreshed in the shop and the hotel. There is also a choir school, collegiate church, priests’ quarters and retreat house. There are plenty of paths for pedestrian access to the surrounding slopes. Standing proud over it all is a statue of Pelayo. It may be a tourist haunt, but the official English guide wants the visitor to know that this whole area is a sanctuary, a shrine to Our Lady. It is intended as a reminder that the Christian vision of Spain took root in the heart of certain warriors in the 8th Century.

However, much of this gave me a sense of unease which might be symbolised by the image of Santiago Matamoros. A carving depicting this figure is now slightly tucked away in the cathedral at Santiago

but it has troubled my interfaith and multicultural sensibilities. Its horror-filled antipathetic image is one that sends shudders and revulsion down the spine of many in the West, reminding us of the beheading of aid-workers or any who are perceived as not conforming to the ideals of the so-called Islamic State. How do we deal with these apparently religion-fuelled acts of violence? How do we respond to the triumphalism implied by statues, monuments, images and dedications of religious fervour that seem to lie at the heart of one people's sense of identity over another's? As pilgrims, do we really set out to underscore these sorts of visions? Surely not!

The provisional ruminations I've used to quell my unease are as follows. Although secularists will often throw at believers that religion causes wars (and therefore should be abandoned for more enlightened ways), it is more accurate to say that religious vision has often been harnessed to give protagonists in conflict something to inspire them (for good or ill). Religion was perhaps the most potent of motivations in the days before the Enlightenment and Reason's call to overcome the religious wars of Middle Europe for the sake of treaty. But Reason was also hijacked for rapacious causes and maybe stood behind empire-building and the two world wars. For the moment I manage to salvage something from this weird combination of tourist aestheticism and spiritual unease. I settle for the understanding that, whatever the conflict, whatever the need to stand up for autonomy, sovereignty or some freedom, there has to be some vision powerful enough to attract, unite and drive forward those seeking such a future. We have the luxury of contemporary Western society to be able to look slightly less dispassionately at these matters, but it does not give us any moral superiority. What it does allow us is space to resolve to resist violence and the violation of others' ways of believing and belonging. In our cultural pilgrimage we are a long way off the place of healing, peace and security for all, regardless of their background or conviction. After all, the vision at the completion of the paths to Santiago is the Gate of Glory, the vision of heaven – yes coined in the masterful stone imagination of Master Mateo – but ultimately pointing beyond it to an unimaginable Paradise for all.

The Pilgrim: Communion with Art

Part I

Rafael Canseco Gómez

Vice President of the Amigos del Camino de Santiago del Bierzo
and member of the CSJ de Ponferrada

(Translated from the original Spanish by Paul Murray, member of the Gaucelmo Committee and Secretary of the CSJ de Ponferrada)

From the time of the earliest pilgrimages, and not just the Jacobean Pilgrimage but also the other classic shrines of Rome and Jerusalem, the traveller's step has encountered a vast array of art which over time has come to represent Pilgrim Faith, witnessing the spirit of those who have gone before us in the evolution of History.

Focusing ourselves on the Camino de Santiago, a living symbol of the Christian tradition from which it originated, there spring to mind those special places which have always registered in our collective psyche as vivid Jacobean landmarks, and which constitute the tradition and furthermore the sculptured shape of that religious itinerary.

Thus we recall the unsurpassed image of St James the Apostle, greeting us from his privileged vantage point in the *Pórtico de la Gloria* of the cathedral in Santiago as he invites us to enter. Or alternatively, we think of the presence of various saints, apostles or statues of the Virgin who, right along the Camino de Santiago, appear before our eyes at every turn to encourage us at moments of weakness or show us the right path when our steps seem uncertain and hesitant because of fatigue and disorientation, and even accompany us like faithful friends to make our day a happier one.

But along with these, there are a few other places in which evidence of Faith becomes much more intense and clear by virtue of their formal reality, their implied beauty or their hidden message.

San Juan de Ortega or Hope

San Juan is situated in the province of Burgos, beyond the gloomy, steep *Montes de Oca*, an immense area of impressive beauty which

always used to frighten pilgrims because of its solitude and the sporadic presence of thieves and assailants. Once these woods carpeted by leafy conifers were left behind, there appeared a place which has become one of the emblematic landmarks of the Camino. In part this was due to a warm welcome at the hands of D. José María Marroquí, who used to regale pilgrims with some austere looking but tasty garlic soup. Over time this soup became associated with the figure of this caring individual, until his death a few years ago.

The other reason for San Juan de Ortega becoming such a key place of reference on the Camino de Santiago is because of the church adjoining the Pilgrim Hostel. This is a building in transition from Romanesque to Gothic relying on both architectural styles. Its stunningly beautiful interior invites us to pray and reflect.

At its northern wall and situated on one of the arches which flank the apses, there appears a triple historiated capital which gives us what we could describe as "The cycle of the Nativity"; the Annunciation, the Visitation of the Virgin to her cousin Saint Elizabeth, the dream of Joseph, the Birth of Christ and the Announcement of this Good News to the shepherds are all shown there in serene beauty. The Annunciation stands out for the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary appear, not in the traditional way which we are used to seeing but both in expectant poses: the Virgin with the palms of her hands extended after agreeing to become the Mother of the Saviour, as she awaits the manifestation of the Holy Spirit and at her side the Angel Gabriel in a more passive stance.

It is at this point that a golden ray of sunlight brightly illuminates for a few moments this evangelical scenesunlight which, "directed" by the church builders from a pointed window in the opposite wall, stresses the importance of this transcendental moment. It is a singularly delicate allegory identifying the luminous beam with God the Holy Spirit who bathes the Virgin in light. And, although it deals with a scene repeatedly represented throughout the History of Art, only here does the beam take on its greatest manifestation of being at one with nature.

This phenomenon is visible at the two equinoxes of the 21st March and 21stSeptember as sunset approaches and also on the previous and following days. This date on the calendar has probably been chosen deliberately since on the 25th March the Church celebrates the Feast of the Annunciation and from that date until the 25th December there fit the nine months' gestation of the Saviour. In this delicate fashion, the

pilgrim can contemplate in ecstasy how the sculptured narration of an evangelical passage “comes to life” by dint of rays of sunlight.

Hope emanating from the Virgin and the whole of Humanity matches the pilgrim’s hope in his confident brave walk towards Compostela.¹

Santa Marta de Tera or The Pilgrim

Pilgrims who travel along the *Vía de la Plata* usually arrive at the church of Santa Marta de Tera, situated in the north of the province of Zamora, after first crossing the vast grazing lands of Extremadura, wading through swollen streams and traversing rough mountain passes. The *Vía de la Plata* is one of the classic routes of the Pilgrimage to Santiago which follows in the footsteps of Roman legions and merchants. The *Vía* was basically an economic route for the transportation of rich metal deposits from the north of Iberia. The pilgrim who walks to Compostela usually branches off towards the region of Sanabria, crossing the plain of the Tera River and finding there a quiet town and its interesting parish church built in a Romanesque style dating from the end of the eleventh century. This church has a close artistic and spiritual link with the Basilica of San Isidoro in the city of León. It is consecrated to Saint Martha, Astorga’s martyr and the patron saint of that city which pays homage to her.

The church has suffered fires and undergone ugly remodeling and subsequent extensions. However, later more sensitive additions have returned this outstanding church to its original principles of construction, revealing it now without the additions which tainted its beauty and masked its very essence. It is in the shape of a Latin cross with three arms of equal length, (the top part and the transept), which confirms a certain Visigothic influence. But the biggest surprise that awaits the pilgrim after his prayer in front of the church’s altar is when he goes to admire the delicate structure of the south door and discovers, placed above the narrow left hand arch, his dear travelling companion the Apostle Santiago himself, a silent friend for pilgrims arriving at this place.

Santiago appears dressed in his traditional Jacobean attire, a coarse sackcloth which he uses to protect himself from the vagaries of the

1 For a more detailed description of this church and its surrounds, we refer the reader to the magazine produced by the Amigos del Camino de Santiago del Bierzo. Issue number 13 provides a more detailed analysis.

weather. One of his hands is leaning on the staff which helps him when he takes difficult steps or as an improvised defense against the possible aggression of the beasts which inhabited the camino in the past. In his pouch or bag we can guess at the frugal amounts of food which the pilgrim normally carries and which give him the strength to walk. The scallop shell, characteristic and symbolic identity badge of the pilgrim, is clearly visible on his chest. This is a handsomely sculpted Santiago which, although archaic, since we are talking about the beginning of the Romanesque sculpture period on the Camino de Santiago, still looks at us with a friendly face framed by a head of hair with elegant curls and adorned by an eye catching bushy beard. With the other hand he blesses us in an unmistakable gesture as he says: "Welcome. You are in God's home. I have been with you until now and I will continue with you until the city which honours me with its worship. But I will always be here to welcome with affection all those who go to my home in Compostela".

The Santiago Pilgrim in Santa Marta de Tera is considered to be the most ancient sculptured representation of the Apostle in the guise of a pilgrim in the autonomous community of Castilla León and it constitutes one of the most beautiful examples of medieval Romanesque sculpture.²

The idea of using light from the sun in either a didactic or merely expository way can also be observed in the church of Santa Marta de Tera where another capital is lit up in this ingenious fashion at the same equinoxes (see note 2).

Villafranca del Bierzo or Forgiveness

Villafranca is a welcoming town with a long history and a rich past. It is situated within the boundaries of the Bierzo region and at the entrance to the narrow valley of the Valcarce River next to the steep slopes which give access to the mountain pass of Piedrafita at El Cebreiro. Its origins are perhaps connected to the arrival of French monks from Cluny who chose to live there. It has also been the birthplace of learned figures like D. Pedro Alvarez de Toledo, the Marques of Villafranca and Viceroy of Naples, the romantic writer Enrique Gil y Carrasco or the "illustrious" monk, Father Sarmiento.

2 The present day church, although delicate and majestic, is very far from what it could have been if we consider the structure and size of its incredible Gothic apse.

The pilgrim arrives at Villafranca having crossed the peaceful area of El Bierzo. This is a beautiful section which leaves Ponferrada, the “natural” previous stage, as it wends its way along hidden paths which cross small streams or offer delightful multicoloured vistas of the countryside of El Bierzo. Grey tinted landscapes can turn immaculately white in the winter, green and flowering as summer approaches, or with a thousand different shades of colour in the sweet autumn melancholy-filled days. Fields and paths twisting their way through gentle hillocks are carpeted with fruit trees and vines. This is a landscape where in former times Roman legions resided and monasticism exerted an important presence via the monasteries which still proliferate today as living proof of the area’s history.

