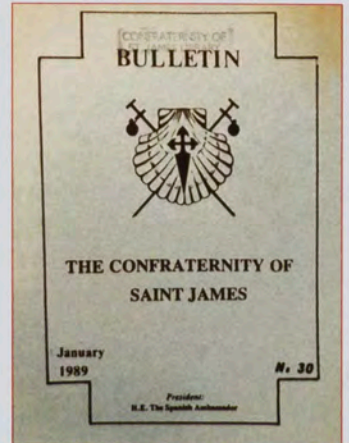
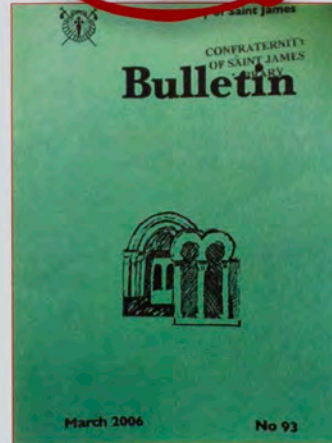
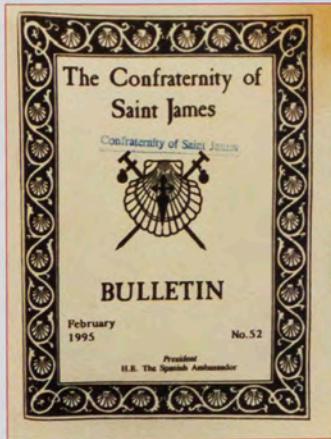
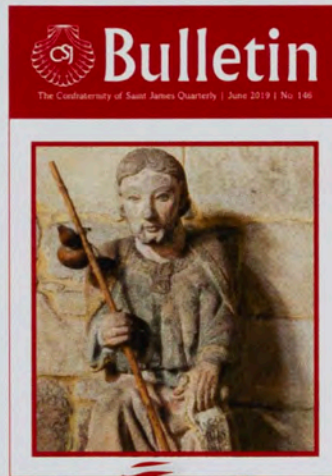
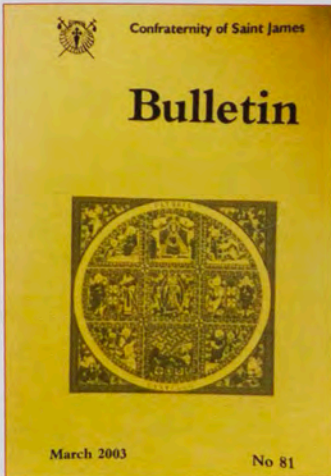




Bulletin

The Confraternity of Saint James | Spring 2021 | No. 150



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A sample of different covers of The Bulletin from over the years.

About the Bulletin

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Production Editor: Loretta Brennan

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For further guidance email the office.

All views expressed in this Bulletin are those of the author and not necessarily of the Confraternity of Saint James.

Call for Submissions for Autumn 2021 Bulletin
Pope Francis, fully aware of the impact of Covid-19 on the 2021 Holy Year, has declared 2022 a Holy Year. We would like to publish articles around this theme.

Please feel welcome to share recollections of previous Holy Year pilgrimages, plans for making upcoming pilgrimages logistically feasible and spiritually satisfying, or images and photographs related to Holy Year.

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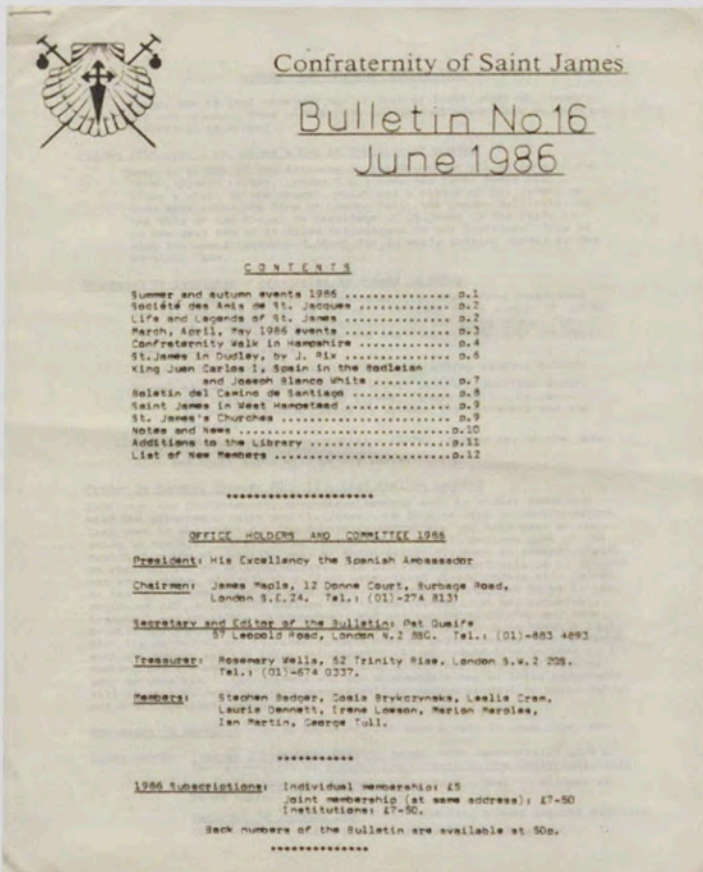
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I imagine I'm not the only one to remember the insistent smell of the Gestetner machine! This example of an early cover should make members very proud of the Confraternity's progress in technology, artistry, and photography.



Patricia Read-Hunter

Passing of Founders Alison Raju, Pat Quaife, and Mary Remnant

Of leading CSJ members Alison Raju, Pat Quaife, and Mary Remnant, we can truly say, paraphrasing Ecclesiasticus, that by "...their knowledge of learning meet for the people....Such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing: All these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times. There be of them, that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be reported."

In this 150th edition of the Bulletin, some of their memorable contributions are reproduced, in addition to the recollections of those who knew them best, in hopes that the qualities displayed in their writings, will serve to remind, sustain, and encourage members in this difficult time.

The Camino Had Other Plans for Me

One of the themes in this edition of the Bulletin is the writers' accounts of their reactions to the discovery that "the Camino had other plans for me." We have passed a year without the ability to make the Camino de Santiago, and in all probability face more months of deprivation. Members are finding joy, or least comfort, in using this time to develop domestic pilgrimage routes, walk in their own environs while praying or meditating, rediscover local churches, write up overdue accounts of past Caminos, contemplate the nature of pilgrimage,

and pursue historical research – to name only a few of the ways they are retaining connection with the Camino.

In this edition, Michael Kenning tells us about his experience on St Patrick's Way in Northern Ireland, Piers Baker outlines his "short circular Camino" on Jersey, Annie Sparkes writes of the touching ceremony of "washing of the feet," Priscilla White shares a beautifully illustrated account of the St Augustine Way, David Sinclair explains the self-publication process that resulted in his book, *Not Just a Long Walk*, and Patrick di Camillo and Catherine Louise describe the making of their Camino calendar. Olivia Pittet invites us to consider the parallels between Saints Thomas à Becket and James the Greater. Philip Rush recalls the misery of walking in the rain but then cheers us up by fixing his pilgrim's eye on the walls and door along the Camino in northern Spain. Louise Butler finds that friendship and the Camino intertwine in an unusual way. Helen Willson and Jenny Downing tempt us to curl up and read. Kimberly Saward is pursuing yet another avenue of connection, through the Virtual Camino.

Meantime, stay safe, keep well, and dream ahead to your next Camino, whatever it may be.

Buen Camino!

Chairman's Report

Rev Colin Jones

In 2020, the traditional and fraternal greetings of “Buen Camino” and “Ultreya” were supplanted by the solicitous yet stark, “stay at home,” “be safe, be patient.” Our credentials were empty of starting points and sellos. The Caminos were largely devoid of pilgrims as restrictions to curb the rapid spread of the Covid virus effectively closed them to free movement. As a consequence, our albergues at Rabanal and Miraz, along with many others, were not able to open their doors. The impact upon the economic, human, and spiritual life of the Caminos has been severe and profound.

For so many, this past year, the Camino journey has been internal, deferred, eased through books and screen. Of course, we ached, even grieved, for the world that pilgrimage had opened to us with all its variance, its stories, and that strange, mixed moment when we are almost there – our goal – Santiago, both Apostle and city.

Yet what we did discover was that the companionship of the Camino could be sustained through the Internet, via Zoom meetings, and through phone calls.

For the CSJ, these past 12 months have not been a fallow time. Online coffee mornings, chat groups, and a virtual albergue have allowed us to re-imagine how members can encourage, support, and feed the spark of adventure that is the pilgrimage to Santiago. They may not have

the same feel and depth of relationship as our face-to-face meetings, but they have shown how valuable virtual conferencing is as a tool to allow geographically distant members to be in contact with each other at a national level or in local groupings. We shall certainly continue to use them to supplement our activities, even when we are able to move more freely into a new normality.

Through virtual meetings, the CSJ has participated in international groupings, cooperating with other associations and institutions to exchange news, offer mutual support, and strengthen relationships. These included the Federación Internacional de Asociaciones del Camino Portugués and the Grupo de Asociaciones Internacional organised by the Xunta de Galicia. These meetings kept us informed and gave a better understanding of the prevailing conditions in Galicia, Spain, France, and other countries.

In the same way, the trustees met regularly to manage our finances, to facilitate alternative directions for the 2020 programme, and to monitor the situation of the Caminos. Through the CSJ website, we were able to advise members about developments.

The trustees agreed to establish the role and position of patron of the Confraternity Saint James, to draw upon a great depth of experience and to drive forward the promotion of the

Chairman's Report

Confraternity and its values. It is with great pleasure that I can announce that the Archbishop of York, the Rt Revd Stephen Cotterell, Fr Javier Aparicio Suárez, OSB, of the Rabanal Benedictine house, and Andrée Lombard, Chairman of the CSJ South Africa, have agreed to be our first Patrons. A brief biography of each can be found on our website.

It was with both great joy and deep humility that we received the news in July that the Confraternity, in conjunction with all charitable and voluntary Camino associations, had been awarded the Xunta de Galicia's highest civilian honour, the Medalla Castelão. This award was in recognition of our common endeavour to promote the culture of the Camino and the spirit of pilgrimage. Although we were not able to attend the award ceremony in Santiago in person, we were represented by the President of the Federación Española de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino de Santiago, Sr Luis Gutiérrez Perrino.

Perhaps the imposed and unforeseen disruption of 2020 has given space for more creative, reflective activity, especially in the visual media, as well as in literature and art, reflected in the establishment of our own virtual Camino book club. This was emphasised by the news that the Princess of Asturias award for literature had been given to Anne Carson, the Canadian poet and writer. Her meditation of her own pilgrimage to Santiago is published under the title, *The Anthropology of Water*.

During 2020 we received the deeply sad news of the death of three of our long-standing and respected members: Mary Remnant, Pat Quaife, and Allison Raju. As we shall hear later, each contributed with energy and enthusiasm to the Confraternity and to the enrichment of the Camino.

As this year begins, there are tentative signs that give reason to believe that we may be more hopeful of the next twelve months, albeit cautiously. The holy door of the cathedral of Santiago was opened for the first time in 11 years on the 31st of December. Its opening is symbolic of the start of the Holy Year – the Año Xacabeo. During the opening ceremony, the papal nuncio announced that Pope Francis had granted an extension of the Holy Year. It will now include the whole of 2022. Also, national and local authorities have prepared programmes that will enrich the Holy Year. Considerable planning and preparation have been involved to make the Caminos safe. Taken together, these may begin to restore the confidence of pilgrims to return to the much loved routes that lead to Santiago.

Financially, as we should hear in the report of our outgoing treasurer Mr Tony Ward, the Confraternity has become more stable.

The vaccination programme as it progresses may permit pilgrims to return to the Camino and the Confraternity to meet more freely throughout the country and at our office.

On behalf of all members, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed

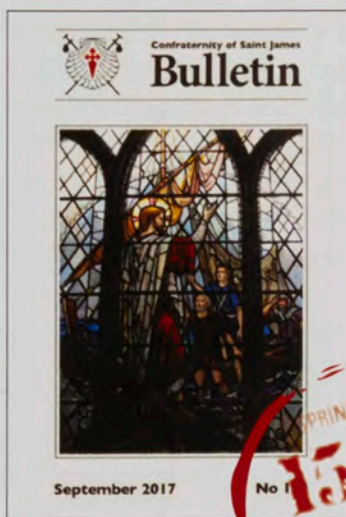
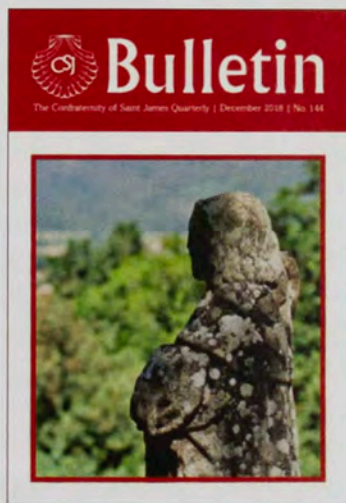
Chairman's Report

to the life of Camino pilgrim in this most difficult of years – the trustees; Freddy Bowen as our office manager; the volunteers, local group organisers, and members who have done so much to maintain the confraternity on a national and local level; the volunteers who have been caring for the office and the library during the past year, as well as members who have offered their generous financial support.

I am sure that as conditions ease, we shall spring into life once more with new and creative energy.

I end with a quote from Anne Carson's *The Anthropology of Water*.

“...just as no mountain ends at the top so no pilgrim stops in Santiago. The end is not the point and yet it is indispensable.” The Confraternity was established by those for whom Santiago was indeed not the endpoint but rather the springboard for something else. That something else was to begin this fraternity of pilgrim friends and companions of the Way to inspire, promote and celebrate the Camino and pilgrimage. Their foundational vision is at the heart of all that we do. Our task now is to affirm that Santiago awaits to welcome pilgrims despite the pandemic, and that we shall return and once more say “Buen Camino – Ultreya.”



Alison Raju, Pat Quaife, Dr Mary Remnant

Contributors:

Marigold Fox, early member and guide writer
Dr William Griffiths, CSJ Chairman 2003-2010
Laurie Dennett, CSJ Chairman 1995-2003
Dr Gosia Brykczyńska, CSJ Vice Chairman 2010-2017
Jocelyn Rix, last surviving CSJ Founding Member

Alison Raju RIP



From Marigold

Alison joined the Confraternity of St James in around 1990, after her first walking pilgrimage to Santiago from Le Puy. She was by then living and working as a language teacher in Nottingham. She was an enthusiastic and active member, and over 30 years made significant and wide-ranging contributions to the development of the CSJ in general,

but was particularly known as a serial hospitalera and writer of pilgrim guides for the CSJ and the Cicerone Press.

Alison was an ideal hospitalera. She understood the spiritual and practical needs of pilgrims and how to manage difficult pilgrim relationships. She also knew how to manage a refuge and how to deal with Spanish bureaucracy – being fluent in several European languages, learned in her earlier work with the International Voluntary Service and wide travels. She mainly served at Refugio Gaucelmo in Rabanal del Camino on the Camino Francés, where she actively participated in village life and played a role in the foundation of the monastery next to the refuge. She was also involved in the development of the Voie de Vézelay, with Jean-Charles and Monique Chassain. With all this experience, she was able to guide the CSJ hospitaleros training programme and to run practical pilgrim days for those intending to go.

As a guide writer, Alison reached an even wider audience. For the CSJ, she wrote pilgrim guides to the Chemin de

Recollections



CSJ members at a meeting with Monique Chassain, centre, and Alison on the far left

Saint-Jacques and Camino Francés; the Camino Mozárabe, Via de la Plata (Seville to Santiago) and its variants; and the Jacobsweg (Nuremberg to Konstanz), the latter following her participation in Gerhilde Fleischer's group pilgrimages. The commercial Cicerone Press guides to most of these routes were compact, easily carried, and illustrated with photographs and schematic maps. Routes were always re-walked for new editions, meticulously researched and every detail checked and re-checked.

Somehow Alison found time to play the horn in the Nottingham Police Band. Her "brush with the law" also included a spell teaching language in Nottingham prison! She played in the Djanogly Community Orchestra.

Alison held deep and personal Christian beliefs, and her faith guided her philosophy and actions. She lived simply as a very private person, but had many friends worldwide. She will be much missed but much remembered.

From William

Alison Raju contributed so much to the CSJ, and also to the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome. Outside the Santiago Caminos, she promoted and wrote guides to St Olaf's Way in Norway, and to the Via Francigena.

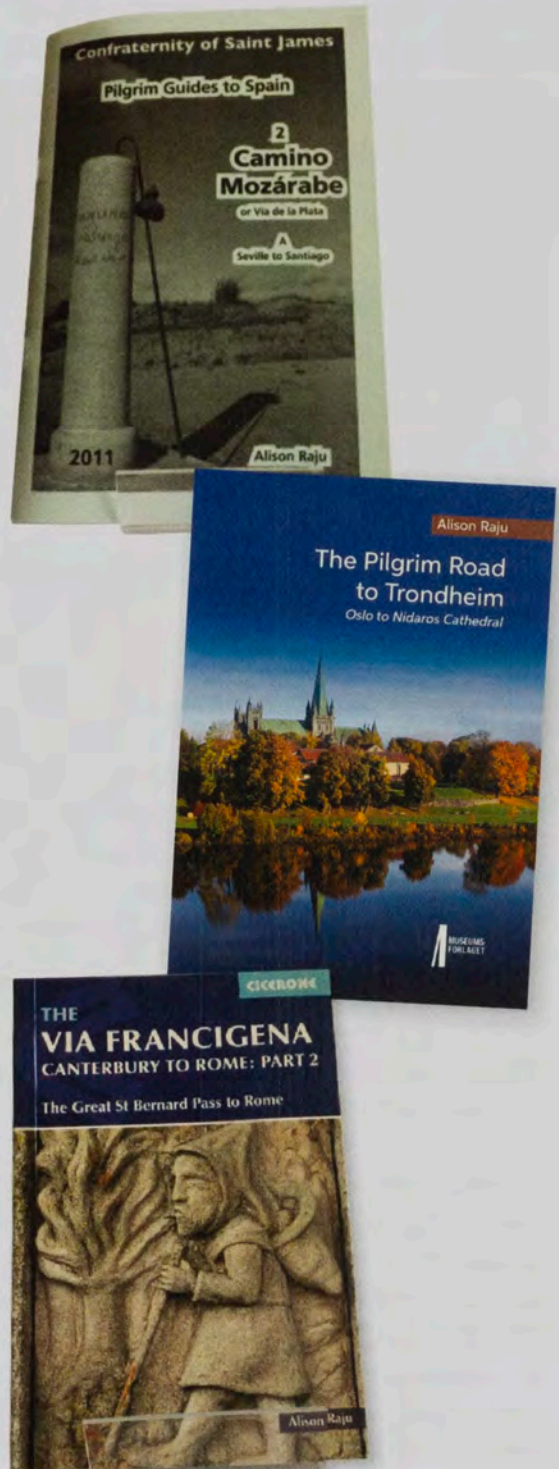
When Laurie Dennett was preparing to step down as Chairman in 2002, Alison declined to be proposed as Chairman, and she went on to be our Vice-Chairman from 2003 to 2010.