Villafranca’s incredible church heritage is as great as it is valuable. The Gothic collegiate church is an authentic “frustrated cathedral” as far as its dimensions are concerned since its construction was interrupted by the death of its patron, the afore mentioned Marques of Villafranca.³ Then there is the church of San Francisco with its Mudéjar coffered ceiling and the ancient Compañía de Jesús school with its church in the purest Jesuit style. This is no longer run by Jesuits but better known nowadays as the Padres Paúles Convent. Another Convent is that of the Annunciation with its thousand year old cypress tree, and then there is the Marques’ Castle...But the most important landmark in the locality is, without doubt, the Romanesque Santiago Church.

3 Similarly, other more distant precedents exist in relation to the use of rays from the sun in architecture like the Abu Simbel Temple in the Nubian Desert, the ceremonial kiwas of the Anasazi Indians, (pre-Hispanic cultures which inhabited the land to the south west of what is now the United States of America), Angkor Wat in the jungles of Cambodia, Stonehenge, the famous cromlech on the Salisbury Plains in the south of England...

TO BE CONTINUED

Following in the footsteps of Saint Francis

Steve Altman

As I sat meditating with friends beneath the crumbling masonry of a medieval Norfolk monastery, it became clear to me that I must go on pilgrimage. I had no idea why or where I would go – it was simply an urge from the inner recesses of my being that needed to be fulfilled. Subsequent dreams revealed dusty dirt tracks and looming cathedrals, and when combined with a little internet research, it was evident that the Camino de Santiago would be my pilgrimage outlet.

Of all the Christian mystics, Saint Francis of Assisi had been the one that spoke to me the most. Born into a life of wealth and drama, where the potential for great military and mercantile reputation abounded, somehow he awakened and saw the illusion behind the external world. Seeing that the same God-consciousness was within him as it is in all of us, he embraced a life of poverty, knowing that the external forms around him were as transient as the wind. He lived his life beyond the ego – as the lively consciousness that simply bears witness to thoughts and emotions, from where compassion and joy naturally radiate.

When I arrived on the camino I had no idea that the great saint had walked these same steps 800 years before me. As soon as I found out and realised that once I arrived in Santiago I'd be handed a special anniversary certificate – issued only every 100 years – I couldn't have been happier, especially as I knew I might struggle a bit more to walk 500 miles in 2114! I think it really hit me as I walked across the dimly lit bridge of Puente de la Reina at 5am, shrouded in darkness. To think that Francis himself had clattered across those very cobble stones nearly a millennium before filled me with awe.

A few miles off the camino track, the Cistercian monastery in Cañas beckoned. Renting a cheerful and cheap room opposite, I spent the day walking around this beautiful space where Francis had once been. I've never had such a peaceful meditation as I did in Cañas, and the words of his prayer – 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace', seemed to permeate straight through me. Standing by the elaborate tomb of the incorruptible body of the Beata Urraca, a 12th century abbess, decorated by scenes of monks and nuns in joyous prayer, I

could easily imagine Francis there in 1214, taking in the beauty of yet another day in Spain, releasing his ego so that he may continue to abide in God-consciousness.

This sense of 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace' was to manifest in a number of ways for me on the camino. A clear polarity developed that I had been almost completely unaware of in daily life, namely that either the thinking mind had overall dominance, or it wasn't there at all. And when it wasn't there, there was abundant space for intuition to take over and for events to unfold in a natural way.

One day that will always stick in my mind was waking up and seeing in my guidebook that a refugio dedicated to the great spiritual author, Paolo Coelho was 20 miles away. It only had ten beds and there were thousands walking that stretch of the trail, yet I refused to book it in advance and simply set my intention for it to manifest. There seemed to be a lot of high energy that day. Everyone was walking very fast and didn't quite know why. I stopped off at the cathedral of Santo Domingo de la Calzada, catching a glimpse of the hen and rooster that are famously kept within the cathedral grounds in homage to the saint, whilst also gazing upon the tomb of King Enrique II – the king who had stabbed his own brother in the eye to claim the throne, yet centuries later is barely acknowledged by passers-by. As I continued walking, an English lady started chatting to me on the road and we soon realised that we had a deep connection with the same spiritual teacher. On reaching the next town, she bumped into a friend she had been walking with, who at that exact moment was booking her place at the Paolo Coelho refugio, and offered to book me a space too. Manifestation at its highest level!

The spirit of Saint Francis flourished on the camino. I remember one incident where I desperately needed paracetamol but the café owner had none. I walked about a mile on, and a couple who had overheard my request were chasing after me with paracetamol! Another time, a Danish friend and I arrived in a town where there were no beds, either there or in the preceding or next towns. It was getting late and we were both prepared to sleep outdoors until the hostel owner told us he had two spare beds in the laundry room. The beds cost half the normal price, plus we both took our mattresses out onto the large balcony we had to ourselves so we could sleep under the stars. The famous saying – 'The Camino provides', was beginning to have great meaning. I began to see clearly that there is only so much that the thinking mind can bring into our lives, and when we instead

choose to trust our intuition and in the unlimited compassionate capacity of the universe, then we will be naturally taken care of in all of our endeavours.

Upon my arrival in Saint-Jean, I had bought a staff to use on the camino. It served me well the whole 500 miles and when I finally reached the Franciscan monastery in Santiago, I saw a beautiful mural of Francis gazing upon the city, staff in hand. Early the following morning as I set off to leave the camino for good, I placed the staff by the door of the monastery. A fitting tribute to the man and his overwhelming compassion, fortitude and ability to trust in life, just as it is. 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.'

Ministering in the Cathedral at Santiago

Fr Gerard Postlethwaite

On 28th October 2013 I arrived at the sacristy in the Cathedral at Santiago in order to concelebrate at the noon Pilgrim's Mass. Having already concelebrated on 18th October at the end of my pilgrimage from Le Puy en Velay, I was expecting a good number of fellow-concelebrants. To my surprise they did not materialise. I found myself the sole concelebrant and fell into conversation with the priest who was to preside. Part way through our conversation the priest summoned one of the sacristans and asked him to go to his office to find 'John' and instruct him to come to the sacristy after Mass. 'There is someone here whom he should meet', said the priest.

After Mass I discovered that the priest was none other than Don Segundo Pérez López, the current Dean of the Cathedral, and that the 'John' in question was John Rafferty, the organiser of the 'Camino Volunteers' and 'Camino Chaplaincy' programme. Don Segundo said that he hoped that I would return in 2014 to be part of the Chaplaincy programme. So it was that, on 23rd September, I took up residence as the 'chaplaincy priest' for three weeks.

Over three weeks the attendance at the English Mass oscillated between to low 30s and the high 50s. On the busiest days (and there were a good number of them) we could hardly fit into the Chapel. Each day the participants brought with them their personal experiences of the Camino. Many mentioned deeply sad events in their lives, such as the loss of a spouse. Each person brought a special presence to the celebration and, as I greeted participants personally at the end of the celebration, many were unable to speak through their tears. A good number declared that the opportunity to share in the celebration had brought together their whole Camino experience.

Whilst pilgrims from Ireland tended to be the largest group we had English, Scots, Welsh, Northern Irish, Canadians, North Americans, South Africans, Australians, New Zealanders, Dutch, Germans, Austrians, Bulgarians, French, Spanish, Greeks, Argentinians, Chinese, Iraqi, Koreans, and Philipinos. (On one morning we even had two pilgrims from my own home town of Warrington!)

Let me give a flavour of some of the encounters. Early on there was a lady from Los Angeles whose husband had un-earthed a particularly fine Frankincense in the Oman. Sadly, he had died of an embolism at the age of 55. She had walked from St Jean carrying some of the frankincense in the hope that it might be used in the *botafumeiro*. On the morning that she attended Mass I spoke of the journey of the Magi as a symbol of the Camino journey and how we each offer our gifts back to God. I also reminded the participants that the Chapel next to where we celebrated Mass- the Chapel of the Corticela- has a particularly fine stone carving of the 'Adoration of the Magi' over its door. She commented that this was a most helpful reflection. (Later that day the frankincense was used in the *botafumeiro* and she had a special seat!)

Another day two generations of a family from the Philippines came to give thanks to God because they had prayed for a baby for one

Mass in English
Cathedral of Santiago

10.30am and 6pm daily
4 May to 16 October 2015



The Camino Chaplaincy offers:

- ❖ *A quiet space for reflection*
- ❖ *Mass and confession*
- ❖ *An opportunity to talk privately*
- ❖ *Spiritual retreats on request*

❖

Pilgrims of all faiths and none are very welcome

of their children on a previous visit to Santiago and now they had a lovely grandson – who is called Santiago. One day two Northern Irish Presbyterians commented that they had never felt as welcome at a Catholic Mass as they had done that morning! These are just a flavour of what is shared at these celebrations.

Both before and after daily Mass I sat in an open confessional in the North Transept. I was humbled by the profundity of what people

shared with thoughts and memories awakened by the experience of walking the Camino. In one case the penitent said that they had not been to Confession for forty years. Not infrequently non-Catholics would come seeking a word of advice or a blessing. A Jewish woman came by to say 'thank you' for the spiritual support that she had received during her Camino. It was a very moving experience.

What is clear is that, at the end of the Camino, many pilgrims are looking for a word of re-assurance, or an opportunity to focus on what they have experienced during the pilgrimage. I was reminded of the sense of anti-climax and disappointment that many of my fellow pilgrims had felt in October 2013 at the Pilgrim's Mass and how the service of the 'Camino chaplaincy' is filling that gap.

During 2015 the Chaplaincy programme is to be extended to offer services both at 10.30am and 6.00pm. What is provided by the 'Camino Chaplaincy' has met a very real and important need. Long may it continue!



Camino Companions

"The longest journey is the journey inwards"
Dag Hammarskjöld

You have walked the outward journey, where do you go now? Is there an inward journey to attend to before you return home?

Take time to share with others, talk things over with someone or simply to reflect on the experience in a peaceful atmosphere.

Introductory meeting @9:00 or 14:30,
the Pilgrims Office, Santiago
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Or contact: Katherine +34 663 426 900

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Quiet space, prayer, one-to-one meetings, group reflection.

Cost: By donation
English, French, Spanish & Italian spoken



A road less travelled and a feast for the senses – Geneva to Le Puy (350km)

Bryan Stevens

Whether or not you are a seasoned pilgrim, if you appreciate rural France and speak a little French then this route may well be the next walk for you! Three things in particular make this a very special part of The Way of St James:

(1) The path passes through incredibly beautiful and varied countryside. The route has been planned to avoid large towns, although there are plenty of small places where you can use cash machines and buy provisions for picnics. We made the journey in September and feasted off grapes, apples, pears, walnuts, hazelnuts, figs and blackberries growing on the wayside. To our surprise there were still plenty of wild flowers. The entire route is well indicated with red and white GR markers (*balises*) and the blue and yellow shell (*coquilles*).

2) Compared to the sizeable crowds thronging the latter part of the Camino Frances, this section sees considerably fewer walkers – an estimated 2,000 per year, mostly German, Swiss and Austrian. Several hosts said we were the first English pilgrims they had met.

3) A feature of this route which makes it particularly special is the *acceuil jacquaire* or ‘pilgrims welcome’. This is an arrangement set up by the *Association Rhones-Alpes des Amis de St Jacques*, by which 110 families along the route have formally agreed to welcome pilgrims into their homes on presentation of a pilgrim passport. Their standard provision is a four-course evening meal with wine, a night’s accommodation and a hearty breakfast. There is no fixed price: one is invited to make a donation.

My wife and I have now walked the Way, from Rorschach in Switzerland to Santiago de Compostela. Of all the 2,450km however, this section was arguably the jewel in the crown. Whilst we were slightly disappointed by the relative lack of Romanesque churches – instead encountering numerous village churches that were

open but heavily restored and thus not hugely characterful – the warmth and generosity of our hosts between Geneva and Le Puy was a highlight of the entire pilgrimage.

Among the many welcoming hosts we met were Christine and Christian, who live in a former convent full of beautiful furniture and paintings; we sat together overlooking the River Rhone, enjoying a feast of four courses. Odile and Jean, retired farmers in their 80s, have a house full of life-size sculptures made by their son, a gifted sculptor. Francoise and Gerard, whose contributions to their local community span acting, theatre scripts, gastronomy and basket making, gave us a delicious dinner of ingredients entirely from the garden.



Saint Michel d'Aiguilhe, Le Puy

The Route

The path begins in Geneva, 350 km from Le Puy. An attractive city at the western end of Lac Lemman, Geneva (like everywhere in Switzerland) is expensive. On top of this, accommodation can be difficult to find, and so pre-booking is suggested. The Float Inn, a catamaran moored at the lakeside, is recommended.

The way out of Geneva is well marked and passes through the attractive suburb of Carouge with its lively market. You soon cross into France. Reminders of St Jacques – signs, shells and statues – dot the route. The first village (Neydens) has an unsightly caravan park, but a comfortable hostel (or gite) is available at Beaumont. The hilly terrain gives fine views back to Geneva and the Jura, and the path climbs to 785m at Mt Sion.

No part of this section of walking is highly demanding, but the approach to Chaumont is one of the more difficult sections. It first descends down a riverbed strewn with large boulders, then crosses a spectacular bridge before climbing up very steeply.

After Frangy the route undulates beneath alternating sun and shade. Several detours (or variants) are available: the 2km detour to Seyssel, a delightful town straddling the Rhone, is particularly recommended. Beyond Seyssel the Way becomes a little monotonous along the Rhone, where marshes have been drained to create the largest poplar forest in Europe. From Chanaz you then climb gently through vineyards to Jongieux where wine tasting (*dégustations*) awaits if you so desire.

After *Yenne* the Rhone turns westwards, parting from the Way for about 150km. The path then runs along a ridge with occasional belvederes, giving breathtaking views 350m above the river and passing through deep forests of pine, beech and oak with carpets of velvety green moss, alternating with lush meadows.

An especially notable spot beyond *Les Abrets* is *Lake Paladru*, which is a 'beach' for locals and is reputed to cover a Neolithic village. The largest town along the walk is *La Cote St André*, the birthplace of Hector Berlioz and home of the painter Jongkind. Here the way follows a low ridge overlooking *La Bievre* plain, with fine views to the south.

At *Chavannay* we join the Rhone once more, now considerably wider than where we left it upstream. Crossing the river, the route climbs gently up to the Massif Central, first through apple orchards and vineyards (the northern Cote du Rhone) and then through forests and meadows. None of these climbs is steep, and when you reach *Raffy* (1280m), the



Carla and Bryan in Le Puy

highest point of the route, there spreads before you the expansive volcanic landscape of the Le Puy area. 7km before Le Puy there are superb views at *Montjoie*, which give a foretaste of the view of Santiago from the Monte de Gozo.

Many people think of Le Puy en Velay simply as the starting point for their pilgrimage (just as we did in 2011). It is, in its own right, a place full of fascinating buildings built on steep hills and pinnacles (like the famous *St Michel d'Aiguilhe*). A day exploring the town is

time very well spent. The excellent hostel St Georges, run by volunteer *amis de St Jacques*, is recommended.

London can be reached from Le Puy in a day, by train, via Lyon changing either at Paris or Lille.

PRACTICAL NOTES

to make use of the *accueil jacquaire* system you must hold the latest yellow book (*Livre Jaune*). It is published by the *Association Rhones-Alpes* and is normally available from CSJ. The book gives distances and an altitude chart (but don't be put off: the two highest points are gentle climbs even though they appear in the book as minor Everests!)

You may also like to obtain the *Topo Guide*, published by FF Randonnes and only available in French. This has a full description of the route with excellent maps.

For any further advice or questions please feel free to contact me on: email bcsbs@hotmail.co.uk

Not swift and beautiful – a pilgrim’s hymn

Rosemary Hill

*Take my feet and let them go
Without a blister on each toe.*

*Take my legs and make them strong
Free from cramp the whole day long.*

*Take my knees, just keep them well
To walk or climb but not to swell.*

*Take my hips, may any pain
Be nothing more than sign of rain.*

*Take my shoulders, let the pack
Ride lightly on my aging back.*

*Take my hands, my heart, my head
And I’ll go slow and sure instead.*

Take my life, and let it be is a well-known hymn by Frances Havergal. It contains the wonderful lines:- *Take my feet and let them be - Swift and beautiful for thee.*

Above is my adapted version composed while walking the Vézelay route in stages.

Rabanal and the Refuge in 1991

David and Diane Wesson

When I set off in July 1991 to go to Rabanal del Camino I had no idea what the village would be like. It was hard enough to find it on the map! Likewise I had no idea what the refuge would be like or how I would need to organize it. It may seem strange now but since I did not know what to expect I took with me not only a sleeping bag but also a primus stove and a set of pans for cooking.

Rabanal del Camino

When I arrived what I found was a village in what looked like terminal decline. There seemed to be more abandoned and derelict properties than there were houses being lived in. *Calle Real* and all the roads within the village were dirt tracks, dusty in summer, muddy in winter. The only tarmac was the road that bypassed most of the village, going past Chonina's, and that had only been built recently by the military for access to their base on top of the mountain. Once past there, it reverted to a very rough track down the hill to Molinaseca.

The year round population was less than thirty and they were



mostly the old folk left behind when their children went off to Madrid seeking work. The obvious exceptions were three of Antonio's children, Antonio Junior and the two youngest daughters Pili and Cristina, and Chonina's youngest son, Miguel Angel. There was another child living in the village, Montse, a

vivacious, attractive and lively young girl until she had been involved in an accident with a car that had left her paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair for life.

There were no shops. The only commercial operations were the two small bars run by Antonio and Chonina, each with a small dining area. There were only three private cars. One belonging to Antonio, one to Miguel Angel and the third to two ladies from Madrid who had in recent times bought the typical *Maragato* house next to what had been the derelict parish priest's house.

That had now become the new refuge and they were the immediate neighbours, Charo and Assumpta, otherwise known as the *madrileñas*. When the quiet village they had come to live in became an endless succession of pilgrims they moved to an estate in Andalucia and gave their restored house to the church – who proceeded to demolish it internally and turn it into a monastery. Transport for everyone else in the village was the bus which went to Astorga early on Tuesday morning for the weekly market and came back early afternoon.

Going into Rabanal was a step back in time. The agriculture was all done by hand or with a horse. There was no mechanization and cows were walked back each evening up through the village. The only telephone for general use was in a corner of Antonio's bar. The only touch of modernity was the satellite dish outside Antonio's bar. Every evening after their meal, that is from 10 pm onwards, villagers would drift into the bar, as they obviously always had, to chat, play cards or dominoes but now with the novelty of multi channel television.

So it was a sleepy quiet village where nothing much seemed to happen. Then, suddenly, in the middle of August there were lots of people, lots of cars. It was the Rabanal diaspora come home for the main annual fiesta on the 15th in honour of the Virgin Mary. At daybreak that morning the usual silence was broken by the sound of Maxi going round the village playing his traditional pipe and tambor to let everybody know 'Today is fiesta!' Throughout the day, for the procession carrying the Virgin from the main church to the one at the road junction at the entrance to the village, at the party outside the house of the person who was sponsoring the day, and at the dancing in the evening in the road outside Chonina's (there was no through traffic in those days), the only music was Maxi's flute and drum, complemented by the men playing the traditional *castañuelas*. For all these events everyone born in the village wore the traditional *maragato* dress.

Before the dancing there was a game of *bolas* on a special site on the left of the tarmac road. Obviously an ancient game it was played by the men and consisted of hurling a large heavy stone at a peg stuck in the ground. The stones were thrown with great force and could bounce anywhere on landing so spectators kept a safe distance on the opposite side of the road, seated around an old tree in the square.

Refugio Gaucelmo

The refuge was a brand new building. The only trace of its prior existence was the cast iron range in the kitchen. This wasn't in use but the large top made a handy counter. There was also, in the disused and semi derelict barn, the priest's toilet, a wooden affair raised up a height with a couple of steps. An interesting relic that might have been preserved but like the range in the kitchen, it was destined to disappear in the interests of pilgrims.