My own lasting memory of Alison comes from a time when I was an hospitalier at the pilgrim community in Estaing. The bell rang, and I went down, to find Alison wearing two rucksacks, fore and aft. She was rewalking the Le Puy route to prepare a new edition of her guides.

From Laurie

Alison Raju was a clear-thinking, practical, and helpful member of the main committee for many years, but her true vocation was as a hospitalera. This was most apparent to those who served with her, or who experienced her care as pilgrims, especially in Rabanal. She was, and remains, much loved by the villagers, who prized her unfailing “disponibilidad”—a combination of unfailing availability and helpfulness. I recall how one busy July, she resolved a challenging situation at refugio Gaucelmo by simply dropping everything and getting herself there to pick up the pieces.

Alison was so self-effacing that few people knew how accomplished she really was, which is why Brian Mooney’s wonderful account of her life on the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome website came as a revelation to so many of us. In all she did, Alison’s ideal was service to others – how fortunate it was that the CSJ and the CPR were its recipients.



Some of Alison’s guidebooks to the Camino Mozárabe, St Olav’s Way and the Via Francigena

Recollections

Pat Quaife RIP



From Gosia

Pat Quaife was one of the five early pilgrims invited to the founding meeting of the CSJ in January 1983. She had bicycled from Vézelay to Santiago in 1981. She soon became a very important and active member of the new Confraternity. She was the first honorary secretary of the CSJ and helped design the notice which was sent around churches and community centres around the UK, inviting people to join the CSJ. It was the first public announcement of the existence of the CSJ encouraging people to join.

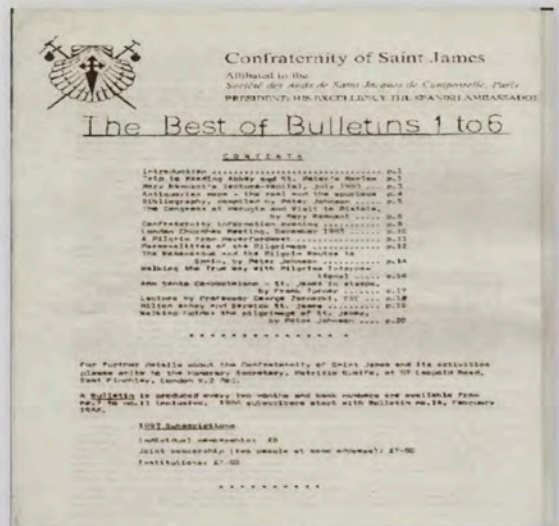
Another of Pat's many CSJ functions, before she was elected Chairperson of the CSJ (a role she held from 1989-1994), was that of Bulletin Editor. Initially it was just a newsletter informing members of organised events and meetings. It was typed and then printed off on a second-hand Gestetner which I helped Pat to operate. Shortly afterwards, the Confraternity debated the need for a used copier (Xerox) machine. All this office

equipment was kept in her East Finchley house, and all responses to Confraternity notices were sent direct to her home address. The CSJ did not yet have a formal office.

Pat often held gatherings in her house, including one memorable summer meeting of CSJ members, to which Liz Keay was invited. Liz was later to become the Bulletin production manager, a job she held for several years, while I was editor.

Pat attended – in fact, helped organise – almost all the early CSJ excursions and weekend trips, both in the UK and on the continent. Together with Marion Marples, she introduced me and many other members besides to the mysteries and history of pilgrimage in England and on the continent.

We took it as a badge of honour to ferret out any church, village, or institution with even the most remote connection with St James. In fact, trying to determine which



The Best of Bulletins 1 to 6, 1986

St James a church was dedicated to – St James the Great or the Less – became a priority task for the early members. In 1990, Pat wrote a superb paper – *St James in English Literature* – reflecting the preoccupations of the CSJ in the early years.

Pat was also very active in leading and organising walking pilgrimages in France. I was never able to join those continental groups, as I was involved with my professional work at the time, but by all accounts, they were excellent and introduced many a UK pilgrim to the delights of walking in rural France. Not only did she take pilgrims along French pilgrim paths, but she researched and wrote several pilgrim guidebooks. Her guide to *Camino Francés* has had over 15 editions, and in 2000, she wrote the *Pilgrim Guide to Camino Inglés*, with her husband Francis Davey.

Pat was one of the first enthusiasts for Rabanal, and active in fundraising for its restoration. For all her work in Spain and for the Camino, she was admitted to the Order of Isabela La Católica.

Years later, I was very touched when she invited me to her wedding. She kept up a correspondence with me on all major feasts and my birthday, even after moving to Exeter with her husband Francis Davey. I was always slightly in awe of her, and

so was very surprised when she asked Liz Keay and me for the results of our research in Malta, on the possible connections we may have found with St James and the fate of the icon of Philaremos.

Pat Quaife will be missed, and the debt that the CSJ owes to giants like her is almost unredeemable. We can only say “thank you,” and strive to do similarly.

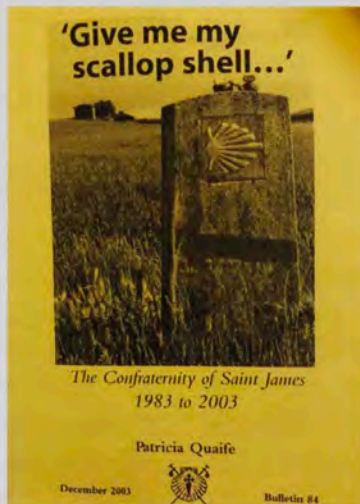
From William

Pat became the CSJ's first Secretary and first Bulletin Editor, and our third Chairman, following James Maple from 1989 to 1994.

In 2003 she wrote the first volume of the CSJ's History (1983 to 2003) with the title “Give me my scallop shell...” I am pleased to report that work is in hand on a second volume. In her introduction, Pat said that the history would be her last tribute to the Confraternity. In my preface I said that

I found that hard to believe! Of course, Pat did not disappoint us. Among much else that she did for us after 2003, I would single out the research she undertook with her husband Francis Davey, both in libraries and by travelling the routes, into the pilgrimages of the 15th century Englishman William Wey.

James Maple writes that “it is almost impossible to say anything adequate about Pat. She almost single-handedly got the CSJ off the ground. Her original ideas



Cover of ‘Give me my scallop shell...’

Recollections



CSJ pilgrims on the Camino Inglés in 1993

and Bulletins were fundamental. We were a small initial group (six at the founding meeting) but it was Pat and, of course, Marion Marples, who ensured that the CSJ grew steadily. Many of the ideas that are still vital to us were dependent on Pat and her encouragement, such as the Bulletin and Practical Pilgrim Days.” He even mentions the project to launch our first Refugio at Rabanal, though it was in James’s own Chairmanship that this project began.

Perhaps the most important of the CSJ pilgrimages she led was the pioneering one in 1993 on the Camino Inglés. We were the first English pilgrims there since the Reformation, so our departure, in pouring rain, from A Coruña was covered by Galician television. When we stopped later at a café, there was Pat on the TV, being interviewed.

I owe to Pat my own initiation in pilgrimage. Postponed for various reasons, in 1992 I was able to join a group of 11 led by Pat on the Le Puy route, from Conques to Moissac. Around Gréalou, we ran into a fierce storm and arrived sodden at a café, which was able to serve us a warming *soupe de pain*. Knowing Pat to be vegetarian, I pointed out that the soup seemed to be made with meat stock. Pat replied “William, I don’t wish to know that!”



Pat on Galician TV

From Jocelyn

The first thing I noticed about Pat was her attractive voice which like everything else about her was clear and distinctive. I was really surprised to learn that she had spent her teenage years in New Zealand as there was no trace of an antipodean accent. She said she had made a conscious effort to retain her Englishness because she had resented being uprooted and taken to the other side of the world.

Another aspect of Pat's personality had formed during her years in NZ. Born under the quiet, shy, retiring sign of Virgo, she was having none of it! She realised that particularly as a woman, if you didn't stick up for yourself, you were likely to be downtrodden. Pat was always in charge. If I stayed with her, I fitted in with her because I was the guest. If she stayed with us, I fitted in with her because she was the guest... Once at hers, there were strawberries. This must have been when I went to London for a St James Day celebration. She didn't like cream, so we ate them with fresh orange juice, I remember agreeing with her enthusiastically, though to me strawberries are a good excuse to eat cream galore.

Pat was a great correspondent, sender of postcards from all over. Every four years she would go round the world, visiting friends in many countries – notes on reused cards, frequently featuring cats, and rememberer of birthdays. Her writing was neat, regular and easy to read – no frills or flourishes as with other aspects of her personality. She was not flamboyant. She did not suffer fools gladly.

As Secretary, and later as Chair of the Confraternity, when she spoke at the AGM, it was clear, concise, no “ums” or “ahs.” She was also good at taking questions from the floor.

I took part in the Confraternity pilgrimage along the Camino Inglés from La Coruña to Santiago, led by Pat. I saw at first hand what a big responsibility it was for her to be sheepdog to a flock of about 15, particularly nerve-racking when public transport was involved.

I hope I haven't made Pat sound severe. Firm and fair would be a better description. She did have a sense of humour and if something amused her, she would burst out laughing. As I got to know her better, I also found that she was sensitive – a tremor in her voice when she spoke of sad events which had happened to people or pets she loved.

I was delighted when Pat said she had found a walking companion called Francis, and absolutely amazed when some years later that they were going to marry. I simply could not believe that Pat had met her match – a man who ticked enough of what must have been a long list of boxes to make her relinquish her independence, including an intellectual meeting of minds.

Where could they find common ground to set up home? Cornish Francis did not want to move east of Exeter. Pat did not want to move west of Exeter. That narrowed the search and they found an idiosyncratic house in a narrow street at the quiet end of Topsham, a delightful

Recollections

little town on the Exe between Exeter and Exmouth. My brother Paddy and I were honoured to be invited to the wedding attended by 35 guests at the Belvedere, a Strawberry Hill Gothic folly outside Exeter, commanding beautiful views, in April 2005 – a very happy occasion.

Living with Francis and the visiting neighbourhood cats mellowed Pat. No longer intimidating, I enjoyed our friendship more now less censorship was involved. I was also delighted that she and Francis went off exploring the world, including many cruises, to such exotic locations as Easter Island and Mauritius – more postcards. Then the news became less welcome. Pat had cancer. She documented the inexorable progress of the disease, sending long bulletins to her friends. I used to phone her and if she felt like talking, we'd chat. She very much wanted to reach her 80th birthday on August 25th, 2020 but sadly didn't quite make it, dying just 10 days before, but far more importantly, Francis was with her at the hospice.

Once again, I felt honoured to attend her funeral on September 4th, with William Griffiths, and Howard Nelson who had come all the way from Scotland. Sadly, the funeral was restricted to 30 by Covid regulations.

Pat gave so much to the Confraternity in time and talent, scholarship and skills. She is missed by many people, her colleagues and friends.

From Laurie

Pat Quaipe will be remembered as the

driving force behind the growth of the Confraternity in its first 15 years. Astonishingly, during that time, she also edited more than 65 issues of the Bulletin, got the CSJ's guidebook series off the ground, led the Research Working Party, and organised study tours in France and Spain. During its first few years, the CSJ spark was fanned by Pat's discreet personal subsidy. Without that, and the collective support of other early members, it would never have become the welcoming blaze around which so many of us gathered.

Just as Mary Remnant's house was given over to music, Pat's was given over to the Confraternity and the Camino. She was constantly alert to possible opportunities to foster interest in both, and carried on an ever-increasing correspondence with other enthusiasts all over the world. Thanks to that, the Confraternity could draw upon a wide range of speakers, from art historians to travel writers, and in turn – through Pat's close working friendship with the late Marion Marples, the public face of the CSJ for more than 30 years – it soon became the centre of Camino-related information in the UK and the English-speaking world.

Pat's dedication to the CSJ was total, and while she held office in it, she knew every member personally. Initially she produced the Bulletin six times a year, writing much of it herself, and as long as the membership was below 500, would address and post the envelopes too. Around 1990, by which time the Bulletin was being printed locally and delivered to Pat's home in sacks, the job had become too much, and I sometimes joined her for

an evening of “Bulletin stuffing.” Seated cross-legged on the floor, we would slide the copies into franked envelopes, stick on the address labels Pat had printed, seal them, and toss them back into the conveniently supplied sacks: Then, bent double, we would stagger to the postbox at the end of Leopold Road. By the time the membership had passed 1000, the Bulletin had become a quarterly and we were making two trips to the postbox, filling it to the point of overflow (and protest from the Post Office).

Such changes, multiplied across the range of CSJ activities, led to the decision to acquire an office and produce the Bulletin professionally, so those long evenings when Pat would talk about her life in New Zealand, her love of cats, and her travels (not just along the pilgrims roads of France, but cycling from Ankara to Jerusalem and camping at Mount Ararat) gave way to more creative uses of her time. This included the many walks she led for the CSJ, including her pioneering efforts to revive the Camino Inglés.

I last saw Pat in March 2019, when she and Francis were in Santiago at the end of a tour of Galicia’s wonderful camellia gardens. We met, fittingly, in the Hostal de Los Reyes Catolicos, that magnificent former pilgrim hospital, and raised a glass to the CSJ. How little did we know that Marion, Mary, Pat herself, and Alison, four of our brightest stars, would soon leave us. Our best collective tribute to them will be a CSJ that continues to reflect their gifts to it, and keeps its founding aims – scholarship, educational outreach, and service to pilgrims – uppermost in all it does.



Recollections

Dr Mary Remnant RIP



From Jocelyn

I first met Mary Remnant in Santiago de Compostela in July of Holy Year 1982. Mary was with various members of the Société des Amis de St Jacques de Compostelle, including Secretary Mlle Jeannine Warcollier. Mary had received a number of enquiries from the other side of La Manche for information about the pilgrimage and felt there was sufficient interest for a UK group to be set up.

She invited us to her Chelsea home on January 13, 1983, which turned out to be her birthday. Around the table in the large living room I recognised Robin Neillands who had also been in Santiago, having cycled from Le Puy. I was introduced to Pat Quaife who had cycled from Vézelay

in 1981, and Peter Johnson and Ian Dodds. We discussed possible names for the group. I remember being very impressed by Mary's enthusiasm, energy and willingness to take on more when she was obviously already extremely busy with recitals, research and teaching commitments.

Mary occasionally invited me to look after her house and cats while she was away, usually in Normandy. Mary adored cats and the trio I knew were siblings Ferdinand and Isabela, and Zooka, all beautiful tabbies. Mary took many photos of them and would then arrange the best into a Christmas card for her cat-loving friends.

All over the house were signs of St James, starting with the welcoming scallop shell at the front door. Best of all, in the bathroom there were large tiles above the bath and basin depicting landmarks along the Camino and Mary's journeys along it in her blue vehicle, covered with large stickers of many European destinations. I mourn her loss but am grateful for all she gave the Confraternity at its inception and subsequently. She was a loyal member and a generous contributor.

From Laurie

I knew of Mary long before I met her, since she taught music to the sons of friends and her latest travels and writings were often mentioned. When I finally did meet her, it was through the Confraternity. We always met in committee members' homes in the days before the CSJ had an office.



The founding meeting of the CSJ: right to left – Mary Remnant, Pat Quaipe, Robin Neillands, Jocelyn Rix, Peter Johnson and Ian Dodds

Mary's house was the very place in which the Confraternity was formed, and her delight and pride in that fact was ongoing. It was also a house filled to the brim with the evidence of creativity. Some of that creative exuberance seemed to find its way into our meetings, since this was the period when all our effort was going into increasing the membership, and ideas for events, speakers, and visits tumbled out of us, one after another. Some of the best events were Mary's own Camino-based lecture-recitals, which brought the medieval music of the pilgrim roads alive for London audiences.

I have many dear recollections of Mary, but her generosity of spirit supplies me with an anecdote that, while typical of her, may not be well known. Back in the 1990s, a Spanish friend who had met Mary in London bought a translation of

her *Western Musical Instruments* from El Corte Inglés. He then found, on speaking to Mary, that she had no contract with any Spanish publisher, so this was a pirate copy, an outright theft. Despite urging, she resisted taking legal action: perhaps the culprits had actually needed the proceeds? Eventually, and very much of two minds, she was persuaded to mention the matter to her lawyer – and some months later received a letter of apology and a cheque from the guilty publisher!

From William

Mary was renowned for a series of lecture-recitals in which she would herself play the replica instruments she had commissioned (which are to be preserved in the Horniman Museum). If vocal pieces were needed, Mary would convene the CSJ Choir. James Maple remembers that the king of Mary's instruments was the

Recollections



Poster for one of Mary's lecture-recitals



Mary playing the organistrum with Gillian Clarke at 11, Downing Street in 1995

organistrum, that two-man hurdy-gurdy copied from the carving in the Pórtico de la Gloria. Mary would invite the most distinguished member of the audience to turn the handle while she herself played the keys. On one occasion, in the Purcell Room, this was Graham Leonard, then Bishop of London.

In 1995, we performed at 11 Downing Street, in aid of Rabanal. The performance was at the invitation of CSJ member Gillian Clarke, wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mary was particularly fond of a 13th century text from Roncesvalles, a poem praising the welcome given there to

pilgrims. No mediaeval tune for this has survived, so Mary composed her own. It begins: "Domus venerabilis, domus gloriosa." Wishing to give her tune a wider circulation, I had the cheek to write an English version, which began: "Mary Remnant wrote a tune; it was so melodious. We sang it in the Purcell Room, which is so commodious...." Mary accepted this unscholarly musical tribute with her usual charm and grace.

From Gosia

Our 38-year friendship took me back down familiar paths – as a youngster I had lived in Fulham, only a few streets away from Mary, and like Mary, attended the local Servite parish church – and

along English country lanes, as when we pilgrimaged to Walsingham together. Not forgetting singing for her with the CSJ choir over many years, during her countless lecture-recitals. The last time the choir sang with Mary was during her 2016 Mass of Inauguration as a Papal Dame of the Order of Pope Gregory the Great, back in the familiar Servite church in Fulham.