Those relics aside, everything else was new, clean and sparkling, thanks to the very thorough daily cleaning regime instituted by Nelly and Etienne, the first *hospitaleros*. The only oddity was that there was no hot water in this new building. The attitude seemed to be 'pilgrims must suffer'. Suffer they did when they used the showers for the water was on the glacial side of cold but back then, pilgrims were grateful that there were showers at all. Being told they were only cold, elicited no more than a shrug of the shoulders. We wardens – as we were called in the early days (it was some years before the CSJ was persuaded to use the much more appropriate sounding term *hospitaleros*) - could effect a certain nonchalance when passing on that news because our next door neighbours, Assumpta and Charo, had offered use of one of their hot showers each day after the cleaning duties were finished. I for one was delighted to be included on their invite.

Etienne and Nelly had been running the refuge from scratch for seven weeks when I arrived. They were experienced pilgrims in their own right and the first things that they had decided were that the refuge would be *donativo*-based and that they would give the pilgrims a free breakfast from 0600. That was something completely new. No other refuge on the camino did that and it was a major factor in helping to create an excellent reputation for Gaucelmo. Initially the only rule that they had was 'No smoking' anywhere inside the building. All went well for the first week or so. Then some Flemish pilgrims arrived. In the evening they went over to Antonio's where they enjoyed themselves enormously and they came staggering back in the early

hours very drunk, very noisy and were sick all over the place. Etienne and Nelly being the saintly people they are, cleaned up and put them to bed but the next morning saw two new rules implemented. They were 'Total silence after 23.00' and 'Front doors locked at 23.00' and it was made clear that meant 23.00 precisely, the only leeway allowed being that the doors were not locked until the church clock finished striking 11 the second time. After that no one would be allowed back in.

So after two weeks, three of the four house rules that have remained the norm were in place. The fourth came soon afterwards. Gaucelmo was the only refuge between Astorga and Molinaseca. There was nowhere else for pilgrims to stay and numbers increased as it got nearer to July. The consequence was that it became impossible to differentiate between yesterday's pilgrims who were taking their time to move on and those who had just arrived. The solution was to insist that yesterday's pilgrims were gone by 0800, lock the gates behind them and reopen at 1200 for a new intake. This had the added advantage of giving time to clean the refuge throughout and, if necessary, drive down into Astorga for provisions and to drop off the plastic bags of rubbish in Santa Catalina since there were no facilities in Rabanal.

That then was the system in place when I arrived and it was very smooth and efficient and easy to follow when I came to take over. The *Camino Francés* in 1991 was relatively quiet and not widely known. In 1990 for example when Diane and I cycled by tandem from Vézelay there were no CSJ Guides, all we had was a photocopy of some notes made by Pat Quaipe when she had cycled the route earlier, and although we planned the journey so as to arrive in Santiago for 25 July, in other words in what would become high season, during the whole ride we saw only 5 other cyclists and three of them were a French family in Astorga. All that was to change with the Holy Year 1993 when the Xunta of Galicia launched a massive advertising programme in the press and on TV. In 1991 we averaged less than 20 pilgrims a day over those first five months so it was not stressful and there was time to get to know your pilgrims individually.

What turned out to be a very stressful day for me began quietly enough. By 1 o'clock I had just three pilgrims; a Basque father and his young son walking to Santiago in memory of Mum who had just died of cancer and an elderly German priest who had spent so many years working in India that his English had that distinctive Indian lilt. He was an interesting man to talk to and I decided I would go to lunch with him in Antonio's. I didn't lock any doors but I left a notice on the door

of the refuge itself saying where I could be found if anyone arrived. When I came back an hour later, it was absolute mayhem. A group of 40 or so Spanish cyclists had arrived and taken the place over. Every bed was taken, even those of my three pilgrims and to cap it all two girls had moved into my bedroom at the far end of the corridor. What was more they obviously had a back up vehicle because their luggage was all kit bags, suitcases and the like so they had no *credenciales* and were not pilgrims as defined. At that point my Spanish was very basic but eventually I managed to find someone on the balcony who seemed to be some sort of leader. I told him in no uncertain terms that they were not eligible to stay and were not going to do so. Things got rather heated. I told them I was in charge, I made the rules and they were not staying. Any bags still in the refuge in an hour's time I would personally throw over the balcony. A large person standing near me growled that if I threw his bag over the balcony he himself would throw me over the balcony after it. Things were getting very nasty indeed. The one I was talking to calmed him down and eventually we came to an agreement that they would go but if there were any spare beds that evening I would let their girls use them. Somewhere in the middle of all this I noticed the president of El Bierzo come to the entrance with some colleagues obviously intent on seeing how the new refuge was getting on. They took one look and left!

Having got that agreement, I fled next door to see Assumpta and Charo and tell them of my woes. They listened, they gave me a very large whisky, or perhaps two, and generally calmed me down in a very relaxed Spanish way. Eventually and with no little trepidation I went back. They had gone!! All was quiet and peaceful again although I did hear the next day that they disturbed the village generally with their noise overnight.

One result of that day was not a new house rule as such but an understanding that we would not accept groups, even groups of genuine pilgrims. Then, as now, the difficulty was in deciding just how many constitute a group. Based on the fact that we were only a small refuge with 24 beds in the dormitory and another 12 in the three side rooms (there was no wardens' bathroom or barn then) no more than seven seemed reasonable. More than that and the atmosphere was spoilt as one group would dominate. It was an Irish pilgrim who told me the loneliest place she had been in on her camino was as the only outsider to the group otherwise filling a refuge she had stayed in. The other result was that, having checked with any residents that they

weren't going out any time soon, I locked the front door when I went to lunch at 1 o'clock leaving a notice on it saying 'Open at 14.00'

It was policy to be evenhanded in our dealings with the village and so the arrangement was to lunch one day in Antonio's and the next in Chonina's. In Antonio's there was always a choice of dishes at each course. I was told them verbally. Apparently that was a point of pride with the Perez family. To have the menu written down to show to customers was somehow *infra dig* and unprofessional. There was no such routine at Chonina's. I was given whatever she had, prepared for me, and it was just for me because 1 o'clock was not, and is still not, a time at which any Spaniard would eat lunch. I had no problems with that. Chonina was an excellent cook and her salads with produce straight from her *huerta* that morning were a delight. Even now I still drool at the thought of her *menestra de verduras*. Then one day when I sat down the first dish put in front of me was a plate full of different meats. There was a variety of them obviously long and slowly cooked. They were all derived from the pig, the staple of country folk. There could have been up to seven different types of pork meat. I know there was chorizo, it was my introduction to that delicacy, but I can't remember the others although they would have included things like a chunk of very fatty bacon and bits of nose, and ears. "Odd" I thought but since my father was a butcher in the days when every bit of the animal except the squeak was utilized as food, I pressed on and finished it. The next dish was chick peas. And finally it was a bowl of a very thin watery soup. When I had finished that I noticed that Chonina and Miguel Angel were both smiling at me. It had been a test and I had passed. It turned out that the 'upside down' meal I had been given was the traditional *maragato* peasant meal: a cocido *maragato*. I was told it had its origins in the Peninsula wars when foreign troops were rampaging about the countryside demanding food. The *Maragato* response had been to eat their meat first and quickly so that when the troops burst in all they had to offer was a very thin watery soup. So my lunch was a history lesson but I also thought that if they were prepared to tease me in that way I was obviously getting on very well in that establishment.

I soon realized that the job of warden involved more than just being a friendly host who gave pilgrims bed and breakfast. I was also a father confessor listening to their problems. Within a short time I was also a paramedic with a particular skill in dealing with foot injuries, above all blisters. These were treated in the 'Spanish way' i.e. a needle

and thread kept sterilized by hanging it in iodine was passed through the blister to drain it. Then, as fiesta time approached, another job came my way. Tour Guide. The villagers were obviously very proud of 'their' new refuge and as family members came home they were brought round to be given a guided tour. My Spanish vocabulary soon expanded to include terms praising the beauty of the view over the Maragateria as seen from the balcony. That too was all part of being accepted by the village.

A routine soon established itself and by early evening it would be obvious that there would be no more pilgrims that day. There was a very occasional exception to this. That would be a long distance pilgrim who had walked that day from Hospital del Órbigo. He would arrive probably after 9 and so had to be pretty quick about settling in, having a shower, and going for a meal, all before closing time. Both bars knew about the refuge rule of course but I found it useful to go over to Antonio's every evening particularly when there were Spanish pilgrims. Northern Europeans would want to eat as soon as Antonio started serving at about 7 but Spaniards, then as now, were used to much later hours and it helped for me to be able to say to Antonio "Those two there, that three over there are 'mine'" so that he could ensure that their meal was served promptly and they were ready for the dash back before the clock stopped striking twice.

Diane came out join me at the beginning of September. She had two surprises in quick succession. First the ladies of Rabanal were waiting outside the refuge when I drove up having collected her from the airport and as she stepped out of the car they rushed over to give her hugs and kisses and say 'Welcome to Rabanal'. Quite overwhelming. The next day as she was standing by the patio a very handsome young man in jeans and t shirt walked in and he too came up to her gave a big hug and kisses on both cheeks and said 'welcome'. It was Alberto Moran from the church of La Encina in Ponferrada. Diane knew that my immediate 'boss' was a Catholic priest. Alberto was not what she had imagined!

At my suggestion Diane had brought with her a set of framed photographs that we had produced of images of Santiago taken along the route of our pilgrimage the year before. We put them around the wall of the salon and thought it would be a good idea to have a celebratory opening of the new 'gallery'. We would invite all the village to attend and provide wine and tapas. When I asked Assumpta if she would do the inviting for me she refused. She insisted that I do it



Diane and David Wesson at Rabanal in 1991

myself. When I protested I didn't have enough Spanish she primed me with the appropriate phrases and sent me on my way. It worked. Everybody, but everybody, came. It was a great success and we had that uniquely Spanish experience as they all stood around us and shouted '*Viva los señores!! Viva!!*' I felt then that the efforts of Etienne and Nelly and of ourselves over the past few months had succeeded in making this new refuge an accepted part of village life

Were there any pilgrims who stood out? Yes. Two. They both arrived in September and both walked the camino every year.

The first was Helmut. He was German and not very tall but he carried a lot of camera equipment and a full tripod. The result was his rucksack towered above him so his was a distinctive profile. He was, in his other life, an organist and his sack contained lots of sheet music. I was happy to let him play my keyboard – the problem was to get him to stop! He said that he would play the organ in the cathedral when he got to Santiago. Helmut walked from home in Dusseldorf every year. But he had grown a little bored with the same route so this year he had come round by Paris. When he turned up the following September, when I was again *hospitalero*, he had come round by Italy.