Mary's interest in the Camino was due to several factors, and through her fascination with depictions of musical angels in early art and medieval carvings, she became an early promoter of ancient music. She was awarded a Churchill scholarship in 1967 and proceeded to research depictions of early medieval instruments found along the Camino. How she would have enjoyed the beauty of the restored Pórtico de la Gloria in Santiago Cathedral – although I am certain she is busy as I reminisce, photographing it from a much better vantage point than I can ever imagine.

She would often laugh at herself, and frequently asked us members of the CSJ choir for suggestions and/or help over problematic notation or pronunciation of ancient verses which we were about to sing. Now, when I think about it, I am truly amazed. How could we, a motley group of non-musicians, non-medievalists pilgrims – the majority of us having absolutely nothing to do with music or music-making, we just happened to enjoy singing early pilgrim songs as directed by Mary – ever have seriously been capable of discussing music with her? And yet we did, and we learnt so much from her, many times by default; by just listening

to her long digressions and stories and explanations, for which she was truly legendary.

Her enthusiasm for all things Camino went as far as commissioning hand-painted tiles depicting the various stages of Camino Francés, including one showing the Abbot of St Wandrille in Normandy blessing her car before she set off on her Camino research trip in 1967. She enjoyed driving and would return from France with her car customised with Camino stickers and badges from towns along the various pilgrimage routes from all over Europe. However, she was a bit of a reckless/speedy driver – and always had the side window rolled down – even during winter storms, which somewhat detracted from the pleasure of sitting next to her, unless you liked the cold.

Finally, Mary had a decidedly humorous side and loved to tell jokes and funny stories. It is no surprise therefore that in a book she wrote in 1978 on musical instruments, she concluded with a section on musical jokes and fooling around. The very last photograph in that book is a picture taken in 1976 of members of the Amadeus Quartet playing three vacuum-cleaners and a floor-polisher, in a work originally composed for the 1956 Hoffnung Music Festival. Mary combined her love of the Camino with music and a huge amount of joy: As she said, musical humourists give tonic to a world which needs to be revived. It needs that tonic now more than ever.

The Confraternity Choir

Dr Mary Remnant (1935-2020)

Reprinted from Bulletin No 61 pp 26 – 29 December 1997

Music has played an important part in the history of the Confraternity from its earliest days. When the six founder members met on January 13, 1983, they were entertained by the organistrum made in 1980 by Alan Crumpler and copied from the one sculpted at the top of the Pórtico de Gloria in Santiago Cathedral.

At the first general meeting on March 6th the members present sang Aimery Picaud's hymn "Ad honorem Regis summi" from the *Codex Calixtinus*. Since then that has almost become our signature tune, whether with its original words or with new ones written to celebrate special events. Some of the more memorable occasions when the original version was sung were:

- 1985 in Suso's bar at Santiago (to the consternation of the other customers who quickly vanished) and later outside the Cathedral at midnight, with Señor Ballesteros from the Tourist Office;
- 1986 unexpectedly in Santiago Cathedral when some French choirboys did not turn up to sing in a pilgrim service;
- 1987 on the Luxembourg Metro Station in Paris.

More formal occasions go back to July 6, 1983, when the present writer did a lecture-recital entitled "The Musical Road to Santiago de Compostela" for a confraternity meeting in the crypt of

St James's Church, Spanish Place. The audience joined in singing "Ad honore" when the journey arrived at Aimery Picaud's home town of Parthenay-le-Vieux.

The choir itself, however, originated when a special version of the programme was performed at our international conference at Hengrave Hall, Suffolk, on March 17, 1990. At appropriate points in the journey, pilgrim songs were sung in French, German and Spanish, and as no English one is known to survive, the English members sang "Sumer is icumen in," which comes from the abbey with Santiago connections at Reading.

Since then the nucleus of the Hengrave choir, together with later additions, has sung and played medieval instruments in many different versions of the programme, including one in 1990 in aid of the Rabanal Appeal in St Joseph's Hall at The London Oratory; several times over the years in the Purcell Room at London's South Bank; in 1995, at No. 11 Downing Street, by kind invitation of Gillian Clarke in the presence of H. E. the Spanish Ambassador and Señora de Aza, who together played the organistrum to accompany the choir.

Lecture-recitals with participation of the choir but on different subjects have included in 1995/6 "Minstrels in the Age of Rahere," about the 12th century

minstrel founder of St Bartholomew's Hospital and Priory. This was performed in the crypt of St Etheldreda's Church, in the Purcell Room, and in the church of St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield. In 1995, several members of the choir took part in the musical play *Rahere* and his vision of St Bartholomew by Patricia Wharton at the Mermaid Theatre, and later in 1996, at a concert of words and music concerning the history of the hospital at St John's, Smith Square. In 1997, the choir took part in a lecture-recital "Music in Florentine Art" for the centenary of St Philip's Servite Priory at Begbroke, Oxon.

Because the Confraternity Choir originated in a lecture-recital, that category of events has been considered fir St However, much more important are the occasions when the choir has been singing and playing directly in praise of God rather than indirectly through another context. These have included Mass at the Little Oratory, London, in 1991 to inaugurate the first stage of Paul Graham's pilgrimage to Jerusalem by penny-farthing bicycle in aid of a hospice; in 1993 at a special service in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, led by our member the Very Reverend David Stancliffe, then Provost of Portsmouth Cathedral but soon to become Bishop of Salisbury; in 1995 at the nuptial Mass in St Matthew's Church at Rowde, Wilts, following the marriage of Paul Graham to Helena Harwood; and in 1997 at the Mass at St James's Church, Castle Acre, Norfolk, during the weekend to celebrate the feast of St James, and several times at St James's Church, Spanish Place in London.

Besides these events there have been times when members of the choir were present and singing, although the choir as such was not involved, for example, in 1995, our member Professor Janet Nelson, now made a Dame of the British Empire, organised the Musical Road to Santiago de Compostela in the "Pilgrimage Day Colloquium" of the Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, together with the Confraternity, at King's College, London; or in 1995, when some members of the Confraternity visited Roncesvalles and sang our own musical setting of the ancient poem "*Domus venerabilis*," which describes the hostel there around 1200. Unhappily, the composer could not be present.

For about three months the choir has had a rest, but is about to wake up. By the time that this Bulletin comes out we will have had a rehearsal and party on the feast of St Cecilia and made plans for the future; which will include the Santiago lecture/recital for the Catholic Writer's Guild (The Keys) on March 17th, 1998.

Ultreia!



‘Give me my scallop shell...’

Pat Quaife

The following is an excerpt from Ms Quaife’s history of the CSJ, entitled ‘*Give me my scallop shell...*’ which is to be reprinted shortly.

A second volume for the years 2003-2023 is in hand.

According to William Griffiths, a former Chairman of the CSJ, “Among our founder members, Pat Quaife has served as Secretary, Chairman and Editor of the Bulletin, and many members of our Confraternity will find her prominent in their memories. I myself remember the detailed reply she sent me to my hesitant enquiry about membership, the welcome and good cheer at my first CSJ event, and her leadership of both my first visit to Santiago and my first steps as a walking pilgrim. Now Pat has given us “the past as a present,” to inform our present and inspire our future.”

Twenty years, a quarter of the average life-span or even one third of an adult life, is a good deal of time, however one looks at it. In terms of an organisation like the Confraternity of St James in which participation by members has always been a sine qua non, two decades of activity at the end of a century and the end of a millennium deserve to be recorded for posterity.

By happy chance – and quite unrelated to merit – I had the good fortune to be a founder member (1983), Secretary (1983 to 1988) and Chairman (1989 to 1994). Twelve years during which the Confraternity was central to my life and when I met and became friends with so many different and interesting people in this country and in the rest of Europe. Like other long-standing members, I have gained so much that not ‘giving something back’ to future pilgrims would be almost unnatural. I came to this history in 2002 after many years of editing the Bulletin and our Camino Francés guide, not to mention the rewarding and mainly fun-filled pilgrimages and visits to Spain, organised from 1985 to 1998. The history will be my last, and I hope lasting, tribute to the Confraternity. Writing it has not been easy, with so many events to record, pilgrimages to mention, people to remember, and decisions to be made on what to describe in detail and what to leave out for reasons of space. Inevitably some achievements have had to be omitted or a modest history would have swelled to encyclopaedic proportions

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Table of Contents of Quaife’s comprehensive history of the CSJ

(you may think it has already). If anyone feels they have not been given their due I beg forgiveness; no slight was intended. The seven chapters – with one exception – follow each other chronologically, from 1983 to 2003. The exception is the story of how the Refugio Gaucelmo came into being between 1987 and 1991. It deserved to be told in detail and would have overwhelmed any other chapter. Fittingly, as chapter 4, it stands at the centre of the history, preceded by the years 1983 to 1991 and followed by 1992 to 2002/3 – the jewel in the crown of the Confraternity. To long-standing members, I hope you will enjoy the recollections found in the earlier chapters, the events in which you participated, the history you helped to make. To newer members, I hope the account of the preceding 20 years will encourage you to explore the highways and byways of Europe's many pilgrim roads to Santiago de Compostela and to volunteer your services to help safeguard the future of the Confraternity for the next 20 years and beyond.

PAT QUAIFFE

Discovering the reasons for people joining the Confraternity, who or what influenced them, and their pre-1983 pilgrim activities and links, was always of interest in the early years, when the pilgrimage was little known. Before writing this history I contacted all the founder members and a selection of other early members who joined between 1983 and 1985, asking them about these points and also the reasons for their remaining as members for so many years. The answers were fascinating and are reproduced in full or in part in Appendix 1. Several people,

including Mollie Coviello, Marion Marples, Edwin Mullins, Pat QuaiFFE and Richard Reece learned of the pilgrimage in the 50s, 60s or early 70s through their academic studies or through a teaching contact. In turn a number of early members were influenced by books they had read in these decades including particularly Edwin Mullins's own book (and subsequent television programme), V. and H. Hell's *The Great Pilgrimage of the Middle Ages...* (1966), Walter Starkie's *The Road to Santiago...* (1957), Jonathan Sumption's classic study *Pilgrimage, an Image of Medieval Religion* (1975), as well as sources as diverse as the Michelin green guide to Spain and a Simenon detective story. Mary Remnant's lecture-recitals were also a source of knowledge and inspiration for members living all over the country. Family history or a family connection, or attendance at a St James church were also mentioned as were the influence of colleagues, travel and work in the travel trade. Once the Confraternity was well established, of course, there was more likelihood that new members applied partly or wholly because they had seen a reference to it in a travel book or article, had attended a well-publicized CSJ event, or had heard of it by word of mouth. The overwhelming reason given for remaining a member for up to 20 years was the success of the Refugio Gaucelmo project at Rabanal, which is the subject of Chapter 4....

...A landmark date in the CSJ calendar of events was that of Wednesday 6 July when Mary Remnant gave her Santiago lecture-recital specifically for the Confraternity, 'Medieval Minstrels on the

Camino Life

Road to Santiago de Compostela' in the crypt of St James Church, Spanish Place, London W1. Over 70 people were present, including nearly all the London members and their friends as well as Monsignor Frederick Miles, parish priest of St James, and John Wilkins, editor of *The Tablet*. Included in the slides was a selection of those Mary had taken on the Reading Abbey visit in May, thus giving a personal touch to the evening for some members of the audience. Towards the end of the performance copies were distributed of the words of two hymns from the twelfth-century *Codex Calixtinus* (or *Liber Sancti Jacobi*), 'Dum Paterfamilias' and 'Ad houorem Regis summi', which were enthusiastically sung by all present. In later years, with practice at subsequent lecture-recitals, some of these singers became the mainstay of the Confraternity Choir, performing far and wide under Mary's expert guidance....

...Two more CSJ events brought 1983 to a close. On 22 October, an 'information meeting' was held in the Small Hall at St James, Spanish Place, with three very different – and entertaining – speakers: Edwin Mullins, whose readers were delighted to see (and hear) the author in the flesh, George Grant, our first pilgrim, and Dr David Thomas of the University of Bristol who was also a 1983 pilgrim, having cycled from St Malo. In contrast, on Sunday 11 December, a London Churches meeting was organized by Marion Marples (by now responsible for Confraternity publicity) with visits to St James, Garlickhythe in the City of London and St James, Spanish Place. This was the first of many occasions when

the two Jameses were present: James Maple, a very new member attending his first meeting, and James Hatts, at two and three-quarters, a Confraternity veteran. Both would make significant contributions to the Confraternity in the future. They were promptly christened James the Great(er) and James the Less. For the first time also Marian's formidable organising skills came into play, as she first shepherded us on to the right bus from the City to the West End and then escorted us to one of the rare places open for tea on a Sunday afternoon.

The year ended with some 85 members enrolled, many of whom had come to know each other through Confraternity events. Whether people had done the pilgrimage or not there already existed a strong sense of fellowship, goodwill and shared interest in St James and the pilgrimage to Santiago.



An Autumn Walk Along St Augustine's Way

Priscilla White

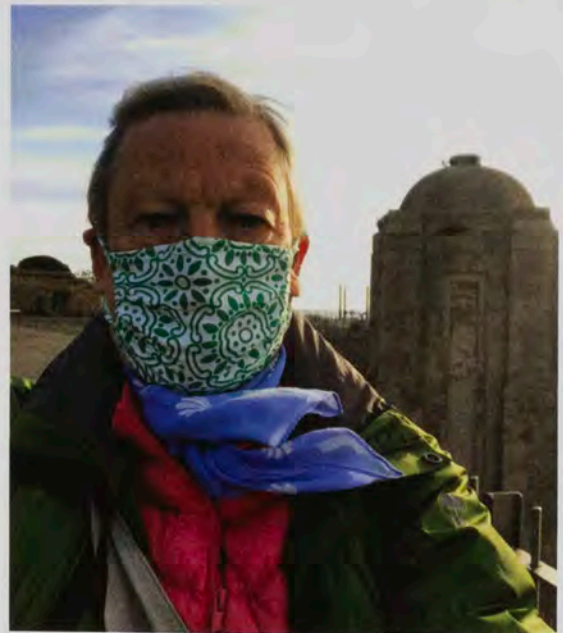
A bit of background history: Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) wished to convert the heathen tribes of Northern Europe to Christianity, and despatched St Augustine to carry out his mission. Augustine set off for England, but was so worried about the fierce reputation of the English that he and his forty monks begged to return to Rome. However, the Pope was determined that Augustine should persevere, and in AD597 Augustine landed at Ebbsfleet (near Ramsgate) on the Isle of Thanet to begin his ministry.

He was aided by Queen Bertha, a Frankish princess who was already a Christian. She persuaded her husband King Ethelbert of Kent to meet Augustine. This meeting took place in the open air, as the King was fearful about the possibility of witchcraft. Fortunately, Augustine made such a good impression on the Kentish King that he gave him the old Roman church of St Martin, named after the saint of Tours where Bertha originated and where she worshipped. This is the oldest continually used church in the English-speaking world.

The great abbey of St Augustine was built on land between St Martin's and the city walls, and until the Reformation would have rivalled the cathedral in size and importance. Little of it now remains, apart from the stone walls, following the destruction of the monasteries in the 16th century.

One of the reasons for following St Augustine's Way, apart from its historical and spiritual significance, is that in order to gain a Compostela when walking the Camino Inglés, which I hope to do in the spring of 2021 unless prevented by Covid restrictions, you need to walk at least 20 km in your home country. St Augustine's Way is some 30 km from Ramsgate to Canterbury, so fits the bill well, and where better to arrive than at Canterbury Cathedral, where Augustine became its first archbishop?

Here is the starting point of the Way. This picture shows the corner of Pugin's house, the Grange, where he lived with his family next door to the Chapel he



Setting forth on a windy October day with mask in place and endless layers to keep out the cold and rain.

Camino Life

designed and built in the mid-19th century in the Gothic style. It is in this house he designed the present House of Lords after the mediaeval Palace of Westminster burnt down in October 1834. You can get a stamp for your credential from the Pugin Centre before you set off along St Augustine's Way.

As you leave the town of Ramsgate behind, you walk along the cliff top down and round to Pegwell Bay with magnificent views over the Channel. The shore is an important bird sanctuary, with scores of wading birds poking about in the mudflats – redshanks, shelducks, oystercatchers, a little egret, and a lone curlew. Seals bask on the strip of land in the distance. A man is digging for lugworms out on the flats, using a wooden contraption to stop him sinking into the mud.



Pegwell Bay



The Hugin

You pass through Pegwell village with its two adjacent pubs. One of them, the Belle Vue Tavern, boasts a long history of smugglers with their contraband hidden in nearby caves. It reminds me of Kipling's *A Smuggler's Song* – "Brandy for the Parson, 'Baccy for the Clerk."

The cliff path follows the contours of the bay until you reach the village of Cliffsend. Perched above the cliff is a replica Viking ship, "The Hugin," a reconstructed longship that sailed from Denmark to Thanet in 1949, as a gift from the Danish government to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of the arrival of Hengist and Horsa, leaders of the Anglo-Saxon invasion, at nearby Ebbsfleet. (King Ethelbert was a descendent of Hengist.)

Leaving the village, you turn inland and shortly reach St Augustine's Cross, set by the side of the road near a golf course. An undistinguished setting for such an important moment in history. St Augustine's Cross was commissioned in 1884 by the Earl of Granville, at that time Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. He was



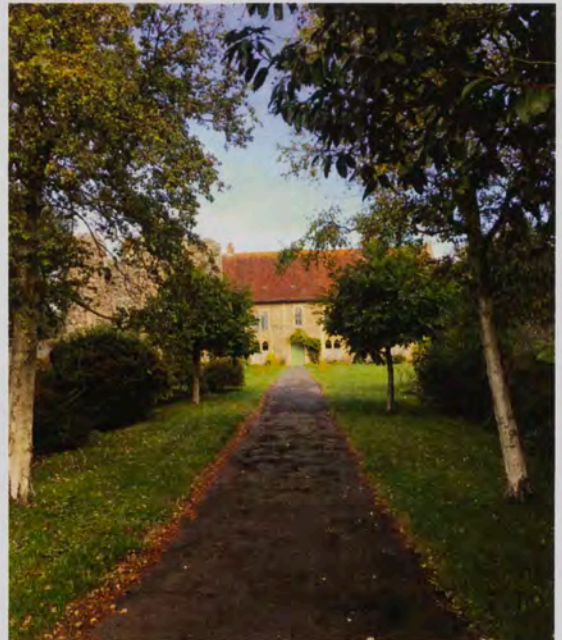
St Augustine's Cross

inspired to erect it after a massive oak, known as the Augustine Oak, was felled in a storm; according to legend it was under this tree that Augustine converted King Ethelbert and baptised him in a nearby stream (the Stour) that was afterwards known as St Augustine's Well. Tradition holds that the baptism was carried out on Whit Sunday AD597. The cross is carved in the early Christian style, modelled on the 8th century stone crosses at Sandbach in Cheshire. It stands quietly by the side of the road with farmland behind.