The second was The Sea Captain. I had been hearing for days and days on the camino grapevine that 'the Sea Captain is coming'. He was obviously a well-known character. He was indeed. When this grizzled

character arrived, he walked straight past the check in desk and up the stairs completely ignoring my protestations that he had to sign in first. 'Later' he said 'plenty of time for that later'. And later, washed and refreshed, he came down and saw to the formalities. Over the ten years that I was *hospitalero* he was the only one who got past me! A Basque, an interesting character, he had indeed in his younger days been captain of a merchant ship. He was fascinating to talk to and later that evening over in Antonio's he introduced me to the joys of that classic Basque liquor: Pacharán. To this day whenever I drink it I have fond memories of 'the one who got away'.

Position of CSJ Secretary

We are seeking to appoint a dynamic person as our part-time Secretary (21 hours per week) on a salary of £18k pa. The role involves managing the office and supporting a team of volunteers who help with the running of the organisation.

The key tasks include dealing with enquiries from CSJ members and the general public, maintaining the website, fulfilling orders for the online bookshop, and ensuring that the library and membership database are running effectively. If you think you might be the right person, please contact us for a Job Description and details of how to apply.

The closing date for applications is 5pm Monday 13 April 2015. To receive the job pack please e-mail us at: recruitment@csj.org.uk

St James and Upper Provence

Helen Willson

Knowing that wherever one goes, one is never that far from some connection with St James, I was pleased, but not that surprised to find myself – over several visits to the very pleasant Provençal village of Cereste – on another pilgrim trail leading eventually to Compostela.

Cereste lies on the northern flank of the Luberon hills – a world away from the ‘Golden Triangle’ of the more sophisticated ‘celeb’ villages of Gordes, Menerbes and Lacoste. During a previous trip, the little *Office de Tourisme* had provided me with a photocopied guide to the village, which proudly states that it remains ‘a staging post on



the Way of St James of Compostella’ and yes, there in the heart of the village is the familiar ‘*Accueil du Pelerin*’ sign over the local *gîte*. Intrigued by yet another link in the ever widening strands joining just about every part of Europe, I decided to explore this further.

There are walking tracks and cycle paths in the Departments of the Alpes de Haute Provence and the Vaucluse between Sisteron and Cavaillon, following the GR 653D, which in turn is based on the Via Domitia, a Roman road – one of the oldest routes in France – which ran between Rome and northern Spain. It carried soldiers, bureaucrats,

merchants, travellers and pilgrims from the days of the Empire to the Middle Ages. On the roundabouts along the D900 are attractive signs announcing that this is the 'Voie Domitienne'. A printable brochure in English on the history of the road can be found on http://www.alpes-de-lumiere.org/fre/index/notre_histoire.html

The Amis de St Jacques Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur-Corse have created a pilgrim route, roughly following the Via, from the Italian border near Briançon to Arles. <http://www.compostelle-paca-corse.info/Chemin/chemincompostellepaca.html>

There is a *topoguide* (in French) <http://www.tourisme-alpes-haute-provence.com/topoguides/topo-guides> which describes the route from Montgenèvre to Arles, and the Haute Provence Department produces a good downloadable brochure (in French) on the route in their area from Sisteron to Cavaillon. <http://fr.calameo.com/read/0002827721d9842344b52>

Additionally, there is a lot of general information about the area on the website www.tourism-alps-provence.com

If one follows the GR heading west from Sisteron, as well as the pleasure of stunning landscapes to enjoy, with the Luberon high up on the south, there are several historical sites which should not be missed. Near Forcalquier, perched above the Durance is the tranquil Benedictine monastery of Notre Dame at Ganagobie with its mosaics and tympanum of Christ in Majesty. At Mane is the Priory of Salagon with its 12th-century Romanesque church, medieval 'simples' garden and a huge old stone barn which houses the Conservatoire du Patrimoine Ethnologique de Haute-Provence with exhibitions and a museum. The fortified priory of Carluc (with scallop shell decorations, which suggest a firm pilgrim link with Compostela) is a couple of miles east of Cereste and was a well-known pilgrim halt in the Middle Ages. Now there are just the rather dilapidated but atmospheric remains of the church and tombs hacked into the rock, almost concealed among overhanging trees and undergrowth, with a parking and picnic space alongside. In Cereste itself, there is the so-called Pont Romain – an elegant, narrow humpbacked bridge which in fact turns out to be 18th century! Nearer Apt – once a thriving Roman staging post called Apta Julia – is the fine Julian bridge, built by the Romans over the Calavon river. There are also remains of marker stones and a Roman ford – not far from the Observatory of Upper Provence. This was established because the

skies here are so clear and unpolluted...stargazing on dark nights is an imperative!! Here at St Michel, l'Observatoire is a charming idea for a stroll through the village: one can follow the Voie Lactée...the Milky Way...up a steep path to a viewpoint high above the rooftops with the story of astronomy depicted on boards at strategic points along the path, ending with a view across the hills to the silver domes of the observatory glinting among the dark green of the Mediterranean oak woods.

If you have transport – or don't mind a long detour – a visit to the isolated Cistercian Abbey of Valsaintes – shouldn't be missed. Peacefully set in the lonely foothills of the Plateau d'Albion, Valsaintes is lovingly being restored. It too has a tradition of receiving pilgrims and there are scallop shells carved into the church walls. Now it is a place for spiritual refreshment, with a stunning garden filled with roses and lavender and despite its out of the way situation, it is a very special place to seek out. <http://www.valsaintes.org/abbaye/en/homepage.php>

So, if you find yourself in northern Provence, or if you want to find wonderful scenery and good walking on a path that leads – eventually – to Santiago, the Cereste area is worth visiting and remember – St James he's everywhere!!

Rabanal Report 2015

Julie Davies

WORKING PARTY END (2014):-

Dave Arthur, Peter Garlick, Trevor Curnow, Graham and Lexi Scholes

FIRST HOSPITALEROS (2015):-

Liz and Dick Crean (UK)

Many thanks to the Working Party who closed down Gaucelmo for the winter. Blankets washed and put away, water taps all turned off, fridges emptied and cleaned, mattresses taken off beds and stored – the usual cleaning, washing and tidying. Dave Arthur organised contractors for the winter assignments. Work continued throughout the winter with several major projects being undertaken.

The dividing wall in the salon was removed and the floor tiles and walls made good. A much larger space has been created and we will be welcoming *hospitaleros*' comments during the 2015 season regarding how the space and furniture is being used. This project has been made possible by a very generous gift in memory of a special, kind and caring *hospitalero* who unfortunately is no longer with us. Many, many, thanks.

Hospitaleros this season will be glad to know that the old shower and bath is now removed from the *hospitaleros*' bathroom. A new shower cubicle and shower has been installed in its place.

The pilgrims' main dormitory bathroom also received a face-lift. The shower cubicles were completely gutted and new shower trays installed. The old cracked tiles were removed and pristine white tiles put up. Pilgrims will start the season with gleaming new showers.

This work has been completed on time purely thanks to the efforts of Gaucelmo's Refugio Co-ordinator - Dave Arthur. I'm sure all Gaucelmo Committee feel very grateful for the efforts he has made on behalf of the pilgrims who will stay with us during 2015.

Now all that is needed is our first pilgrim to arrive on 1st April. The *hospitaleros* rota has 37 enthusiastic volunteers.

20 from UK 4 from Canada

5 from Ireland 5 from USA

1 from Australia, Poland and Belgium

First *hospitaleros* of the season - Liz and Dick Crean (UK)

Book Reviews

Bedbug's Big Adventure by Ruth Welburn (author and publisher)
35pp, ISBN 978-0-9865322-1-4, \$19.99 from www.bedbugsbigadventure.com

"Some (pilgrims) are opened to feeling a mystical union of the self with God and nature." (Nancy Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 1998.)

Since Nancy Frey published her comprehensive anthropology of the camino, pilgrims' experience of nature has been affected by the increased prevalence, from 2006 on, of a significant species: *Culex lectularius*, the bedbug (Sp. *chinche*, Fr. *punaise de lit*). The experience of many pilgrims has been transformed by the tendency of this species to seek not just a mystical, but a very physical union with the self. The authorities have swung into action. We are assured that this particular aspect of union with Nature is under control. The intending pilgrim need only use the *Search* facility of the CSJ website to find all that he needs to know of practical measures (take antihistamines).

Now is the time for a profounder grappling with the problem, through Ruth Welburn's delightful book for children. In Jungian terms, is not the object of fear and loathing a hidden aspect of oneself, the Shadow side? Are we failing to appreciate that the same inexpressible yearnings that make us become pilgrims are at work in the bedbug? Ruth Welburn's first page thrusts into this attitudinal transformation: "Bedbug is a friendly, happy little guy who lives in a mattress in a dormitory in France in the city of Saint-Jean." With stripy thorax and serrated horns, Bedbug resembles the devils of Romanesque art, those ancient representations of the Shadow. Bedbug, who has never been outside his mattress, decides to hitch a ride in the bedroll of the Pilgrim who has slept in his bed that night. And so they set out, through the beauties of the camino (Ruth Welburn has used her own photographs and added Bedbug in paint) to the point where Pilgrim and her friends, arrived in Santiago, are tired and very happy and "Bedbug is happy too!" Bedbug shares in the sacred and secular rituals of Santiago, experiences post-camino syndrome as so many of us do, and overcomes the desolation by deciding to go on to Finisterre. The last sentence offers a slight hint of a sequel.

Perhaps the book is lacking in some of the savagery that children seem to take in their stride in the classic works of their literature.

Nowhere is it suggested that Bedbug may ever take a little nip from his Pilgrim companion. But it has a simple map, a glossary (“*Tapas* are Spanish snacks”) an educational quiz (“Where can you see scallop shell hanging from backpack?”) and notes for parents and teachers.

Delve deep into this book. And pack the antihistamines.