Following along the river for a mile or so, you cross over the railway line and walk through fields along a footpath until you reach the village of Minster and Minster Abbey, founded by Domneva of Kent in AD670. She was succeeded by her daughter Mildred, a much loved prioress who became the patron saint of Thanet (her feast day is July 23th). The abbey was largely destroyed in the 16th century, during Henry VIII's Reformation. St

Mildred's Priory, adjacent to the abbey, is now owned and run by Benedictine nuns who escaped from Germany in the war and set up their convent here in Minster. You can visit the abbey in the afternoon and services are held there on a Sunday, in normal Covid-free times. At the moment, it is closed to all visitors.

Just down the road from the abbey stands the church of St Mary the Virgin, with the original building dating from AD670. Rebuilt by the Saxons and enlarged by the Normans, the present building dates from 1150 and the nave has remained in its present form since that date. You can see St Augustine's stone that he is said to have used when he preached. Traditionally called the "Cathedral of the Marshes," it is a beautiful church with a great sense of peace and tranquillity set in village once on the edge of the Wantsum Channel. A lovely spot to sit and reflect awhile and get a stamp for your credential.



St Mildred's Priory



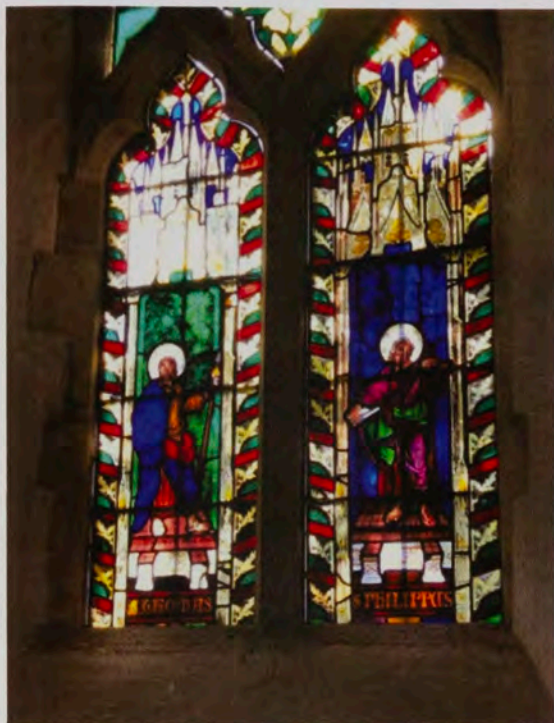
Church of St Mary the Virgin, also known as "The Cathedral of the Marshes"

After stamping my credential and offering me a cup of coffee, the Rev Richard Braddy, vicar of St Mary's, joined me for a way. He filled me in on the local history and showed me the path down to the River Stour. The hedgerows were full of berries, both hips and haws and dark purple sloes. A kestrel hovered overhead and pair of swans with their cygnets glided by along the stream at the side of the path. Up to the right, at the edge of the field, is the Abbots Wall, a mediaeval earthwork to stop the water from flooding into Minster during heavy rain. In St Augustine's day, the land would have been under water, so he would have sailed towards Canterbury across the Wantsum Channel.

The path follows the river, and ahead of me on a stubby bush sat a stonechat with his mate; they flittered ahead of me as I approached them. Cormorants were drying their wings on a large tree by the river and a solitary marsh harrier quartered the ground looking for small prey. Richard left me to return home and I continued on to the hamlet of Pluck's Gutter, apparently named after a Dutch drainage engineer called Ploeg, which is Dutch for plough. The Dutch were renowned for digging ditches and draining the marshes to create farmland. The rain set in just as I arrived at the Dog and Duck pub, and as my boots were muddy and my jacket was dripping, I ate my packed lunch on a bench outside the pub. The friendly waitress braved the rain to bring me a drink and stamp my credential. I could see spire of the church at Stourmouth ahead of me as I walked by the side of the river in the afternoon. The path was muddy after all the rain, but the walking is easy underfoot and I made good time.

I soon reached the small village of West Stourmouth, with its ancient and beautiful Anglo-Saxon church of All Saints. It is no longer in use as a place of worship but open to visitors and is worth a visit to look at the beautiful stained glass windows. The sun came out at this point so I sat on the bench to enjoy a few minutes sunning myself. You can book a night in the church for the experience of "champing."

From West Stourmouth, you continue along a well-trodden path by the river bank until you reach Grove Ferry, so called because it was used to ferry traffic across the Great Stour. The Grove Ferry



Anglo-Saxon Church of All Saints: Stained glass window showing saints Philip and Thomas.



The Grove Ferry Inn

Inn is a converted manor house set by the river and looking over Stodmarsh. In earlier times it held the rights to the ferry crossing and farmed 17 acres of lavender, creating a popular day trip destination, as there was a railway station nearby. You can't get a stamp but you can spend the night, and it is a good place to end the first part of your journey. I ended my first day's journey here and took the bus back home.

Retracing my bus journey of yesterday, I returned to Grove Ferry to complete the walk to Canterbury.

For this second part of the journey, I was joined by a fellow CSJ member, Dominic Kempson, who lives nearby. The weather was warm and sunny and made for a pleasant day's walking along the banks of

the river Stour. Small boats chug up and down the river taking advantage of the good weather.

Autumn berries glowing bright red in the sunshine along the path through Stodmarsh. This is a particularly beautiful part of the Way to Canterbury and you feel you are walking through history as you follow the old paths towards the village of Stodmarsh. Leaving the marsh, you walk through a car park used by walkers and bird watchers, and up a track to the hamlet of Stodmarsh with its small flint stone church of St Mary's originally built in the 12th century. The church was open, as the verger was doing the flowers for the altar. Although the church doesn't have a stamp, the verger kindly signed and dated my credential.

Camino Life



Early morning view of the Stour at the edge of Stodmarsh, once farmed by the monks of St Augustine's Abbey in the Middle Ages and now home to rare birds and butterflies.



Belted Galloway cattle grazing in the distance: together with the Konik ponies help to keep the pastures cropped in this wild life haven.



At St Mary's strange looking crossbeams support the bell turret and are believed to be unique in Kent.

Ahead is The Red Lion, a 15th century pub where you can eat a meal and spend the night. A good place to stay if you are bird watching on the marsh, or another place to break your journey to Canterbury.

We continued on to the top of the hill and climbed over a stile into a muddy field. The path was unclear at this point and once we had left the field we found ourselves walking down the winding road to Fordwich, somehow missing the footpath that leads through the woods to the town. No harm done, but a path through the autumn woodland would have been preferable to the road.

The town of Fordwich boasts of being the smallest in Britain. We stopped to eat our lunch on the bench in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin. Unfortunately, the



As we climbed the hill out of Stodmarsh along a quiet country lane surrounded by fields with the river meandering below us, we came across these tempting apples but reluctantly left them in the box as there was insufficient room in our knapsacks.

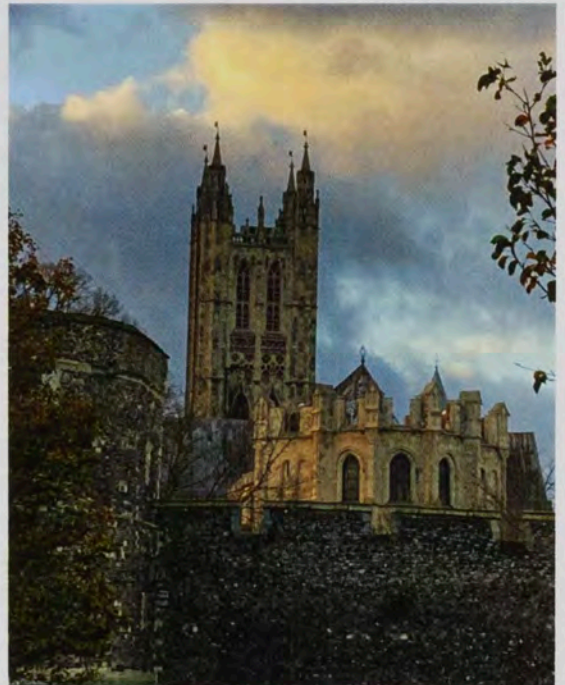
church was closed. Shakespeare's plays were performed in the Town Hall here during his lifetime, and actors use the upper room of the mediaeval hall to this day.

We crossed the bridge and turned left to follow the river into Canterbury. A wooden fingerpost directs you along the path through water meadows and woodland until you reach the outskirts of Canterbury, passing by the church of St Martin, used by St Augustine, with the agreement of King Ethelbert, when he arrived in Canterbury to begin his mission.

As you pass by the abbey, you come across the statue of Queen Bertha walking down Lady Wootton's garden. Her husband is beckoning her to join him after she has attended Mass at St Martin's.



Autumn colours by the river Stour. Before the bridge was built, this is where the river was forded, hence the name of the town.



This is a particularly beautiful view of the Cathedral standing high above the city walls, with the Caen stone glowing in the late afternoon light as you cross over the road and walk down Burgate to the main entrance.

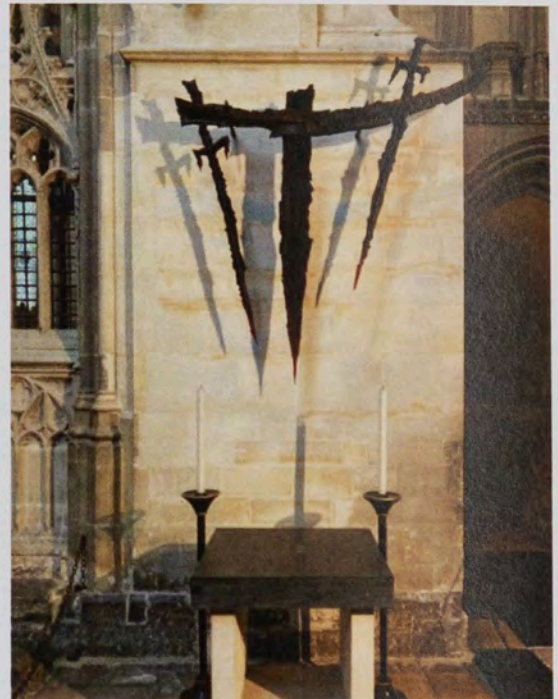
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Arriving at the Cathedral, credential in hand with my fellow pilgrim, Dominic Kempson.

The Cathedral precincts are closed at the moment and the front of the building is covered in scaffolding whilst restoration works are carried out. There was a long queue of visitors waiting to enter via a side entrance. My credential was stamped and we were welcomed into the cathedral. I had completed the 20 km required for my Compostela.

We sat for a while in the main body of the cathedral, contemplating the journey from Ramsgate to Canterbury and feeling very much part of the history of earlier times with past centuries seeming very present as we followed in St Augustine's footsteps.



The site of St Thomas à Becket's martyrdom with the arresting sculpture by Giles Blomfeld above the altar stone representing the knights' four swords; two swords and two shadows.

In the Footsteps of St Patrick: Walking the St Patrick's Way

Michael Kenning

Since 2014, I have found that walking a section of the Camino each year has become a much anticipated and essential part of my lifestyle. Each trip allows me to press reset in my life, recharge my batteries, seek God, pray, have time out with friends, and appreciate the simple pleasures of fresh air and exercise. This is especially welcome as I spend my working life indoors, treating patients in a clinical setting. Having a scheme for my next Camino trip(s) and the planning and research involved in advance, gives me something to focus on in the midst of the mundane!

My plans for 2020 were no different. The New Year dawned with a plan to walk the Camino Inglés in April already in an advanced stage of development. Flights were booked, friends invited and an itinerary had been drafted that involved walking from Ferrol to Hospital de Bruma and then traveling by bus back to Coruña to walk from there to Santiago. And then Covid struck, and Ireland along with the rest of the world went into lockdown. If you had told me that I would live to see a year when St Patrick's Day was cancelled and the pubs in Ireland closed, I wouldn't have believed you!

At first I didn't panic; maybe lockdown would finish before the end of April, and then, when that didn't happen, well at least I could defer our flights to the end of August and go then, surely? Meanwhile,

the news of the rising infection rates in Spain made this seem less and less likely.

There was a moment of excitement in early July, when the Irish government announced a green list of countries to which Irish citizens could travel, only to dash hopes the next day by pointing out that people would have to quarantine for two weeks upon return. As a Public Sector worker, I just couldn't afford the unpaid leave this would involve, and would it have been sensible anyway?

By early August it was abundantly clear that the Camino Inglés would not be happening this year and our flights were soon cancelled by Aer Lingus. At least I got my money back. But what to do now? I couldn't even travel to Great Britain to walk from Winchester to Canterbury (another of my many plans). I was restricted to the island of Ireland for the foreseeable future. While I love living in Ireland, in my experience, Irish long-distance walks can lack infrastructure and that indefinable sense of "pilgrimage," one of the things I love about walking the Camino.

It was while I was feeling depressed at the thought of a whole year without a pilgrimage that a friend, Alex Cupples, stepped in with a new suggestion; why didn't we walk the St Patrick's Way in Northern Ireland?

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The St Patrick's Way is a pilgrim trail developed a few years ago by Alan Graham, a veteran of Alpine and Arctic expeditions. It stretches 132 km / 82 miles (although we actually walked 162 km / 100 miles) and was designed to take in locations associated with the life and ministry of St Patrick and to emulate the Camino de Santiago in an Irish setting, through the provision of a pilgrim passport. The Way starts at Navan Fort (Emain Macha), the ancient capital of Ulster, just outside Armagh City, and finishes at Downpatrick, the traditional burial place of St Patrick, following the route of the Newry Canal and crossing over the beautiful mountains of Mourne along the way.

It turned out to be an inspired suggestion, and plans were quickly made. I decided to organise a parish pilgrimage with a few young men from my Church of Ireland (Anglican) parish of Carrigrohane, Cork, and Christ Church Bray, Co Wicklow. Alex

“It was while I was feeling depressed at the thought of a whole year without a pilgrimage that a friend, Alex Cupples, stepped in with a new suggestion; why didn't we walk the St Patrick's Way in Northern Ireland?”

and three other friends, none of whom had done a pilgrimage before, agreed to walk with us and form a bubble: Jonathan Stanley (my daughter's boyfriend), Tiarnán Healy, and Nzube Mekah – a Nigerian friend studying for a Master's Degree in Cork.

The walk took us seven days. We set off on August 20th for our first Irish pilgrimage. I was excited to walk in the footsteps of St Patrick and think more about our national saint. His life has become obscured by legends and even modern festivities, but we peeled back the layers as we walked, coming a bit closer to the real man and Ireland's ancient rich Christian heritage.

St Patrick was born sometime in the 5th century. According to his own autobiographical *Confessions*, he was Romano-British, born somewhere in Britain, maybe in Cumbria or perhaps in Wales? He was the grandson of a deacon in the Church. Aged 16, he was captured by slave traders and brought to Ireland, where he worked as an animal herder, either on the slopes of Croagh Patrick in Co. Mayo, or perhaps less likely, on Slemish Mountain in Co. Antrim.

While a slave in Ireland, Patrick says he sought God seriously for the first time, due the deprivations he suffered. When, after six years, he managed to escape and return to his family, he trained as a priest. Some years later, he states that he had a vision, in which an angel called Victoricus came to him and handed him a letter entitled *The Voice of the Irish* and he heard the voice of the Irish saying, “We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come

and walk among us.” Obedient to the vision, he returned to Ireland as a bishop to minister mainly in the north and west of Ireland.

We started our Day 1 walk at Navan Fort (Emain Macha), walking through Armagh City and out the other side, as far as Clare Glen near the town of Tandragee. The distance was about 26 km, but my phone ran out of charge before the end, so my tracker data was incomplete.

Emain Macha is the ancient capital of Ulster and is situated 5 km outside the present city of Armagh. A royal site in pre-Christian Ireland, it is named after Macha, goddess of war and fertility. It is the setting for Iron Age Celtic epics that were written down in the 7th century by Irish monks, such as the Táin (*The Cattle Raid of Cooley*) and the Ulster Cycle. Archaeology has revealed a large timber pagan temple which, although ritually burned before St Patrick’s time, shows the importance of the site for pagan worship. In the surrounding ritual landscape, evidence has been revealed of sacrificial victims who were thrown into local lakes. This is the spiritual atmosphere that Patrick had to confront as he entered the area.

In AD 445, Patrick persuaded a local chieftain to give him the nearby hill of Ard Macha (the high place of Macha) from which Armagh gets its name and on that site he built a timber church. The 14th century Church of Ireland Cathedral is its successor on the same site and this is the origin of today’s city. There is an excellent multimedia visitor

centre at Navan Fort, but due to Covid an advanced booking was needed and we had forgotten to do this.

Emain Macha and Armagh continued to have significance in the early medieval period. In 1005, the High King of Ireland, Brian Boru, symbolically camped at Emain Macha and laid a gift of gold on the cathedral altar, recognising Armagh’s pre-eminent ecclesiastical status. In 1014, Brian defeated the Vikings at the battle of Clontarf, but was then slain by his rivals while at prayer. After the battle and his remains were brought to Armagh for burial.

The first day’s walking was diverse, and there were many points of interest – Bronze and Iron Age history at Emain Macha, the Georgian architecture of Armagh City, woodland walks through shaded glens, the landscape of gentle glacial drumlins with mixed arable and livestock farming, and hedgerows full of late summer fruit and flowers. Due to Covid, the Church of Ireland Cathedral in Armagh was closed, although it does have a beautiful walled garden in its grounds and here we said our daily office, did our bible readings, and prayed. The beautiful and impressive twin-spired Catholic Cathedral was open, however, and we greatly enjoyed its sublime interior.

The way was well signposted, and at points along the walk we collected the three stamps we needed to emboss the pilgrim passports we had obtained at Navan Fort. Finding the stampers added an orienteering quality to our walk, as some of them were placed on walls in

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obscure locations, which only added to the fun! The passport booklet and map created by Tourism Northern Ireland details the route of the walk and the location of each stamper.

The walk on Day Two (28.9 km) was a journey through Ulster's industrial past, as we walked from Tandragee to Newry along the disused Newry Canal, the oldest summit level canal in Britain and Ireland, built between 1731 and 1741 for the purpose of transporting coal from Coalisland in Co. Tyrone, across Lough Neagh and down the canal from near Portadown to Newry. The walk was a long one and the last hour into Newry did seem like it would never end! There was also fairly heavy rain for the first half of the walk. Nevertheless, the sun came out and we really enjoyed walking beside the canal on the old towpath, which is now part of the National Cycle Path network.

On Day Three (22.6 km), we walked from Newry to Rostrevor through the lower slopes of the Mourne mountains. It rained the entire day during the walk, so our ponchos and waterproofs saw good service! While walking in a poncho keeps you dry in a general sense, I find that it's a bit like walking in a mobile sauna, and the sweat inside nearly matches the rain outside. Nevertheless, we kept in good spirits and in the end, Rostrevor seemed to arrive quicker than expected.

We had started the day by examining Newry city centre and especially enjoyed the Catholic cathedral, where we stopped to pray for a few minutes. Nearby are the partial remains of Bagnel's Castle – a rare

surviving 16th century fortified manor house thought to have been destroyed in the 18th century, but found still standing within the walls of a 19th century bakery! Now restored, it acts as a visitor's centre, which of course was also closed due to pandemic restrictions.

Rostrevor is a lovely old seaside town with charming 18th and 19th century buildings which lends it an especially quaint atmosphere that reminds me of the English Lake District. Its heyday was the Edwardian period and the Christian writer C.S. Lewis had many childhood holidays in the area. The landscape was an inspiration for his Narnia Chronicles.

Day 4 (19.9 km) involved a walk into the Mourne mountains from Rostrevor to Spelga Dam. The weather was dry and pleasant for nearly the entire walk with only a few light showers. The trail was very picturesque and nearly entirely off-road on gravel tracks and only became arduous when we had to cross sections of boggy ground. The walk started in the wooded surroundings of Kilbroney Park with views of Carlingford Lough at Rostrevor. We then ascended into pine woods which gave way to a small valley interspersed with fields and scattered stands of Scots Pine. The final section brought us into open moorland - over a ridge, around Hen mountain and up to Spelga Dam.

Day Five (25.8 km) saw us walk from the mountains back down to the sea, probably our most enjoyable day of walking on the pilgrimage. The day started at Spelga Dam, and there was a stiff ascent of

Spaltha mountain, then on to our highest point at Slievenamuck (491m). From there onwards, the path began its long descent to the sea at Newcastle, Co. Down. By evening we found ourselves walking along the seashore at Murlough Nature Reserve.

The final descent into Newcastle was through Tollymore Forest Park, an 18th century demesne created by James Hamilton, the 4th Earl of Clanbrassil in the 1770s and full of neo-gothic follies, including a hermitage that the earl built in a ravine above the Shimna River as a memorial to his friend, John Montagu, the Marquess of Monthermer. As we walked through Tollymore I was flooded with childhood memories of all the times I had walked these paths with my late parents. It made me feel emotional, but also very grateful for my mum and dad. Tollymore has also gained fame more recently as a filming venue for *Game of Thrones*. The day was rounded off with a visit to a Balti restaurant and the required ice cream from Morelli's, a local institution and an essential part of any visit to Newcastle. We finished the day after dinner, walking along the beach to Murlough at dusk, looking back at the silhouette of Northern Ireland's highest mountain, Slieve Donard (named after St Patrick's disciple St Domanghart who had a prayer cell on the summit) and the twinkling lights of Newcastle.

On Day Six (12.8 km), another named storm – Storm Francis – hit Northern Ireland in the early hours of the morning. We had a leisurely breakfast while we waited for the weather to improve and set off later than usual. Despite all the chaos

elsewhere, we somehow managed to have a lovely day's walking, as the worst of the weather had passed by late morning. We had second breakfast of raspberry scones and coffee at Newcastle, then continued our walk from Murlough Nature Reserve through a peaceful estuarine landscape to Dundrum. The air was full of the shrill piping of oystercatchers, the "pee-whit" of lapwings, and the bubbling cadence of curlews. Little egrets fed on the mud flats as the tide receded.

At Dundrum we had a frugal pilgrim lunch; I had oysters followed by crispy whitebait, washed down with a fine local elderflower cider, while Tiarnán tackled some excellent langoustines. The bill for all of us was only £25 and not for the first time, we proposed a toast to the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, for his *Eat Out To Help Out* Covid relief scheme. It's difficult fasting from rich food on a pilgrimage with such an offer!

Dundrum itself has an interesting history. John de Courcy, the Norman adventurer founded a castle here in 1177 and King John sent Henry de Lacy to besiege it in 1210, when de Courcy grew too big for his boots. It was destroyed by Cromwell's army in 1652. Isambard Kingdom Brunel's S.S. Great Britain ran aground in Dundrum Bay in the 19th century. We left the village walking along the old route of the Belfast and Co. Down railway, then walking around the top of the lagoon that lies in front of Dundrum, before heading down to Ballykinlar, passing the old army firing range to finish the day by enjoying the storm-tossed waves at Tyrella beach.

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Tyrell Beach with Mourne Mountains in the background

Our final day (25.7 km) involved walking from Tyrella to Downpatrick. We were surprised as we walked along a country lane to hear the squawks of macaws and parrots, and stopped to admire a hyacinth-coloured macaw in an aviary in the front garden of a bungalow. The owner appeared and invited us into his house. It turned out that he bred the birds and we were astonished to see in his back garden a large collection of aviaries with macaws, cockatoos, and lorikeets, as well as chicks in incubators in various states of development. Not what you expect to see in rural Co. Down!

Further north, we stopped to examine Ballynoe stone circle, a complex neolithic monument, 33 m in diameter with 2 m high stones. It was built about 4,000BC and seems to include an Early Bronze Age burial, where pottery and

the cremated remains of two female individuals were found. We moved on to our final goal, Downpatrick Cathedral, the tower of which could be seen from the stone circle but had to take shelter under a cherry tree from a deluge of rain during the final leg into the city.

Arriving in Downpatrick, we called in at the Visitor's Centre, obtained the final stamps on our pilgrim passports, and registered for our certificates. The Director of the Centre, Dr Tim Campbell, greeted us enthusiastically, taking our details and photographing us. According to Tim, there were quite a few people walking the pilgrim route last year, but far fewer in 2020 due to Covid. The Centre has been trying to promote itself as a "staycation" alternative pilgrimage to the Camino de Santiago.



At St Patrick's Grave

Leaving the centre, we walked up to Downpatrick Cathedral to visit the grave of St Patrick. He died in AD 461. The stone marking his grave was placed

“It was moving to pray together at the grave of St Patrick, and realise all that we had experienced and achieved together over the previous seven days of walking.”

beside the cathedral in the 20th century, replacing an earlier broken high cross which had originally marked the site. The Irish annals say that although Armagh was the more exalted ecclesiastical site, an angel appeared to Patrick in a vision, telling him that he should be buried at Downpatrick. This may actually have been a politically motivated decision as the opposing kingdoms of Uladh, based at Downpatrick, and Airghillia based at Armagh, almost went to war over Patrick's body. St Brigid and St Columba may also be possibly buried at Downpatrick.

It was moving to pray together at the grave and realise all that we had experienced and achieved together over the previous seven days of walking. We finished the day at Saul Church near Downpatrick, where the Right Reverend David McClay, the Anglican bishop of Down and Dromore,

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Michael Kenning With Bishop David McClay at Saul Church

kindly agreed to meet us to mark the end of our parish pilgrimage.

The name Saul is from the Irish “sabhal,” meaning barn. Here in AD432, St Patrick landed after sailing up the Slaney River, when he returned to Ireland as a bishop. Dichu, a local chieftain, tried to set his dog on St Patrick’s party, but Patrick prayed for protection and the dog immediately went silent. So impressed was Dichu, that he became a Christian and gave Patrick his barn where the saint built his first church on Irish soil.

We really enjoyed meeting Bishop David McClay. He spent a long time talking to us, and we were impressed how, despite his busy schedule (he had already visited 11 churches around his diocese that day!), he took the time to ask each of us about our personal journeys and listened carefully to what each of us had to say. It was wonderful to have him pray for us

at the end of our meeting and pronounce a benediction over us. The sense of the Holy Spirit was almost palpable and it was a fitting end to our pilgrimage to be prayed over by one of Patrick’s spiritual successors.

So I didn’t get to walk on the Camino this year, but strangely enough, I am glad, because Covid forced me to take a closer look at the cultural, spiritual, and scenic riches of my own land and be grateful for them.

Michael Kenning has walked the Camino Francés, the Finisterre circuit, and the Voie d’Arles / Camino Aragonés from Pau to Santa Maria de Eunata. For more information on St Patrick’s Way visit www.walkni.com

A History or Mystery: St Thomas à Becket and St James

Olivia Pittet

What an unlikely pairing! Why would anyone want to couple St Thomas à Becket and St James? For me, this happened while I was looking for another medieval pilgrimage trail to walk, having already happily covered much of the Camino on a series of walking tours. My husband Michael and I settled on Canterbury, this time in an English-speaking country, and about half the length. To test the waters, we decided to start with the final 40 or so miles on the North Downs Way and the Pilgrims Way from Rochester to Canterbury in the summer of 2020. Little did we know that our plans would be Covid-cancelled before they'd barely begun.

I had fondly envisioned a chapter in a possible second book entitled something like "In my end is my beginning," taken from the poetry of T. S. Eliot, author of the verse-drama *Murder in the Cathedral*, about Becket's martyrdom. So, while waiting in social isolation to reschedule our trip, I started reading more about Becket. Unexpectedly, I found myself harking back to the Camino and St James, while trying to disentangle the threads of history and mystery that weave together their separate lives.

"Why would anyone want to couple St James with St Thomas à Becket?"

Both Becket and St James are linked with two of the most popular pilgrimage destinations in medieval Christendom, the Way of St James (or the Camino) to Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain, and the Pilgrims Way to Canterbury in southeast England. The end-stops of both these pilgrimages are their respective shrines, St James's in Santiago de Compostela and Becket's in Canterbury cathedral. But they each got there by two very different routes.

St James was one of Jesus's twelve apostles in first-century Galilee. His travels in Spain, both in life and in death, take him far beyond the confines of the biblical record, on a journey shrouded in mystery, into strange legendary worlds bordering on the supernatural. Becket, on the other hand, was an internationally recognized public figure, known to most of the leading players of his day. His career trajectory, in the service of the Angevin king, Henry II, is one of the most highly documented of the medieval period. The only real mystery that may attach to Becket is a still-enduring one, the nature of his martyrdom.

Becket, the ambitious son of Norman merchants who settled in London after the



The murder of Thomas à Becket – stained glass, Canterbury Cathedral (Credit: Chris Beckett, Flickr)

Conquest, was a successful social climber with a meteoric rise into the elite ranks of the aristocratic ruling class. Serving first as a clerk in the household of Theobald, an earlier archbishop of Canterbury, Becket came to the King's attention and became his chancellor, personal friend to some extent, and right-hand man. Later, Henry appointed him archbishop of Canterbury, where he hoped, futilely as it turned out, that Becket would continue to function as his loyal and trusty servant in the interests of the crown.

James and his brother John aspired to quite another sphere of entitlement. They petitioned Jesus: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory" (Mark 10:37). Jesus's response to this uncomprehending, self-aggrandizing pair was "... to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall

be given to them for whom it is prepared" (Mark 10:40), thereby making it plain that shattering this particular cerulean ceiling was not on the cards.

Both men came to a sticky end: In death, however, both rose to new heights. St James was the first of the apostles to be condemned to death, being beheaded by Herod as a troublemaker, not long after the crucifixion. Although there is no historical evidence that he ever did so, St James was thought to have preached the Gospel in Spain; he was not very successful and returned home. But then, after his execution, his headless body miraculously floated back to Spain in a rudderless stone boat – and came ashore in Padrón (the name means mooring-stone). His few remaining disciples buried him nearby; this grave site was lost for over seven hundred years. During the ninth century, however, when much of Spain

was still in the hands of the Moors, his tomb was rediscovered by a local hermit whose normal range of vision was said to have been miraculously illuminated by a sky full of stars. Papal verification of St James's remains led to the foundation of a small church, later to become the great cathedral and a major pilgrimage shrine.

Becket was Henry II's choice for Canterbury following Theobald's death. He was consecrated archbishop there on June 3, 1162, having been ordained as a priest only the day before. But by the following year the two were at odds over issues of church and state; in their disputes over the balance of power between religious and secular authority, Becket became a fervent champion of the church, no longer exclusively loyal to the crown. Henry II was outraged. Much of their quarrel was dramatized by the French playwright Jean Anouilh in *Becket*, or the *Honor of God*, which became the basis for Becket, the acclaimed 1964 film. The clash of these two titans ultimately led to Becket's murder, most likely at Henry's instigation, by four knights in his own cathedral on December 29, 1170. After his death, St Thomas the Martyr joined St James the Apostle as a fellow member of the canon of canonized Catholic saints, each with his own special liturgy and feast day.

And, after their deaths, both of them lent their names to significant medieval

"after their deaths, both of them lent their names to significant medieval cults."

cults. At the height of the Reconquest, St James was given a militaristic makeover, becoming a mighty warrior as well as a protector of pilgrims, known as Santiago Peregrino and as Santiago Matamoros, the supernaturally charged slayer of infidels, alleged to have made a victorious visionary appearance astride a white horse at the putative Battle of Clavijo against the Moors in 844. In such a way, the cult of St James was co-opted in the interests of the gradual expulsion of the Moors

and Spain's eventual transformation into an exclusively Christian nation. St James's Feast Day, July 25, is still an occasion for public celebration and he remains Spain's patron saint.

After Becket's death, it seems that the townsfolk, the poor and the sick, were among the first to recognize him as a martyr. The Canterbury monks had little initial interest in his veneration, and apart from the manner of his death, hagiographers would have been hard-pressed to describe him as a saint. But miracles kept happening; people kept coming to Canterbury, and the cult of St Thomas took off – even if it was to last only about three hundred years. For Henry VIII, at the outset of the English Reformation, had Becket's shrine demolished and all references to him purged from the prayer books, given that by then he come to epitomize the triumph of church over state.

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When it came to considering Canterbury, it was the trail that appealed, or trails, rather, since there's more than one way to get there. I didn't intend, much as I love Chaucer, to make this pilgrimage because I wanted "the holy blissful martyr for to seeke." But, while I still waited to walk, lockdown led me to appreciate St Thomas, who had the guts to speak truth to power. Whether nowadays or not we see him on the right side of history, Becket could be an inspiration to us all, especially since we have recently witnessed many an example of what a rare thing it is to maintain one's integrity in a world of moral compromise and to stand up for what is right. Once he had staked out his ecclesiastical position, Becket held his ground, despite ill health, exile, possible capture, fierce opposition from the monarch he had formerly considered his friend, and ultimately death. Who among us could do that today?



Botafumeiro, Cathedral de Santiago de Compostela
(Credit: subherwa on Flickr)

Nonetheless, of the two, St James has always been my personal favourite, ever since I first learned about his legendary role in the formation of the medieval Camino and came to sense his presiding spirit there today. He still mysteriously beckons, leading us we know not quite where. For me, he was there from the beginning. I frequently felt he was pushing me to read and write about the Camino and to keep walking as much of it as I could. Then at the end, in Santiago, at the Pilgrim Mass, watching the botafumeiro swing, I found myself spontaneously

weeping – in joy, not sorrow, a mini-epiphany. Finally, when Michael and I visited the cathedral for the third time to say a prayer of thanks to St James after doing the Portuguese Way, I could feel his mysterious presence there.

Olivia Pittet is the author of *The Camino Made Easy: Reflections of a Parador Pilgrim*, available online from Amazon and from the CSJ Shop. £14.

A Short Circular Camino

Piers Baker

My wife Margaret and I live in Jersey. Together with some UK friends, we travelled the Camino Inglés in 2019. This should have been followed by a trip in 2020, from Santiago to Cabo Fisterra via Muxia. Covid put paid to that! With the need to do some purposeful walking, I decided to repeat a local church-to-church walk that I last did some fifty years ago. There are twelve parishes in the island, which are simultaneously part of the ecclesiastical and civil structure of Jersey. Each has an ancient church at its centre. What follows is a record of my August 2020 walk. I hope it may encourage others to find similar routes in their own surroundings.

“There are twelve parishes in the island, which are simultaneously part of the ecclesiastical and civil structure of Jersey. Each has an ancient church at its centre.”

Day 1, St Martin to St Clement, via Grouville

Having put a car at each end of this stage, we started at St Martin's church, cleansing our hands of course and then lighting a candle at the altar and enjoying a moment of quiet reflection. Through leafy lanes we travelled just 5 km to Grouville church, dropping down from the north of the island to sea level. Sadly, the church was closed, being open now just two days a week. After a short rest, we headed up over a steep back lane and down into St Clement's parish. The church here was also closed. It was warm and sunny, so the best we could do to catch a sense of worship and well-being

was to drive home via the beach for a welcoming swim.



Piers Baker in pilgrim mode



St Saviour's church sits proud yet peaceful on the hill, and it was open

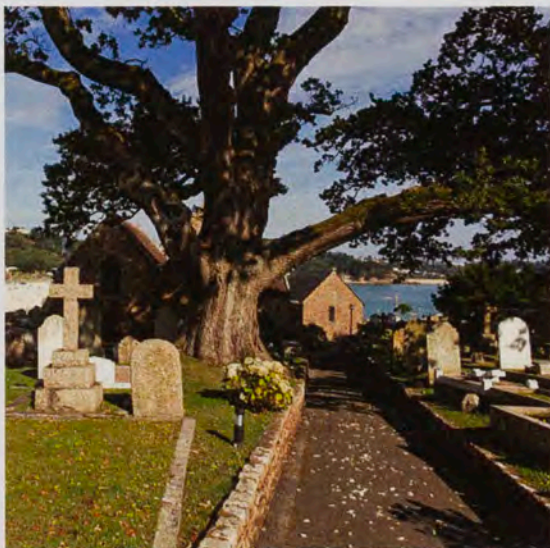
Day 2, St Clement to St Brelade, via St Saviour and St Helier

I did this stage alone, setting off behind the church up an ancient and at times steep funeral path. Soon I was high up amongst small fields with splendid views. It was a fine way to start the day. The route took me past an industrial estate and along busy roads, before climbing above St Helier to pass along aptly named Rue du Froid Vent to St Saviour's church. This sits proud yet peaceful on the hill, and it was open. It felt welcoming. I was glad that the WC was also unlocked! Then before setting off, it was good to reacquaint myself with my grandparents' grave in the churchyard and think back on times past.

The main town of St Helier sits in a big bowl of hills, open to the south. From St Saviour's church there was little option but to take dusty, busy main roads down back into civilisation. Entering the quiet of the old St Helier churchyard

felt good, but it was quickly tinged with disappointment that this church too was locked and barred. Remembering Christ's advice to his disciples that, if unwelcome they should be prepared to shake the dust off their sandals and leave, I was soon back on my feet, heading west along the seafront for lunch in St Aubin's bay.