WILLIAM GRIFFITHS

Discovering the Great Saint Bernard: hospice, spirituality, mountains, history, museum, dogs. Canon Jean-Pierre Voutaz and Pierre Rouyer [English translation by Alison Raju] Martigny: Les Editions du Grand-Saint-Bernard, 2014, 199 pp., ISBN: 978-2-9700940-0-5

This book is beautifully presented and generously illustrated, and gives us a comprehensive account of the history, life and mission of the centuries-old – and indeed almost mythic – travellers’ hospice at the summit of the Great Saint Bernard Pass (2473m). It is divided into sections covering

- Saint Bernard of Aosta
- The Great Saint Bernard Congregation
- Life at the Hospice
- The Church Treasury
- The Canons, the *Maronniers* [the original mountain guides] and their Dogs
- Passers-by today and yesterday
- The Archives
- The Hospice Museum
- Alpine Nature
- Walks, Pilgrimages and Mountain Camps

Each of these sections consists of a series of short contributions by different hands, though most of them are attributed to the two principal authors, Canon Jean-Pierre Voutaz, the archivist to the GSB Congregation, and Pierre Rouyer, who shares responsibility for the hospice museum. A book created this way demands firm editorial control, however, and rather too much is taken for granted: e.g. there is no map showing the relationship between the two Saint Bernard passes, nor the location of the several local parishes for which the Congregation has, or has had, responsibility. It is also a little irritating

to be given information in a less than systematic order: we have to wait some time before discovering which rule the Canons follow (they are Augustinians); and interesting, indeed important episodes (e.g. the mission to Yunnan and its associated martyrdoms) are mentioned with tantalising brevity, and without any “see below” reference to indicate that the story is told more fully later on.

That said, we do end up with a rich and multi-faceted account of a life of prayer, worship, solitude, scholarship, and hospitality, in extremely harsh conditions, which has lasted for almost a millennium, and is even now redefining its mission as modern technology (communications and transport) renders its older patterns of life and service obsolete. The hospice motto “Here Christ is worshipped and fed” clearly underlies all that the Congregation has done, and continues to do. The section on “Life at the Hospice” includes particularly touching descriptions of the experience of offering hospitality in the context of a religious community, and could form the basis of some very interesting exchanges, if they could be arranged, with members of the Confraternity of Saint James who offer hospitality on the pilgrim routes to Santiago.

Impossible not to mention the dogs. We are given some splendid mountain-rescue stories, but we are not told why, in the end, they were withdrawn from active service.

While the sections on the life, history, and spirituality of the Congregation are inspiring, for this reviewer the sections on the Archives, the Museum, and Alpine Nature are in many ways the most interesting. The Archive is astonishingly rich, clearly holding material for a comprehensive account of the political, ecclesiastical and financial history of the hospice and the Congregation, though it is not evident from the Bibliography that it has, so far, been used for the this purpose. There must be many a PhD thesis waiting to be written! The Museum contains coins, found on the site of the nearby Temple to Jupiter, from the reigns of every Roman emperor from Augustus to Theodosius: is any other site so rich? It is evident from the Alpine Nature section that the hospice lies at the meeting point of two tectonic plates, each with quite different geologies.

Alison Raju has produced a skilful translation of an often difficult text. French rhetoric just doesn't sound right in English, and indeed accurate translation makes matters worse, not better (thus “the immense sky which inhales our gaze and our thoughts” – p.170). There do remain occasional lapses: charisma (“compelling attractiveness or

charm that can inspire devotion in others”) is used throughout for charism (“the extraordinary graces given to individual Christians for the good of others”); we have Augustine of Hippone (for Hippo); and “the Yunnan” (from the French le Yunnan, no doubt, while English drops the article).

Sadly, there are numerous irritating misprints: among them, on p.34, we are told that “the provots” was “extremey moved”; and p.44 tells us that a mission proposed in 1930 was approved in 1031!

But these are quibbles, and Alison Raju has done us all a major service in making this lovely book available in an English which carries no more than the occasional whiff of its French origins. A copy will be placed in the CPR section of the CSJ library, and anyone planning to follow the Via Francigena should certainly include it in their preparatory reading.

HOWARD NELSON

[Copy in CPR Library]

Members' Pages

From Maurice Hickman

I am planning to walk from Santiago to Finisterre and back again between *21st April to 7th May*. I am planning to fly out from Gatwick on the 17.40 Easyjet flight on Tuesday 21st April and return on the 10.15 morning flight on Thursday 7th of May. Anyone is welcome to join me on this venture. You can join for the whole of the walk or only part of it. I am planning to stay a couple more days at the end of the walk in Santiago to soak up more of the atmosphere of this fantastic city but there is a more expensive evening flight back to Gatwick on Tuesday 5th of May if people prefer that. The total cost including the flight will be about £600-£700 as where possible we shall stay overnight in the Spanish *refugios* which usually charge about 5 Euros for a bed for the night. Of course you have to carry all you need for the whole journey (including a sleeping bag). Mattresses and pillows are provided at the *refugios*! For more info email: mhickman@waitrose.com

From Joanne Cashman

My intention is to bring past or future camino pilgrims resident in Melbourne Australia, together to form a connection/bond of friendship. If you have not walked the camino before, may our stories/photos and memorabilia inspire you to pack your bags and experience the camino yourself. For the past 12 months, I have hosted monthly camino meet up gatherings in Melbourne call "*Camino Community in Melbourne*" and would love to grow a larger network of past/future pilgrim friends. For more information see: www.meetup.com/camino-community
PLEASE NOTE: There is no joining fee to attend these gatherings.

From Stuart Bexon

Being a well-seasoned and veteran pilgrim walker I am looking to complete a section of the Arles route sometime this year and so I am seeking a travelling companion for this trip. Probably flying from Bristol to Toulouse and then the train to Pau to walk over the Somport Pass in the Pyrenees to Puente La Reina on the GR653. I have the route guide and Miam Miam Dodo and this looks like it is around 244kms (152 miles). As a CSJ member since 2008 I have walked over 2,500 pilgrimage miles in both the UK and Europe including journeying to Santiago from both Lisbon and St Jean-Pied-de-Port, and through France from Le Puy to St Jean and also down the West coast from Soulac to Bayonne. I can walk and talk at any pace – especially if not in a hurry to reach your destination – the slower you walk the

more of the view you take in, flexibility is the key. Eighteen months ago I walked from Toulouse to Pau (it's a lot quicker by train) and now wish to complete this wonderful pilgrimage route. As I should be moving home soon I do not have specific dates in mind and so can be very flexible – it could be anytime this summer until the end of September. Call me at: 07859 999975 or gloucesterpilgrim@btinternet.com

From Joe Skivington

Missa Sancti Jacobi – A Pilgrim Mass on 15 November 2014, Fairford Choral Society, Gloucestershire, gave a concert in commemoration of the First World War which included Haydn's Mass in Time of War, a selection of WW1 songs and the premier of the conductor John Read's *Missa Sancti Jacobi – A Pilgrim Mass*.

John's Mass is a Missa Brevis – that is a Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei with sections of the Propers for St James. It is designed to be sung in a liturgical setting and its composer hopes that it will one day be sung as part of an ecumenical service of the Mass or Holy Communion.

The church was packed with parishioners, pilgrims and representatives from the Confraternity, for the premiere of this work. It was a most enjoyable and moving occasion. John himself conducted. The organist was superb, as were the soloists and the choir, all uniting to produce a wonderful performance. The Introit was reflective, echoing the Ubi Caritas motif of John's Pilgrimage Cantata. The Kyrie brought to mind the weary tread of the pilgrim on the camino, moments of desolation, but turning to triumph in the great Amen of the Gloria. The Sanctus, punctuated by the sacring bell, thrilled with the trumpet calls at its conclusion, contrasting with the stillness of the Benedictus. The Agnus Dei was based on the appropriately named Gregorian chant *Tonus Peregrinus*, the Wandering or Pilgrim tone, ending the Mass with a peaceful resolution. It is a work which captures the spirit of Saint James, and Santiago, the goal of every pilgrim travelling to his shrine. It is readily accessible to any choir and we look forward to hearing it again. John deserves our warmest thanks and congratulations.

From John and Maggie Gardner

We both laughed when we read Robert Lawrence France's article in the December 2014 (No. 128) edition of the CSJ *Bulletin* on the obsessive behaviour displayed by some veterans of the camino. We immediately realised that many of his suggested observable symptoms strongly applied

to us as well (half of them: 23 out of his 46 to be precise).

At the end of his article he asked for readers to suggest any other possible symptoms of the “disease” and in response we would like to offer the following ones which we know definitely at least apply to us:

- Unable to pass an outdoor shop without going in and admiring all the available clothing and footwear.
- Constantly studying maps (both large and small scale) of camino routes already walked and those still to be walked.
- Trying not to let a single day go by since stepping out on our first camino without walking somewhere (come rain or shine) preferably with a back pack.

From Hugh Lockhart

Our survey “For those who have been on the Camino” is now on our website at <http://survey.thewayofstandrews.com> and we have extended the deadline for replies to April 30. The results will be published in June’s edition of the *Bulletin*. The results so far have been very revealing. The majority of respondents put religious or spiritual as their main motive for going on the camino, with a similarly strong interest in visiting historical and religious sites along the way. The “mixed dormitory” remains the favourite accommodation but “B&B with ensuite” has crept into 2nd place. Gratifyingly, over two thirds found CSJ of help in planning their camino, and 90% will go on the camino again – in spite of “worst experiences” from fierce dogs and food poisoning. The survey only takes about 5 minutes, so please give us your views and help us plan for the future.

From Antonia Moffat

There is a statue of Our Lady of Walsingham in the Chapel of St John in the Basilica of St James in Santiago. It was given as a gift to the Santiago Shrine in July 1954 by Cardinal Griffin of Westminster, with the request that the Spanish Church pray for England. I am wondering if anyone knows any further information about this.



From the Secretary's Notebook

Secretary Retiring after 20 years: who will replace her?

See advertisement on p.36

Volunteer Minute Taker needed

Anne Froud, one of our regular Minute taker would like to stand down. We are very grateful to her for the way she makes sense of a lot of material for both the Rabanal and Miraz committees as well as the main Trustees. Would you be able to help us? The Trustee meetings are mostly at 5pm on the first Tuesday of the odd numbered months, except in November, when it is the second Tuesday. The other meetings are held twice a year, on weekday afternoons. All take place either at the office or nearby. Please contact Marion on office@csj.org.uk if you might be interested.

The AGM

Thank you to all who supported the AGM this year. One new Trustee was elected, Robin Dorkings, who has been a regular Thursday office volunteer for some years and is a veteran of quite a few caminos. At the first meeting of Trustees the office holders were re-elected for the coming year.