The way out of the bay is along a pretty, old railway path, but the route quickly turns off to mount steep steps and a short stretch of busy roads. So, it was a relief soon to be coming down into St Brelade's Bay, greeted with lovely views of sea and sand. The church itself sits just above the beach, nestled into the sheltered west corner. Oh dear, once again, it was closed. However, the 11th century Fishermen's Chapel was open, full of a sense of ancient worship and a good place to take stock. The day ended with a swim before an open-top double-decker took me to town to catch a second bus for home. The total distance had been just 15 km, though it had felt a lot longer.



St Brelade's church nestles above the beach

Day 3, St Brelade to St Mary, via St Peter and St Ouën

Margaret joined me for this stage. We had a quick look at the old sanctuary path, known as Le Perquage, and headed uphill. It was to be a route partly along busy main roads but it had its good moments too. We met two long-standing friends and caught up on their news, talked of families, being grandparents, and boating. We bought some cooking apples and pears at a roadside stall. Actually, we didn't have the correct change and didn't pay! However, the vendor was quick to trust these two middle-aged strangers on the promise we would be back. Such small acts of charity matter. Two days later we made a detour in the car and made sure we had paid our dues.

We had lunch on a bench in St Peter's churchyard. It was sunny and the warmth attracted a few competing wasps. The next section took us along a main road with no path or pavement. It was not easy for either us or the traffic. So, it was with relief that a path under oak trees opened up, and soon we were back on lanes leading to St Ouën's church. The church sits on an exposed plateau looking west which added to the sense of desolation. Churches seem so lost and pointless when closed. It was at least a small relief that an

“Churches seem so lost and pointless when closed.”

open and clean WC was to be found in a corner of the churchyard!

It was onward then to St Mary's church, our last stop for the day. Half the short distance of just over 4 km was amongst pretty, twisting back lanes, but the end was again along a busy main road. As we walked up the path to the west porch of the church, we were greeted by the sight of an open door. It was with absolute delight that we stepped in to the sound of a flute. Once we had attended to the formalities of recording our names for contact tracing and doing the ritual cleansing, we sat and listened. We learnt that the young flautist was practising in preparation for starting music college in the autumn and he had to find somewhere where he did not disturb his family. So, we were the lucky ones. I felt the church itself was glad of the company and the uplifting music. The day ended with a swift beer outside the local whilst waiting for the bus back to town.

Day 4, St Mary to St John via St Lawrence

Once again alone, I set off along byways, passed old farms and paused in front of the lovely Victorian Catholic church of St Matthieu, now resurrected as a set of apartments. The route kept me clear of main roads and I arrived at St Lawrence church ready for lunch. Notices alerted me to the fact that the church was closed, but I noticed the door was ajar. Stepping in, my eyes adjusting to the gloom, I saw a small group of people sitting around a table in the transept. They were having a meeting and not expecting an intruder. I was quickly told I must not enter and that there were other times when I would be

Camino Life

welcome. It was with more than sadness I felt the weight of what Covid was doing. As Christians is our first duty to protect the vulnerable from illness or to care for the soul?

Onwards then, down into the valley. Following the steep, aptly named Mont Misère and travelling north, I lost my way a little and made a meal of just 5 km. Arriving in St John's parish, I was lucky to find it was a day when the church was open. Some moments of reflection cleared my unkind thoughts and I was content to end the day there.



Trinity Church decorated for a wedding.

Day 5, St John to St Martin, via Holy Trinity

Margaret joined me for this, the final stage. We wound through a cluster of houses away from the main east-west road and made our way on lanes above the north cliffs. Trinity church was open and beautifully decorated, clearly ready for a wedding. We were pleased to peep in but did not stop long for fear of being met by guests: They would be dressed in their finery and we in our shorts. So, lunch was eaten a little distance away from the churchyard, in a corner of the local pétanque ground.

As we headed for St Martin, we came across a large tractor heading our way with lights blazing and the driver dressed in topper and tails. Behind him was a set of fifteen identical tractors, all with lights on and white ribbons flying. Clearly the groom and his entourage were arriving! It was good to wave, see their excited faces and know that country weddings were very much alive.

Not very much further along the lanes we saw the spire of St Martin's over the tops of trees, and knew the end was in sight. There was a brief friendly chat with a man out with his dog and then a short stretch of an old flagstone path before we were back where we started. We had only covered some 50 km in total over five days, so it was not arduous, but every walk can show us new things or bring out new thoughts. We each lit a candle and spent time in quiet prayer, feeling thankful for being fit, yet sorry for this mixed up world and those who suffer and struggle.

A Photographic Ode to the Walls and Doors of Northern Spain

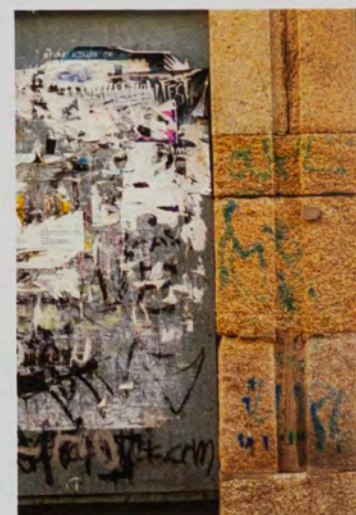
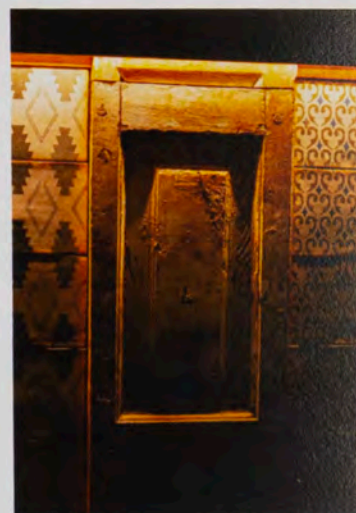
Philip Rush

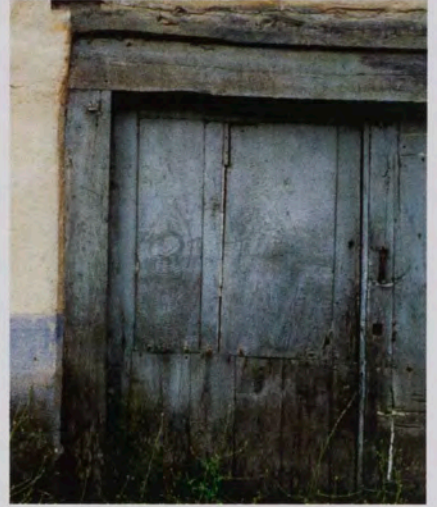
Walking through a rural hamlet in northern Spain, steeped in sunlight, the shadows sharp, your eye is caught by the small doors and walls of barns, outhouses, and abandoned homesteads: to the textures of the stone, the faded and stained paintwork on cheap planking or loose tongue-and-groove, the coarse fixings, the twist of blue twine, the light chain, the heavy cobble wedged at the foot of a mud-spattered iron door rusted into whiskeys. It is easy to remember, days and miles away now, the adobe mud walls of Lédigos, the wood and plaster of La Rioja and the mountain passes, the huge family farmhouses, cattle cheek by jowl.

The wooden door has something about it of cheese rind and elicits speculations about the kind of cheese which might even be ageing behind these walls, dug as they are into a small hill at the edge of the village, in the same way back home an icehouse once was dug into the Norman motte opposite the library. Behind the door, in its secret darknesses and its installations, is a life you might have led, a life for which you feel a real but artificial nostalgia, a life summed up by the scrape of a kitchen chair on a tiled floor, by the lingering smell of bread and spiced sausage, a life in which this rucksack and its carefully weighed contents would, laid out on such a table, a table worn with use and fatigue, appear glossy and rich with luxury, gold and frankincense and myrrh, and your quest, such as it is, grotesque.



Camino Life





Coffee Morning Virtual Caminos

Dr Kimberly Seward

We all miss the Camino, even though we regularly meet on Zoom to talk about it with pilgrims old and new. A recent conversation at our Thursday Coffee Morning turned to the topic of a virtual Camino – and an idea was born. While there are commercial apps with bells and whistles aplenty, it seemed that the CSJ might be able to bring something new, personal, and meaningful to the idea of a virtual pilgrimage experience.

Coffee Mornings were introduced last Spring (2020) as a way of continuing the weekly Office Open Days held at the CSJ office on Blackfriars Road in central London. Intended to support pilgrims with the planning of their Caminos, they were popular amongst both new and experienced pilgrims, and gave us a way to connect and build community. Meeting on Zoom during lockdown quickly showed us some advantages – our weekly audience grew beyond London's geographic appeal, as CSJ members and guests learned they could join from the comfort of home, wherever that might be. Unexpectedly, our community and its pilgrim conviviality grew stronger as the pandemic wore on... and on.

With continuing restrictions threatening to curtail our Camino plans far into the foreseeable future, it seemed a virtual experience might be a way to inject an added spark into our chats. We could invite people to present segments of a route, both those with past Camino experience

“the CSJ is bringing something new, personal, and meaningful to the idea of a virtual pilgrimage experience.”

and also those who were still planning for their first walk. Each segment could be unique and reflect both the interests of the presenter and route itself, and be a blend of research and experience.

We started with the basic adage: start where you are. The CSJ actually has a long history of encouraging British pilgrimage as well as supporting pilgrims

“People present segments of a route, each presentation a blend of research and personal experience.”

abroad. We chose to start on the St James Way, following the route from Reading to Southampton. We hope it will encourage people to try pilgrimage close to home – a good choice in any year, but perhaps especially now.

The St James Way is an important route to know about, a feeder route for those who want to walk in this country prior to walking the Camino Inglés from A Coruña to Santiago. Doing so will allow pilgrims to meet the 100 km requirement for a Compostela upon arrival in Santiago. But it is far more than just a feeder route – it is a beautiful pilgrim route in its own right, and its development has been a long-time CSJ project.

Each week we travel virtually along a segment of the route and explore what we would have seen had we actually been walking along the route – Roman roads, abbeys, churches with medieval frescoes, chapels with labyrinths, and beautiful countryside. Father Christopher Heaps of St James Church in Reading joined us to offer a Pilgrim Blessing as we began and we'll meet other notable persons as we progress from week to week.

After arriving in Southampton, our virtual pilgrimage will transfer to León along the

Camino Francés, and we will explore the stages leading into Santiago, with stops at favourite places that include meetings with people who help to make the Camino what it is.

For those wishing to walk locally in conjunction with our virtual Camino, we provide the “mileage” from one point to another. Varying lockdown restrictions (as well as varying degrees of mobility and fitness amongst our participants) lead us to decide to make this an optional activity rather than a focus for the project. As warmer weather arrives and Covid rates decline, it is possible that more and more of us will be able to walk miles locally to accompany our weekly conversations.

Organised by Kimberly Seward, Jude Mackay and Jenny Downing, this virtual Camino will take us over 250 miles/425 kilometres, through two countries and last until late June of 2021, by which time we are all hoping that we will

know more about how and when actual pilgrimages can resume. In the meantime, we are getting to know our fellow pilgrims and their stories as we learn more about routes that matter to us all.

“Each week we travel virtually along a segment of the route and explore what we would have seen, had we actually been walking along the route.”

Book Reviews

Reprinted from Bulletin No 102,
September 2008

LightFoot Guide to the via Francigena: Canterbury to the Summit of the Great St Bernard Pass

Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard
Fougère: EURL Pilgrimage Publications,
2008, 219pp, ISBN 9782917183014.

LightFoot Guide to the via Francigena: Summit of the Great St Bernard Pass to St Peter's, Rome

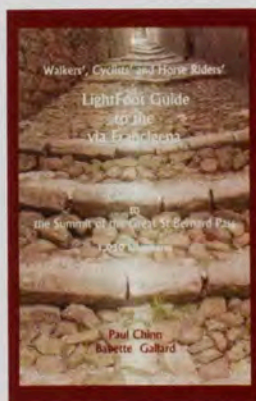
Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard
*Fougère: EURL Pilgrimage
Publications, 2008, 224pp, ISBN
9782917183021.*

Alison Raju

These are what we have been waiting for! Two route-finding guides in English, to lead the pilgrim all the way from the cathedral in Canterbury to St Peter's Rome, whether on foot, horseback, or riding a bike.

Volume 1, covering the sections through England, France and Switzerland, is the first such guide in any language. It covers the first 21,030 km, as far as the Great St Bernard Pass, while Volume 2 describes the remaining 942 km, from there to Rome. The route is divided into 77 sections, 1-44 in the first book, 45-77 in the second, with each daily stage containing a route summary, cultural and historical overview of the region, detailed instructions, a map, and a blog extract.

The colour maps for each section not only have the route traced on them, but also include numbered GPS waypoints referring to the detailed directions given in the following text, symbols to indicate facilities available in the different places along the way, an altitude profile, map references and, where applicable, pictures of the types of waymarking used. Each section also include listings of accommodation and practical facilities such as doctors/vets, internet cafés and tourist offices.



As well as basic information about England (useful for those who don't live there), France, Switzerland and Italy, the introductions to each volume also offer practical advice specifically for walkers, riders, and cyclists, information about dogs and horses relevant to each country, useful websites, a short reading list (though without bibliographical detail)

and vocabulary lists. At the end of each volume there is also a section that can be used as a pilgrim record.

With these two clearly laid-out books, the pilgrim should have no trouble finding his or her way along the Via Francigena or places to sleep en route. They do, however, have one drawback, at least as far as this reviewer is concerned. The authors explain that information on areas along the route is restricted to the general and/or topographical, without detailed reference to religious sites, a decision taken partly for reasons of space but also because, in their view, a significant

percentage of people following the Via Francigena today are either not religious or belong to a different faith. The pilgrim road from Canterbury to Rome was, however, fundamentally a religious route in its origins, and while many modern-day pilgrims may not be religious in the conventional sense, many would be interested in the historical, artistic and cultural aspects of the religious sites along the route. A whole dimension is therefore missing from this otherwise excellent pair of guidebooks.

LightFoot guides are published on demand (POD) and are available from the shop facility on <http://pilgrimagepublications.com/UKShop/PayPal/ppbooks.html> as well as from the from the Confraternity of Saint James' secure online bookshop (www.csj.org.uk). A copy of each volume is in the CPR library.

The Beauty of the Camino Angelika Schneider, John Rafferty (a.k.a. Johnnie Walker), and Stephen Shields

*Privately printed, available from
www.beautyofthecamino.com.*

Standard edition £25

Dr William Griffiths

I dropped very heavy hints to ensure that this sublime work would be my principal present at Christmas 2020. The three authors are pilgrims of great experience, and the creation of the work seems to have arisen from a pilgrimage they made on the Via de la Plata. Angelika Schneider contributes beautiful black-and-white photographs, the fruit of many years

of pilgrimage. Apart from the Camino Francés and Finisterre, there are images from the Voie de Vézelay, the Camino de Madrid, the Via de la Plata, and even the Camino Ignaciano. Black-and-white photography is often the preference of the true artist, but is relatively uncommon in our pilgrim library. These merit comparison with photography such as that of Manuel Vicente's "Peregrinos" Some of the pilgrims in Angelika's work are also recognizable.

The photographs are accompanied by ten epigrams by John Rafferty. They show the same piercing insight as in his last book, *It's About Time*, but the linking thread of the ten is the phrase "the beauty of the Camino is yours," preceded by a "when..." or an "if..." as in : "The beauty of the Camino is yours when you learn to trust, for it is through trust you will receive unexpected gifts."

Why 42 pages but only 10 reflections? The answer lies in the extraordinary care that has been taken in presenting, binding, and printing the book. A concertina method was chosen, stretching continuously from the back cover, so the images are sometimes two or three to a page. Sometimes a single image, such as the first one, the Camino snaking ahead across the meseta, stretches luxuriously over two whole pages. The concertina format was chosen because "it slows the reader/viewer down."

That explanation is to be found in the website, <http://www.beautyofthecamino.com>. It contains biographical information and technical information about

Book Reviews

photography and book creation, as well as a set of reflections by Angelika. PLEASE, only study the website after you have experienced the pilgrimage (your pilgrimage) through the book. The standard edition has beautiful paper and binding, but there is an even lovelier special edition. A copy has been donated to our Library, and all profits go to pilgrim charities.

“If you arrive at the end of your Camino with your heart full of memories and prayers for those you have met along the way, the beauty of the Camino is yours.”

Striking Out: Poems and Stories from the Camino.

Stephen Cottrell

Canterbury Press 2018

ISBN: 978 178 622 1162AC

Available from the CSJ Shop.

£9.

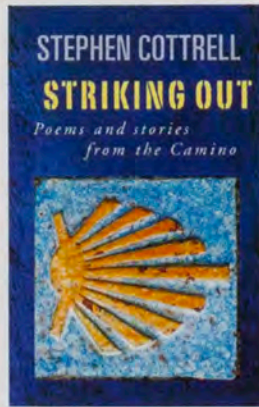
Helen Wilson

This is a small book about a big journey, exploring big ideas. While Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell, now Archbishop of York, made the Camino the focus of his sabbatical. This pocket-sized 73 page book is the result of his pilgrimage following the Camino Del Norte in early Autumn 2016 – chosen because it was a quiet and challenging route. Cottrell needed solitary travelling to recharge his religious batteries and express his faith. He dedicates the book to “...all who walk and for all who dream of walking.” What an inclusive and loving thought, which encapsulates the modesty of this project

– he wryly wonders if the world is really ready for yet another book about walking to Santiago – but this is not a guide book, an account, or a pilgrimage diary. It is a very personal yet universal reflection by a committed Christian, discovering his God around him in the landscape, the people he meets, and his own mind. Because he explores many deep human predicaments and emotions, it is relevant to those who have no specific religious beliefs yet are open to the spiritual aspects of life.

Cottrell laid out his experiences and thoughts in four weekly sections, each with seven paired pages of prose and poetry. There are simple black and white photos which illustrate his encounters on the road and the inspirations for his writing. He was used to creating verse and chose the sonnet form (or a flexible version of it!), and in each duo offers his thoughts and reactions on many themes: beauty, transience, death, immortality and the afterlife, faith, travelling light, yellow arrows, the closed doors of Spanish churches as metaphor for secularisation/loss of faith, love, the environment, anxiety and doubt...all the big questions are touched on with sensitivity and sincerity.