Volunteering in Santiago

There are many changes in the Pilgrim Office this year. The Dean, D Segundo Pérez Lopez, prompted by the experience last summer of many different groups offering hospitality to arriving pilgrims including the Amigos Project, the Germans steadily building their Welcome activities and the concerns of local businesses about congestion in the streets around the Pilgrim Office, has worked with the Xunta de Galicia and the Xacobeo to find a much larger and flexible Pilgrim Office where all these activities can be managed. A building in Rua Carretas, just past the Hostal de los Reyes Catolicos is being transformed into a Pilgrim Office and International Welcome Centre. It is a former old people's home and has been empty for some time. It has a chapel and an extensive garden and is only c 3 minutes from the cathedral. It is hoped the Pilgrim Office will move there in mid 2015. The Xunta are giving 1.5 M euros to the 4 M euro project and there is an Appeal for generous donations from organisations and individuals to support the building works.

English speaking pilgrims in the meantime should look out for the Camino Chaplaincy, which ensures Mass in English is said in a chapel of the north transept each day at 10.30am. [See the article by Fr Gerald in this Bulletin, also caminochaplaincy.blogspot.co.uk]

A new initiative is Camino Companions, meeting Monday-Saturday from 15 April to 21 October at 9.30am or 2.30pm at the Pilgrim Office (to move to a less busy place!) for a time to share, how to tackle the inward journey, or to reflect on the camino experience with Sr Katherine, an Irish Sister of the Faithful Companions of Jesus who are pioneering this ministry among pilgrims.

CSJ Pilgrim Record

Look out on the website for the introduction of the CSJ's new Pilgrim Record. It will be in the concertina format like the Spanish and French versions and is to complement the CSJ's much admired original booklet



version. Members will be able to choose which version they would like issued when they apply for their Records. In a break with tradition and to add to the service the CSJ offers to pilgrims, the new version will also be available for purchase from the CSJ online shop. It is hoped that the new version will be available after Easter.

Desmond Herring RIP

As we were preparing this Bulletin we learnt of the death of Desmond Herring. There will be a full tribute in the June Bulletin.

Local Groups

Please see CSJ Events to catch up with a local event near you. Thank you to those who are helping set up local meetings or walks for those in their area.

Developments on the Vézelay Route

Since the passing of the ferocious energy of Jean-Charles and Monique Chassain who put the Vézelay route 'on the map' for the modern pilgrim their comprehensive Guide is no longer available. However, the Association *Voie de Vézelay* has been trying to fill the gap. About half of the Guide is available to download through the website www.vezelay-compostelle.eu (though only in French and German). In the meantime Jacques Clouteau, already well known for his *miam miam dodo* Guides for the le Puy, Arles and Camino Francés has published a Guide to the Vézelay route. This

Guide follows the 'Chassain' route rather than the GR of the Topo Guide. The Guide is in the familiar format with useful preparatory editorial and the sketch maps and comprehensive listing of facilities and accommodation. There is a glossary of the more technical terms in 6 languages and once the code is mastered the Guide is easy to use. We stock it in the CSJ Bookshop for £16.00. We also stock the original booklet which accompanied the Chassain Guide, translated into English by Alison Raju, price £5.

We hope more people will feel encouraged to follow this interesting route.

Opportunities for *Hospitaliers* and *Permanenciers* on the Voie de Vézelay

There are still vacancies during this season for both these voluntary posts which require a reasonable standard of French. The *Permanancier* (duty officer) is based at the Pilgrim office in central Vézelay while the *Hospitaliers* welcome pilgrims in the three refuges of the Association : Ainay-le-Chateau (Allier); Bouzais(Cher) and Saint-Ferme(Gironde). Availability can be checked on the website:

www.vezelay-compostelle.eu where details are given as to who to apply to.

HOSPITALIERS work on a fortnightly basis and are accommodated in a small room in the refuge. They welcome pilgrims, provide breakfast and dinner (if required), manage the cleaning and upkeep of the refuge as well as keeping accounts and signing the *credencial*. A car is required for these refuges as apart from Ainay there are no shops nearby. Currently there are vacancies at Bouzais (May and June) as well as various fortnights in the other refuges. Occasionally a last-minute vacancy occurs so it is worth indicating interest to the person in charge of *hospitaliers* (Dominique Hanuise)

PERMANENCIERS staff the pilgrim office in Vézelay (on a weekly basis) which is open from mid April to the end of September 7/7 at the height of the season and 4/7 at other times. Accommodation for two people is provided free in a pleasant *gîte* a few kms out of the town so some means of transport would be needed. The *permancier* is expected to be on duty from 08.30 to 12 noon and from 14 to 18.30 giving out information about the Way to both prospective pilgrims and curious visitors. The office is supplied with plentiful resources including a computer with details of lodging and conditions along the Vézelay route, maps, guidebooks and there is the opportunity to photocopy material and to buy *credentials*. The 'duty officers' represent the Association and as such should be fairly well informed about this route though it is not necessary to have completed the whole route as information can be found in the office. They need to be encouraging and positive without imposing their own views. Most pilgrims on this route are French speaking so a good level of the language is required. Most of August and September remain to be covered as you can see from the availability chart on the website.

CSJ Events

Monday 23 March

Wessex CSJ Group

Cathedral Hotel, Milford Street, Salisbury, from 11am.

Wednesday 15 April

**Pilgrim Guides and Pilgrim
Stories at Travelling Through**

6.30-8.30pm Venue Travelling Through Bookshop, 131 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7AE. Meet Candyfloss Guitar author Steve Marriott and learn about the various types of Guide book to the many camino routes.

Travelling Through is a new independent bookshop with a focus on travel books run by Emma Carmichael. Bar and refreshments available. To make sure there is room for everyone please book via office@csj.org.uk

Thursday 16 April

West Country Group

+ Thursday 14 May, 11 June, 9 July

Coffee Mornings at Café Refectoire, St James Priory, Whitson Street, Bristol 1, 11am.

For further information phone Liz Crean on 0117 9734502.

Sat 19 April North West Group: Meet in Manchester

Meet at 11:00 to walk from Manchester to Gorton Monastery, an hour in the monastery, walk back to Manchester for the 14:00 meeting. If you've not been to or heard of the Monastery – I can really recommend it!

Contact Ned Spencer, ned.spencer@point-systems.co.uk

TASTER WALKS

Wednesday 10 June

Worting to Alresford

10.30-5.30pm (16 miles, Hampshire Downland)

If you are travelling from outside of the walk area we suggest going to Basingstoke station and taking the 86 bus. To return, leave Alresford on the 64 bus to Winchester for the return rail journey. (Basingstoke and Winchester are on the same line out of Waterloo). Possibility of a tapas meal in Alresford.

Friday 12 June

Winchester-Eastleigh

(10 miles, Itchen riverside) From Winchester Cathedral following the River Itchen to the River Inn at Eastleigh.

Saturday 10 October

Pilgrims' Day, Exeter.

In conjunction with Camigos, from the Camino de Santiago Pilgrim Forum. The cost will be £5.00 on the day, to cover hire of the hall etc. Please bring your own lunch, drinks will be provided. Any excess will go to support Miraz. Further details and booking information in the next Bulletin.

Other Events

Thursday 30 April

Scottish Pilgrim Path Forum

Old Churches House, Dunblane, see *sprf.org.uk* for more details.

Dates below

Language Courses in Santiago

8 - 19 June, 29 September – 9 October

Cost: 1600 euros (there may be a discount for CSJ members)

The two-week course includes:

- 40 lecture hours at USC (1 week)
- 6 days walking along the Galician section of the French Way.
- Seminars on the Camino de Santiago
- Spanish language course and introduction to Galician culture
- Intensive cultural programme: including guided tours, workshops, official receptions
- Accommodation, meals and health insurance in Santiago de Compostela and during the walk

Spanish for Hospitaleros

15 – 19 June and 5 – 9 October, 2015

Cost: 405 euros (may be a discount for CSJ members)

The one-week program includes:

- 20 lecture hours
- Cultural activities
- Accommodation and half board in a pilgrim hostel
- Medical insurance

New Members

Information is provided for members' personal use only

London

Mrs. D G H Apostolides 67 Fishponds Road, London SW17 7LH	07828 123588
Mr. R. Cottee 233 Halstead Road, Kirby-le-Soken, Frinton-on-sea, Essex CO13 0DX	07749 257474
Mr. E. Lee-Smith 19 Lawrie Park Crescent, London SE26 6HH	020 8778 6538
Mr. A Morgan 2 Worthington Drive, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 6BS	01743 242638
Ms. C. Murphy 18 Fishers Lane, Chiswick, London W4 1RX	
Mr. A. Peaker 112 Madrid Road, London SW13 9PG	07802 775976
Mr. K J Pearson Brewster House, Flat 27, 38 Three Colt Street, London E14 8HU	07595 869108
Dr. R L Smith 34 Bark Hart Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 0QD	01689 330012
Ms. P. Toleda Tonelli 4 Fovany Court, Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3LJ	07868 101142
Ms. S M A R Tracy Flat 5, 2a Harlesden Gardens, London NW10 4EX	07585 711697
Mr. F. Ugboma 66 Hammersmith Grove, London W6 7HA	07940 368589
Ms. C. Weston-Baker 196 Castlecombe Drive, London SW19 6RE	07801 279209
Ms. S. Wright Voysey House, Barley Mow Passage, Chiswick, London W4 4GF	020 8742 3355

Home Counties

Mr. P. Armstrong 12 Arbuthnot Lane, Bexley, Kent DA5 1EQ	01322 525771
Mr. F. Barrett 54 Priest Avenue, Wokingham, Berks. RG40 2LX	0118 978 1924
Mr. M E Borrill Flat 18, Kingswear Court, Kirkley Cliff Road, Lowestoft Suffolk NR33 0BF	01502 531246
Mr. C. Carter 23 Kingsfield Road, Watford, Herts. WD19 4PP	01923 460508
Mr. D. Casey 36 Sea Lane, Ferring, Worthing, W. Sussex BN12 5ED	01903 502070
Ms. S F Choi 147 Southend Road, Rainham, Essex RM13 7XU	01708 557798

Mr. C. Cooper 1 Longmead Avenue, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7EE	01245 478331
Mr. & Mrs. K A Davis 24 Grange Crescent, St.Michaels, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6DZ	01580 765466
Mrs. L A Dutton 40 Brocket Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL8 7TY	01707 393084
Mr. E J East The Old Vicarage, Aldington Road, Lympne, Hythe Kent	01303 264423 CT21 4LE
Ms. E F Gent 40 Wellesley Drive, Crowthorne, Berks. RG45 6AL	07551 228883
Prof. E. Hagelberg 30 Marlowe Road, Cambridge CB3 9JW	01223 369947
Mr. P G Humphrey 34 Oliffe Close, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 2BJ	07882 648536
Mr. D. Hymer 7 Byfield Way, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 2SN	01284 599262
Rev. P T Johnson All Saints Vicarage, 1 Chestnut Avenue, Esher, Surrey	020 8398 9685 KT10 8JL
Mr. R S Johnson 73 Holman Road, Aylsham, Norfolk NR11 6DN	01263 732093
Mr. J. Kirby 6 St Vincent Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 1PB	07814 395116
Mr. I R Marshall 12 Goldenball Lane, Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, Berks.	07804 927389 SL6 6NW
Ms. E. Marson Hillside, Ivy Todd Hill, Debden, Essex CB11 3LA	01799 541478
Mr. N. Pellatt 19 Ringwood Close, Eastbourne, E. Sussex BN22 8UH	01323 645236
Mr. H H M Rogers 3 Lancaster Place, Twickenham, Middx. TW1 1HR	020 8891 2315
Mr. L V Ross 16 Millbrook Gardens, Eastbourne, E. Sussex BN20 8TT	01323 657097
Mr. & Mrs. D. Simpson 104 Worcester Road, Chichester, W. Sussex PO19 5EB	07977 035965
Rev. & Mrs. C J Smith Chevening Rectory, Homedean Road, Chipstead, Kent TN13 2RU	01732 453555
Ms. E. Stevenson 1a Holloway Road, Witney, Oxon OX28 6NQ	07944 124332
Rev. S. Stilwell Field View, Kimpton Road, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9NN	01438 716338
Mr. C W Süß 14 Crossways Gardens, Anstey Way, Cambridge CB2 9JT	07474 034972
Mrs. C. Swanson 102 Station Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 4TU	01582 761305
Mr. C. Templeton 20 Grange Park, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM23 2HX	01279 653787
Mr. & Mrs. J. Tucker	01223 343274

11 Brownlow Road, Cambridge CB4 3NG	
Mr. A R Vartanian	07969 315855
138a Upper Lewes Road, Brighton, E.Sussex BN2 3FD	
Ms. A P Wedgbury	01954 201968
3 The Herons, Cottenham, Cambs. CB24 8XX	
Mr. J. Wright	01603 300249
37 Gordon Avenue, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich NR7 0DP	

South & South-West

Ms. V. Archibald	02380 562691
8 Kingfisher Close, Hamble, Southampton, Hants. SO31 4PE	
Mrs. S. Bowhay	07795 167892
10 St. Annes, Kenton, Devon EX6 8LJ	
Mr. & Mrs. I C J Court	01626 821439
28 Kittersley Drive, Liverton, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 6YX	
Dr. R. Crittenden	01626 832538
6 Brimley Court, Brimley Road, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9DH	
Mr. M. Crossley	01747 852545
Tanders, Elm Hill, Motcombe, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9HR	
Mr. J. Ellerton	07799 420372
33 Oxford Avenue, Plymouth, Devon PL3 4SQ	
Mr. A G Gillespie	01626 774 324
5 Murley Crescent, Bishopsteignton, Devon TQ14 9SH	
Mr. R A Green	07543 790405
House 18, Room A, Marjons Campus Village, Plymouth, Devon PL6 8BH	
Dr. M R King	07855 741875
West View, Higher Hawkerland, Sidmouth Road, Aylesbeare, Devon EX5 2JW	
Mr. S. Knightley	01208 813771
Springs Gardens, Bradfords Quay, Wadebridge, Cornwall PL27 6DB	
Mr. S R Marriott	07939 604234
251 Down Road, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 8HY	
Ms. A C Marshall	07827 331117
88 Portsmouth Way, Basingstoke, Hants. RG22 6HG	
Mr. & Mrs. J. Marshall	01364 720200
Owley Cottage, Owley, South Brent, Devon TQ10 9HN	
Mrs. L. Mavin	01579 350956
North Sillaton Farmhouse, St. Mellion, Cornwall PL12 6PY	
Mrs. J A McConnell	07788 754885
South Lodge, Daggons Road, Alderholt, Fordingbridge, Hants. SP6 3DL	
Ms. J. McEwan	01209 715433
Higher Nanterrow Farm, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 5BP	

Mrs. H C McFarlane Bow Cottage, Jordan Lane, Horrabridge, Devon PL20 7QQ	01822 854907
Mr. P J Shepherd Highfield Cottage, Hungerdown Lane, Chippenham, Wilts SN14 0RP	07768 747192
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Mrs. J W Slater 42 Strouden Avenue, Queens Park, Bournemouth, Dorset BH8 9HX	07827 274035
Mr. D L Woolgar 96 Lyes Green, Corsley, Warminster, Wilts BA12 7PA	01373 832375
Ms. C. Ballard 33 Lower Street, Stroud, Glos. GL5 2HS	01453 767810

Midlands

Mrs. S Y Broadbent 21 Great Oak Drive, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 8UH	01619 296625
Mrs. C S Brown 16 Cambridge Road, Wollaton, Nottingham, NG8 1FP	01159 289443
Mr. S. Evans 14 Kingfisher Drive, Colwich, Staffs. ST18 0FH	07834 601712
Rev. & Mrs. J R Heaton St. Anne's Vicarage, Church Road West, Sale, Cheshire M33 3GD	01619 734145
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Ms. J. Read Shop House, Coreley, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3QU	01584 891656
Mr. R. Roobottom 19 The Haybarn, Stafford ST16 3YQ	01785 245693
Mrs. E. Thomas 46 Portland Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6DL	07963 702458

North of England

Rev. D M Atkinson 4 Belk Street, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 3NJ	01642 909881
Mr. A L Freeman 4 Grotto Gardens, South Shields, Tyne & Wear NE34 7AJ	07522 681534
Rev. C M Gartland Fall Hall, 2 Weirside, Marsden, Huddersfield, W.Yorks HD7 6BU	01484 845851
Mr. P. Golightly Quaker House, 2 Bellue Vue Court, Durham, Co. Durham DH1 1XD	0191 384 1700
Mr. & Mrs. M. Goodfellow The Farmhouse, Bridge Farm, Moor Road, Rawcliffe Bridge, E. Yorks DN14 8PT	07767 606647

Mr. K. Hodgson 31 New Road, Holmfirth, W. Yorks HD9 3XX	01484 687440
Mr. C. Horan 31 Pilkington Road, Southport, Lancs. PR8 6PD	01772 739672
Mrs. P. Hurry 52 Cadley Causeway, Fulwood, Preston, Lancs. PR2 3RX	01706 212439
Mr. D H Middlebrough 246 Helmsore Road, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancs. BB4 4DJ	07960 531477
Mrs. J E Pendered 4 Mountain Ash Court, Spooner Vale, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 1AU	01946 67183
Dr. C A Pollard 60 Springfield Avenue, Hillcrest, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 6TT	0114 268 2379
Mr. B A Roberts 35 High Storrs Crescent, Sheffield, S. Yorks S11 7JX	07805 027232
Mr. M. Shuttleworth 20 Ainscow Avenue, Lostock, Bolton, Lancs. BL6 4LR	01204 574672
Mrs. M. Slade 29 Newmarket Road, Bolton, BL3 1TA	01228 674209
Revd J J van den Berg The Vicarage, Rockcliffe, Carlisle, Cumbria CA6 4AA	

Wales

Mr. M T A P Phillips Garth, Upper St. Mary's Street, Newport, Pembrokeshire SA4 20PS	01239 820228
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Scotland

Mr. R J Brydon 19 Residential Park, Rosneath Castle Park, Argyle & Bute G84 0QS	07803 205840
Mrs. M F Cairns 52 Hughenden Lane, Glasgow, G12 9XJ	07737 601852
Rev. T J Daplyn Coillegillie, Applecross, Wester Ross, Ross & Cromarty IV54 8LZ	07747 464833
Mr. M. Flynn 109 Watson Street, Motherwell ML1 1YP	07828 071740
Mr. D. Frew The Abbotshall House, 83 Milton Road, Kirkaldy, Fife KY1 1TP	01592 260315
Mr. M R C Hamlett 55 Buckstone Hill, Edinburgh EH10 6TL	01314 464207
Dr. R E McKinstry 17 Burnside Park, Balerno, Midlothian EH14 7LY	0131 449 5875
Mr. S. McLean 3 Cockpen Place, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian EH19 3PF	07773 783108

Mr. B G Moore	01324 556532
141 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir, Falkirk, Stirlingshire	
FK5 4QJ	
Mr. W. Scanlan	01416 324691
310 Kilmarnock Road, Newlands, Glasgow G43 2DG	

Europe

Mr. N. Anteney-Hoare	0035 191 936 3188
Rua Teofilo Braga 31, 1°, Portimão,	
Algarve 8500 668, Portugal	

Australia

Ms. Z. Lynn
4 Araluen Court, Paynesville, VA 3880

Asia

Mr. E. Bumutay	
Apt. 80, Kilburne Street, Visca, Baybay City,	
Leyte 6521	
Mr. G. Dunkley	066 8 1535 1849
20 Krabi Road, Phuket 83000	
Mr. & Mrs. S. Middleton	00852 5349 7096
1st Floor, 1D, Lot674SD, Tai Yuen Village,	
Yung Shue Wan, Lamma Island	

North America

Mrs. S. Amber-Oliver	001 360 629 2618
P.O. Box 1231, Stanwood, WA 98292	
Ms. C. Blanton	001 386 426 3167
1644 N. Atlantic Ave., New Smyrna Beach,	
FL 32169	
Ms. J. de Jung	001 775 849 9310
16460 Jefte Court, Reno, NV 89511-8005	
Ms. M S Gallet	001 904 635 1654
1805 Royal Fern Lane, Fleming Island, FL 32003	
Ms. M D Mattingly	001 321 287 8641
700 Melrose Avenue B-23, Winter Park, FL 32789	

Local Group Contacts

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

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gosia.brykczynska@talktalk.net

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thecreans@btinternet.com

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