In the introduction he explores the value of poetry as an expression of faith and discusses how the iambic rhythm of the sonnet read aloud mirrors the human heartbeat or footstep and so can “release” the treasure of the poem. His writing is moving, vivid, and evocative. One



comes across memorable and felicitous images and tropes: Christ as a cricketer with 2000 as his score, but “not needed any more. Or so they say”; the joy of just being alive and on the road in the teasing poem about possibilities: “I leapt! I leapt!”; the playfulness of comparing Solomon “that wise and anxious geezer” to the bindweed “lily” and the daisies by the path, which “etch and pulse because they are themselves and nothing else”; and on nearing Santiago, realising that he will need to adjust to the return to normal life – “the road ahead is made of desks, decisions...meetings...emails...and the steep climb of other people’s expectations of my time.”

Cottrell clearly is a man who loves the play and reach of words, and the title he chooses for his book is repeated before Week One: “Some things are only learned by striking out.” He wants to learn from “striking out” for Spain and the subsequent “striding out,” and emphasizes the paradox that it is in moving that he finds stillness. Each step is what counts – the journey – not the horizon. There is a deep sense of *carpe diem*, of appreciating the moment and his vulnerability and that God travels with pilgrims, as they rely on the comfort of those yellow arrows.

In Day 2 he explores the “steps I am taking today” – the jokey step of finding out the Spanish for “I’m lost,” to the profound step of seeing “...if there’s a way within a way.”

Cottrell walked to find his God in both in stillness and movement. He walked to “scrape the barnacles off the hull of my life.” He walked to find his personal

“bright field” – that essential place of calm between the hurtle towards a tomorrow which moves further and further away and the pointless search for a dream-like past which is now gone. Each day of travel is a beginning, not an ending.

At the end of his physical pilgrimage, Cottrell is moved, not because he has “arrived” at the shrine of St James, but by the realisation that ultimately “life is so precious and beautiful.” It is in his next words that we can appreciate a generous and universal resonance: ‘...and you don’t need to go to Santiago to find this.’

It is that wider horizon that allows this delightful, moving, though-provoking and reassuring compilation to appeal to anyone, pilgrim or not, who is looking for something beyond the everyday, to find that liminal in-between space in which one can just be, “absorbing and learning from all the pleasures, hopes, beliefs, epiphanies, and troubles of life’s pilgrimage.”

This is worthy of being on anyone’s bookshelf, to be taken down and delved into to find and then revisit the pleasures and wisdom it offers.

Yellow Arrow Fever: The Grumpy Pilgrim’s Guide to Santiago

Rudy Noriega (2017)

Self-published: ISBN: 978-1-549-60888-9

Available from the CSJ Shop. £9.

Jenny Downing

Should ‘grumpy’ and ‘pilgrim’ even appear together in a sentence, let alone in

Book Reviews

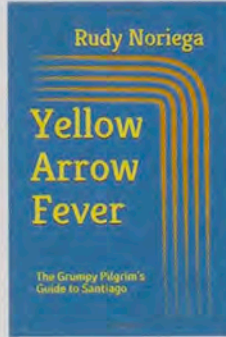
the title of a book about the Camino de Santiago?

Try as he might to embody grumpiness, Rudy Noriega's sense of humour just won't let him descend into the depths of tedious grumpy. There are some wonderful 'laugh out loud' moments on the pages of this book. One of my early favourites is on page 25. You'll just have to read the book to find it.

Although he recounts what appears to be a sometimes irreverent romp, or sometimes limp, through the Camino Francés, Rudy has an identity issue to address as he explores his Anglo/Hispanic roots and revisits poignant memories of his father. Things take a bit of a nosedive when he opens his mouth to order a drink in a bar in Spanish and realises the words he utters are, in fact, Italian. Half-Spanish, with the complexion of an Englishman, and regularly mistaken for German, Rudy seems to have more than one identity issue. Still, when a common language isn't close to hand, there's always the fluent 'language of football' to fall back on.

Rudy is a master of descriptive language and I'm quite sure I'll think of him when I now interpret the sound of the pre-dawn packing of a sleeping bag as someone "rolling marbles around in a biscuit tin while jumping on crisps." His colourful characterisation in describing his pilgrim companions (names have been changed to protect the innocent) found me nervously checking the date and year of his pilgrimage in case I had been on the

road at the same time and had strayed unwittingly into his narrative.



A pilgrimage condenses many of the character types we meet through life and squeezes them into a few weeks. There are the garrulous, the overbearing, the down-right boring. They lead to pre-dawn departures and impulsive minor changes to the day's plans, as we hang back or walk further than intended to avoid them. Inevitably, though,

some of these fellow pilgrims re-appear repeatedly when we least expect them. Rudy has their measure and presents them to his reader with a large dose of his signature humour, even, or perhaps, particularly when, he contemplates murder by trekking pole on occasion.

Thankfully Rudy meets more than his share of pilgrims who positively enhance his experience. He writes of a late-night bathroom picnic, the guest list comprised of refugees from a dormitory staging a snoring contest. An impromptu poker game, with toilet paper as chips ensues. A good way of turning a lost night's sleep into a positive.

How often do we misjudge someone, or at least judge them too harshly? When Rudy needs help, it is the one person he has avoided whenever possible who rushes to his aid and displays true kindness and empathy. It's a humbling experience, and Rudy accepts it for what it is.

As the meseta stretches endlessly in front of him, Rudy has time to muse on the

Book Reviews

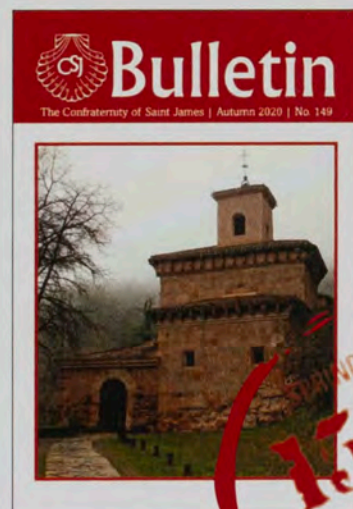
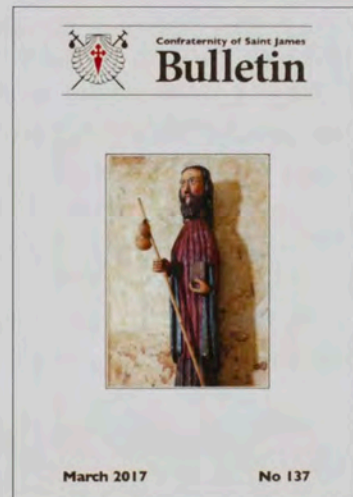
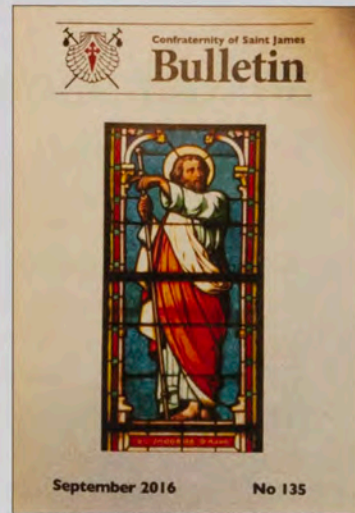
varied terrains of the Camino Francés as life metaphor, concluding that the long, hot, industrial-site slog into Burgos represents eternal damnation. Those of us who didn't take the river route will be nodding now.

Initial unease at being asked to read aloud prayers left a few days previously by pilgrims in an albergue reminds Rudy that it was in part the sad losses endured by friends and the loss of his father in Rudy's early teenage years that prompted him to embark on his journey. As he picks up a pen to write his own prayers, a different Rudy emerges from that grumpy veneer. Days later, the knowledge that pilgrims will in turn be reading out his prayers gives pause for reflection.

When Rudy reaches the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, like many of us, he experiences a mixture of emotions: the joy and relief of arrival, a feeling of sorrow that it is over. But for Rudy, this is not the end of his pilgrimage. There is one more thing he needs to do.

This isn't an academic treatise on the Camino Francés, though it is peppered with historical, religious, archaeological, literary and cultural references. Rather, it is an honest, often endearing, hilariously funny, and ultimately poignant account of one man's pilgrimage.

Whether the reader is a seasoned pilgrim who can relate to Rudy's experiences and may pause in reading to smile, or wince, at the memories they evoke, or someone who is yet to undertake the first tentative steps, this book is an excellent read.



Via Francigena – the Ceremony of Washing the Feet

Annie Sparkes

I have walked the Francés, the Primitivo, the Norte, the Portugués and the Saint Jacques but it was only on the Via Francigena that I came across the ceremony of Washing the Feet, just as Jesus did for his disciples at the Last Supper.

On day five of my journey from Lucca to Rome, I stopped at a small donativo hostel in Abaddia a Isola. There were only five of us staying at the hostel, and before supper the two hospitaleros donned the brown capes of the Order of St James and, with a jug of warm water and a bowl, washed one foot of each of us and dried the foot gently while reciting a prayer. It was a deeply moving, soothing and memorable moment.

Finally, on day 18, I arrived in Rome and stayed at the Italian Confraternita de San Jacopo where once again the pilgrims were treated to the foot-washing ceremony.

Although the prayer which was recited at both ceremonies was in Italian, I imagine it was something along the lines of this prayer, by Reggie Kidd:

Blessed are you, Lord God.

The basin and the towel are signs to us of your Son's servanthood.

You have made us partakers of Christ and of one another.

As we go forth, give us grace to count others more important than ourselves, to love our enemies,

to make peace.

Send the Spirit of truth to keep alive in us what Jesus taught and did,

that our words may carry his good news, and that our lives may bear the shape of the cross of the One who lives and reigns with You and with the Holy Spirit,

One God, forever and ever. Amen.

*A Footwashing Liturgy,
Reggie M. Kidd*



A Camino Journey into Self-Publication

David Sinclair

You have walked the Camino and are knowledgeable about it. You want to tell others what you've found and learned while on the Way, or you may have researched its history, people, and saints, not to mention the legend and mission of St James the Greater. You are motivated to share this in an article, blog, presentation, or book, as a way of giving something back to the Camino and its pilgrims. In committing to writing, you cement what the Camino meant to you. It is, and it becomes, a labour of love.

My focus here is on the book aspect. I searched "Camino de Santiago" on Amazon.co.uk. Over 3,000 results were returned. It goes to show how much love there is for the Way of St James, as I'm sure that most of these authors are not motivated by profit.

I am now the author of one of these 3,000+ books about the Camino. I had been for months repeatedly questioning my Lord God, "how can my journey not be self-centred; it's against all I understand of your Love?" The answer was, "Keep a journal and offer it." This eventually led to self-publication. As you may have already gathered, my book is something of a votive offering. A votive offering is an object offered or deposited, without the intention of recovery or use, in a sacred place for religious purposes.

"Keep a Journal and Offer It"

To keep a journal was the easier part. It just became part of my "to do" list at end of days on the Camino. I would rather have relaxed, not bothered, and explored the place that my Lord had placed me in. Yet, it became a small, sweet sacrifice: How would I ever find the Lord's message otherwise?

"You have walked the Camino and want to tell others what you've found and learned, or you have researched its history, people, and saints, and are motivated to share this in an article, blog, presentation, or book, as a way of giving something back to the Camino."

Members' Pages

Facebook Messenger became my friend in recording these entries. I figured that even if I lost my mobile, the entries would still be there in Messenger. Thankfully, this worked well – I was easily able to copy and paste all the entries in Messenger into a Microsoft Word document. This had the advantage of recording the date and time of every entry, something that proved extremely useful as it preserved wonderful precise detail about each entry.

Publication offered a challenge. Little did I know that most publishers commission authors: They engage, and support celebrities or individuals learned in their field. Very few unqualified authors are ever published. With child-like faith, I had completed all the requirements set by the most suitable publisher in the States and submitted them. I never heard anything. In hindsight, this was a blessing, leading to self-publication.

The Mechanics of Self-Publishing

After producing my manuscript, or rather a journal that at the time did not have much in the way of prologue, epilogue, afterthoughts, related stories and appendices, I sought the assistance of friends. Their first question was, "What is your target audience?" Something I'd



David Sinclair en route

not considered, and an essential before starting to write.

I decided to self-publish my book through Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), which distributes worldwide and is able to print single copies on demand. Another desirable feature of KDP is that errata and updates of electronic books are immediately distributed to every purchaser. KDP offers advice on every step in the process of self-publication. You cannot get lost and their customer service for author inquiries is second to none. They even have an Academy. Not only can you read about how to develop your book, but you can also watch tutorials.

Software

To produce the ebook I used just two software tools: Sigil and Kindle Previewer 3. Both of these packages are free to download and have advanced features, yet are easy to use.

Sigil has all that is needed to create an ebook, including a preview panel to view how the tags present the text to a reader and a facility to generate a Table of Contents (TOC). This TOC gives hyperlinks to each section for a reader, as well as setting tags for Kindle's "Go To" navigation feature.

One challenge with the ebook was the addition of photos. "Wrapping" text around photos and images was difficult. In the end, I accepted that an ebook reader would be more than happy to be presented with a simple photo-and-caption layout.

Kindle Previewer 3 has all that is needed to publish on KDP. Although Sigil has a preview panel, KP3 allows you to check how the ebook would be presented in the Kindle device, by viewing the .mobi file. In an ebook, the image has to reasonably fit the display. Because a reader can adjust the size of the text in an ebook right up to ginormous, the writer has to view the exact point at which Kindle loses the image's header.

Commercial Considerations

Once an ebook is purchased, it is downloaded, making distribution cost extremely cheap. However, the size of the file is a major consideration, because the download cost is deducted from the sale price before any royalty is paid. What this meant was that full-size photos, of which I had many, use up space. Hours had to be spent minimising their size. I did this by using both "Resize" within the Paint tool and the "tinypng" website to reduce the size of each photo to about 25-40% of its original size.

A book is judged by its cover. This is absolutely true. Despite days spent writing, re-writing, refining the text, taking on board constructive critique and formatting advice, an attractive cover that immediately tells the story of the book is vital. If you intend to produce both a paperback and an ebook, produce the cover for the paperback first. The ebook can reuse the front cover of the paperback. I did not follow this route and found that I had to produce two covers.

Another early decision concerns the size and format of your book. Different genres have different ideal sizes, cover finishes, paper types, fonts, etc. To print in colour is very expensive. Mine is 144 pages, too expensive for most budgets. KDP has not worked out how to charge separately for colour pages, and since only a third of the pages of my book had a colour photo or image, I chose the affordable black and white format for the first publication. This was swiftly followed by re-publication in colour with a new ISBN.

Once you have finished your book, and before submission for publication, you have to describe your book for the Amazon website, encapsulating the wonder and message of your offering and why a reader should buy your book. The description of your book on the back cover can be reused for this purpose.

Distribution

KDP helps authors to evaluate distribution options, such as Amazon KDP Select and Author Central. You can also involve yourself in this.

“My self-publication journey started on my return from the Camino in June 2019. On May 10, 2020, almost exactly a year after setting off, my goal for publication, the ebook was published.”

When your paperback is published through KDP, you can order “author copies” at cost only that can be sent directly to a vendor for resale, in any country, or placed directly with outlets of your choice, for sale or free distribution.

If it were my choice, my book would be in the spirit of the Camino a “donativo” offering – given in return for a donation. This is an aspect the author copies make possible. Proceeds from sales of my book are distributed among three works of faith, including the ANCOP Cornerstone project. ANCOP stands for Answering the Cry Of the Poor and its “Cornerstone” project helps slow readers in schools in the Philippines.

Another consideration regarding distribution concerns the stigma attached to “independently published,” or in other words, self-published books. The free ISBN that Amazon assigns labels your book in this way. If you think you might want to work with other publishers, purchase your own ISBN and use this to identify Amazon’s publication.

A Final Word

That’s it. My self-publication journey started on my return from the Camino in June 2019. On May 10, 2020, almost exactly a year after setting off, my goal for publication, the ebook was published. I hope you have enjoyed reading this article as much as I have enjoyed sharing my self-publication journey and where it all started.

I would be delighted to share more details with readers and can be reached via my email: david.sinclair1200@btinternet.com. Please state, “Self-publication” in your email’s title and I will do my best to help with your venture into the process. As stated in my opening, through writing you will develop a great love for your topic, in my case, the Camino Way of the Lord.

The Making of *Camino De Santiago: Way of Mindful Contemplation* *An Any Year Calendar Book*

Catherine Athena Louise and Patrick di Camillo

My friend Patrick and I collaborated on a calendar-book about the Camino de Santiago. We didn't pause to over-think it...we just started straight away. First, by looking through Patrick's photographs from his own four journeys along three of the Caminos – the Camino Francés, the Camino del Norte, and the Camino Primitivo. We laid his photos out in order, thinking about the flow of the twelve months, switching and moving their

sequences around till they felt right. And then I set to work creating the look I hoped to achieve consistently throughout the book, based on old linen bound books and ancient maps. I imagined torn parts of maps, the colour of the vintage paper, the smell of well-read, lightly golden tanned pages and hand-inked drawings.

Our book was published by Thunder River Publishing on 30th November 2020.

We were grateful for the opportunity to make this book, and all the gifts it has brought us during the process.

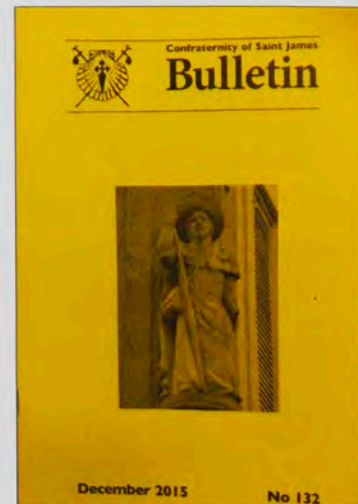
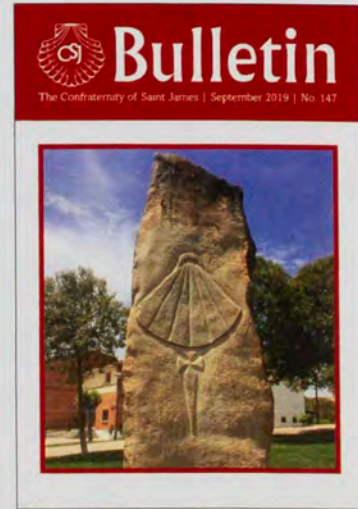


Members' Pages

A Note about Equipment

Philip Rush

Pilgrims often enjoy a good chin-wag about equipment. We wear Gore-Tex topcoats which reach well below the waist. We had discovered on a windy day just east of Burgos how sophisticated the neck fittings were and how we could zip ourselves in, to leave only a small gap for the top of the face. This kept us warm, but made conversation difficult and restricted peripheral vision. Moreover, when confronting an eight-hour walk in rain to wear light, waterproof over-trousers are essential. We have waterproof covers for the rucksacks, too, and umbrellas. The umbrellas are walking-stick umbrellas from James Smith & Co of Bloomsbury, London, and they are not only worth their weight in gold but almost as expensive. Most of the time, on the Camino, they serve as walking sticks, and the umbrella function is tightly furled. In a short summer shower, which can be heavy, they go up in seconds and they are huge, covering both pilgrim and rucksack. We have been mocked for tackling the Camino with such umbrellas, which seem to belong more to a 1950s documentary about city gentlemen commuting from Wimbledon and Stanmore, but our umbrellas have kept us perfectly dry. A passer-by confided in me that he shouldn't have laughed at the eccentric English couple, because the umbrellas seemed a very good idea to him now. An American woman who had walked alongside us for a while in the rain said to us, "You guys with the umbrellas are awesome!"



This information is for pilgrims whenever it is safe to return to Spain.

Technology Enhances the Camino:

The Digital Credential

Patricia Read-Hunter

As of January 1, 2021, we are told that we will be able to obtain our stamps by capturing QR codes. The Digital Credential is intended to make the Camino safer by minimising contact between hospitaleros and pilgrims. It will also speed up the process of obtaining the Compostela.

How will the Digital Credential work?

First, enter your data in the Pilgrim Registry (<https://catedral.df-server.info/agencias/Individuo.aspx?lang=5>). Then download the mobile application (available for iOS and Android platforms, in eight languages – go to <https://www.caminodesantiago.gal/en/get-ready/technological-utilities-and-services/the-ways-app>). Using the app, record one or two digital stamps daily through QR codes available at the different points of the Camino. The app is intended to work on all Camino routes in Spain and the most common starting points, including Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port in France and Porto in Portugal, but it's not clear how widely this has been implemented. We are waiting for more information on this point.

When you arrive in Santiago, go to the Pilgrim's Office on Rúa Carretas to get a QR code with the approximate time at which you can pick up the Compostela (using your code, it is also possible to consult the progress of the queue in real time).

Other Technology-based Enhancements

The launch of the Digital Credential is one more example of the implementation of new technologies in the Jacobean routes. Among the digital advances in recent months is the reservation platform for public hostels in Galicia. It will soon be joined by a new one for private accommodation.



<https://www.caminodesantiago.gal/en/get-ready/technological-utilities-and-services/the-ways-app>

Scallop Shells

Louise Butler

The end of this little story is perhaps more significant than the beginning.

In October 2014, with scant planning except to acquire a new rucksack and some walking poles, I flew to Biarritz, took the train to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port in the Pyrenean foothills and registered my "passport" in preparation for the walk across northern Spain on the Camino Francés pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostela.

My head was occupied with recent events, and I welcomed this lone autumn walk through the vineyards of Navarra, passing the busy cities of Pamplona, Burgos and León, across the summer scorched and barren meseta into hilly, green, damp Galicia. I made my daily "home" in shared dormitories, queued for showers, ate magnificently from simple menus and enjoyed the company of my fellow pilgrims. Blisters, insect bites, sunburn, aching limbs and a simple backpack are great levellers. There are no badges of status, just other people putting one foot in front of the other, coping with what is "now" – not what's on their desk or thinking of the flight back home. Friends made on the Camino stay in touch, bonded by this unique trudge across Spain's wonderfully expansive terrain.

I made it to Santiago, where my dear friend Polly joined me to walk on to Finisterre, end of the land and beginning of the Atlantic.

The pilgrim identifier is a scallop shell, and mine was given to me by Sister Columba at convent school when I was seven. I had always kept this shell, with no knowledge of how it would come into play in my later life. My friend had no such shell and fretted that she had completed this last leg without one.

We had shared such laughter and silliness over these last miles together, and indeed over the thirty years we had been friends. Sitting on the rocks at Muxia, further along the coast and truly the end of our joint adventure, we watched the waves crash, the white breakers dotting and dashing the ocean blue, seabirds wheeling past the rust-stained lighthouse. A tap-tap noise rose above the seaside cacophony: a large gull was holding in its beak a sun-bleached scallop shell, which it laid on the rocks and flew away. There was my friend's shell – she truly became a pilgrim.



Pilgrims in the Rain

Philip Rush

Months later, she was visiting the Cornish churchyard of St Just-in-Roseland where they were selling scallop shells attached to ribbons to tie to a tree in remembrance or for personal intentions. She bought one for me, in symbolic honour of our close and special time on the Camino. As she came to tie it to the branch, her phone rang – it was me. I did not know she was in Cornwall, and she did not know that I had visited that beautiful Roseland churchyard as a child. It stood in my memory, so much so that I often “visited” it in my head, but had never been back. For us, that moment of connection was significant – one that, like pilgrimage and all it brings, cannot necessarily be explained.

Deep down, pilgrims probably want to be tested by their pilgrimage. Not to breaking point, of course, but what is a pilgrimage without some pains and sacrifices, blisters, mislaid euros, sunburn and sleepless nights?

But is there anything quite as dispiriting on the Camino as to wake to the sound of heavy rain, which has settled in for the duration and set up a steady and relentless rhythm of its own? There is a camaraderie, mind you, in the rain. We are all in the same boat. Some of us walk more slowly than others; some of us have big packs, some of us have their stuff sent ahead by car; some of us have done all this before, some of us have no idea what tomorrow’s route has in store. But when it rains, we all get wet. When we meet in cafés and bars, in albergues and refugio and at evening Mass, we all have wet-weather gear to deal with, we all have the



Members' Pages

same story to tell, we all have a big thing in common. It's in the Sermon on the Mount, of course. Everyone remembers that the Lord "sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike."

In April 2017, when we had spent the night in a beautiful room in Burgos, we were woken by rain falling on the skylight. By the time we were properly up and ready for the off, the rain had turned into snow, the kind of snow which makes every landscape look like one of those Howard Hodgkin paintings where the landscape colours are dotted with wet dabs of snowy white. By the time we'd reached the outskirts of the city, the snow had settled itself into a gentle blizzard. Each time we shook our umbrellas, as we did from time to time, they felt distinctly lighter afterwards.

We arrived in Tardajos where a bar was open and steaming with pilgrims; they had gathered at the far end around a stove and were taking off their outer layers to try and dry them. Many of them were complaining about having wet feet and were doing things with plastic bags squeezed between their socks and their boots. One of the pilgrims came over and asked us, kindly, whether our feet were wet. I was almost embarrassed to say that our feet were not wet. This provoked a general consternation, so much so that I checked with Caroline. No, our feet were not wet, although Caroline's

hands had turned purple from the dye in her mother's leather gloves. Waving my feet from the bottom of the stool, I added that we were wearing waterproof boots.

I wish I could say that rain enhanced our experience of the Camino. Crossing the vineyards between Estella and Monjardín our shoes clagged up so much that every step felt like a diver's in lead-lined boots. I remember a long trek along that causeway out of Carrión de los Condes – the one where you have to do 17 kilometres in a dead straight line on a gravelly surface – when it rained relentlessly from start to finish. The view shrank to a small tunnel of vision and the sound of the fields was displaced by the patter of raindrops, whose fall on to the taut skin of the umbrella sounded like the spitting of fat from a chip-pan; each stride was accompanied by that irritating noise of one waterproof surface being rubbed against another. On another occasion, we left Villafranca at the tail end of a thunderstorm which had steeped the narrow lanes in water. Sometimes, rain can take so much heat from you so quickly that, despite all your togs, you find yourself shivering.



Rain is at its most beautiful when it stops. Sometimes we have sat under the eaves of a building, tucked in the dry, and listened to the last drops of the rain from the tiles and from the leaves of the trees all around, enjoying its music and the melancholy joy it brings.

Regional Group Reports

Wendy Mason-Smith *Regional Groups Coordinator*

The Regional Groups continue to go from strength to strength, and to increase in number, despite the restrictions of the last 12 months. Regular Zoom meetings have kept local members in touch with each other and have provided much convivial fellowship over the winter months. We are all hoping that the coming months will allow us to meet in person, at least to some extent, and to begin again to share pilgrimages and visits to places with links to St James. If you would like to be put in contact with your Regional Group, please email me. My email address and those of all the other Group leaders are on the inside back cover of this Bulletin.

Between lock downs, our **Devon and Cornwall** Regional Group has managed a nine-mile local pilgrimage to Exeter Cathedral, and hopes to do another to Truro Cathedral whenever restrictions



Devon and Cornwall Regional Group Pilgrims at Exeter Cathedral

allow. In the meantime, they have been getting to know each other through regular Zoom meetings and are planning some local celebrations for St James' Day in July, together if possible.

Our **Scotland** Group have been enjoying their regular Zooms every fourth Thursday of the month. For one of them, they were joined by Rev Richard Frazer, Minister of Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh, for a presentation on pilgrimage. They also plan to put together some research on churches of St James in Scotland.

For **Thames Valley** members, the CSJ is now a member of the Friends of Reading Abbey (FORA). The live FORA lectures have been replaced with lectures via Zoom, which all CSJ members can attend.

As described earlier in this Bulletin, Kimberly Saward and her team are organising a Virtual Camino along the St James Way from Reading to Southampton.

Each Thursday, a CSJ member takes us through a section of the route. From mid-March, the attention will switch to the Camino Francés from León to Santiago, in stages. Everyone is welcome to join.

A group of eight members has started walking the St James Way in earnest. So far, we have done two stages, with the remaining four or five to be done as soon as restrictions ease. Contact Robin Dorkings if you would like to join us to complete this lovely pilgrimage.

Regional Group Reports



Last year's St James Day walk near Abergavenny

Ultreia Mancunia has been leading the way with their regular Zooms discussing all things Camino. Some of their members have been doing walks and finding out about their local connections to St James and pilgrimage. You can read about some of them on the 'Camino Stories' page of our website, including accounts of a Welsh Camino and the discovery of St James in Daisy Hill, near Bolton. Now that an in-person Practical Pilgrim Day is looking unlikely for the group, they are planning an online version. Watch this space!

Sadly, although they had to cancel their planned trip to Guildford Cathedral, our Surrey Group are still going strong and will be ready to meet up again whenever restrictions allow.



Following the success of their St James Day walk back in July 2020 near Abergavenny, the Bristol Group are already putting plans together for this year's celebrations, all things permitting. These include a trip to St James Stoke Orchard, and a walk at Cameley, Somerset. Fingers crossed!

The Sussex Group managed to squeeze in a trip to Chichester in between lockdowns, and had a very enjoyable day taking in the history of the ancient city. Whenever allowed, they want to repeat the experience in Lewes, for a visit to the Priory there. In the meantime, they are enjoying their Zooms with quizzes and friendly chats.

Back in November, our Isle of Man Group, free of lockdown, organised an illustrated talk from Manx National Heritage on Archibald Knox's illuminated manuscript, "The Deer's Cry," as a fundraiser for Pilgrimage Isle of Man.

The Wales Group now have their own monthly News Bulletins and Zoom Meetings. It is hoped that a provisional programme of spring/summer walks can be announced in late February, once the Welsh Minister has outlined the country's roadmap out of Covid lockdown. For more information, contact Jonathan Gaunt.

Our other groups continue to get to know each other on Zoom and plan walks and gatherings for the future. See the inside back cover of this Bulletin for leader names and contact email addresses.

Albergue San Martín de Miraz Priscilla White, Chair

As you can imagine, my Miraz report does not make for happy reading, but before I begin to describe the catastrophe that was the year of 2020, I would like to thank three groups of people who helped us through all those dismal days. When our sponsors so generously agreed to sponsor a week at Miraz at last year's AGM, who could have imagined what chaos was about to be unleashed on the whole world? They kindly allowed us to keep their donations, and without doubt their support was a financial lifesaver, as we still have outgoings to maintain the property but no income to support this. Despite being unable to go out to Miraz, our volunteers remained in touch, and it was very encouraging to know that we had so many loyal supporters thinking of us, as we struggled to work out what best to do. I include Lindsay Stevenson on my list of thanks, as she has acted as our eyes and ears (and legs) over the past months, bringing over workmen to fix the roof as well as blitzing the garden that over time had become a jungle during months of neglect. I don't know what we would have done without her.

It seems almost unbelievable that it was only a year ago we were planning the new season, brimming with hope and enthusiasm and with a full complement of volunteers eager to help look after pilgrims passing through on their way to Santiago. In February we held our two albergue preparation days for the hospitaleros, partly to update them about any changes, and also to provide

an opportunity for a relaxed get-together over one of Colin Jones's delicious paellas, with a chance to chat about all things Miraz. Then in March, Armageddon: all travel cancelled and a general lockdown until the summer. We were therefore unable to send out our hospitaleros to receive and help the pilgrims who spend the night at San Martín, nor were we able to offer it as a retreat for James Portelli and the Xircammini of Malta.

With our hopes and plans turned to dust, we decided that the best policy was to wait and see what happened during the summer months. In early spring, we still envisaged opening up for a time in September or October. We followed the advice of the Spanish Ministry of Health and the Xunta of Galicia on how to set up safety protocols in the albergue that included reducing the number of pilgrims from 26 to 7 in order to maintain social distancing throughout the building.

However, it soon became clear that opening up was not going to be an option until 2021 at the earliest, as there were too many unknown factors and we could not take the risk of exposing our volunteers to the virus. We had the unenviable task of posting on Facebook the unhappy news that we would not be opening after all.

I would like to say that 2021 will improve the situation in Miraz, but we still don't know when the Spanish authorities will open their borders to overseas visitors. At the moment, Spanish nationals must remain within their own regions, but like the rest of us, they are hoping that the

Refuge Reports

vaccine will bring relief and release. We can give neither St James nor our loved ones a hug for the time being, but I have great faith that things will improve over the coming months when we hope the vaccination programme will start to roll out in Spain. I can assure you that as soon as we have any firm news about reopening, we will let you know.

As 2021 is Holy Year, may I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy New Year, even if you are not able to share it with family and friends. Although we are yet again in lockdown, I hope the vaccine will provide a light at the end of what has been a very dark tunnel for us all.

Refugio Gaucelmo, Rabanal del Camino

Julie Davies, Hospitalero Coordinator

The 2020 season at Refugio Gaucelmo ended as quietly as it started. No hospitaleros, no pilgrims, and no Working Party ready to put Gaucelmo into winter hibernation.

However, there was encouraging news after an end-of-season visit by Dave Arthur (Property Co-ordinator). The building itself was dry, and there was no evidence of rising damp, suspicious smells, or unwelcome guests (rodents!). While he was there, he tidied the shed, dismantled the paddock fence, cut the wood into lengths to be used on the wood burning stove, and organised with Susanna and Ramon the clearance of the apples in the huerta. With a complete rota and a healthy volunteer reserve list,

Gaucelmo is in superb condition to open its doors to pilgrims as soon as it is safe to do so.

When hospitaleros return to Gaucelmo they will note several changes with our good friends and neighbours in the monastery. Father Pius has returned to Saint Ottilien Archabbey in Germany after spending ten years in Rabanal. Father Clement has returned to South Korea after walking from Rabanal to Santiago in September, and enjoying Rabanal for four years. A familiar face, Father Juan Antonio, has returned to the monastery, and Father Pedro from South Korea has also joined the community. The Rabanal Committee are very grateful to Father Javier, who continues to keep a protective watch over Gaucelmo.



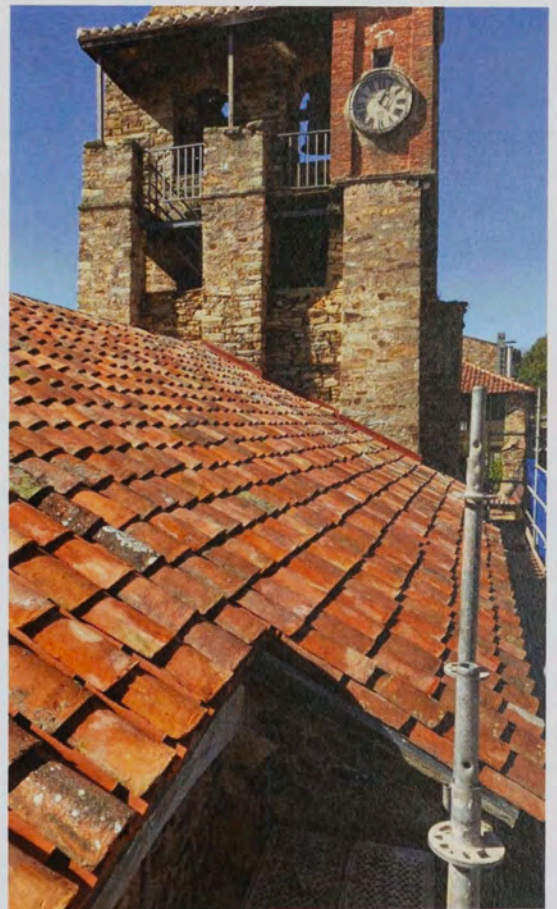
A customer for Gaucelmos apples in Rabanal!



The incoming and outgoing monks

Rabanal has remained relatively Covid-free, although some of the surrounding villages have been badly affected by the virus. Very few pilgrims have passed through Rabanal, especially as Castilla y Leon has closed its borders until May and initiated a curfew. There is always a positive lurking alongside a negative – the church roof was completed in September and is looking splendid. It is a church much loved by pilgrims and hospitaleros.

With great sadness and much deliberation, the Rabanal Committee made the decision that Gaucelmo would not open on April 1st, as normal, but will remain closed until July 1st. The Committee will be reviewing the situation constantly. It was a relief when the Pope announced that due to the pandemic, the 2021 Holy Year was being extended to include 2022. Gaucelmo has not yet missed a Holy Year Celebration in all its 30 years of existence, so we are looking ahead with optimism.



The completed church roof

Camino Pilgrim™ Notebook

Freddy Bowen

In my last Notebook, I expressed hope for hosting an in-person Returned Pilgrims Day, Constance Storrs lecture, and Annual General Meeting before the spring. Clearly, I was wrong. Instead, we continued with our Zoom get-togethers, started a virtual book club, launched an online arts, crafts and literature festival, hosted online lectures for the first time, with attendees from across the globe, and successfully held our first ever virtual AGM.

Events

Times continue to be tough, but we have been so fortunate with the innovation and enthusiasm of our members and volunteers, and now we have the following activities for members to choose from:

- **Online Arts, Crafts and Literature Festival** – An ongoing activity for members to showcase their own creations inspired by the pilgrimage. Entries can be emailed to office@csj.org.uk and will be displayed online and as part of a roaming exhibition nationwide, all things permitting. See more at www.csj.org.uk/arts-crafts-literature-festival
- **Zoom Coffee Mornings** – Thursdays at 10:30 GMT. An hour of chat, news updates, idea sharing and getting to know one another. Occasionally themed around a particular Camino topic. Now also featuring the “Virtual Camino” project, where together we “walk” in stages from Reading to Santiago! Link – <https://zoom.us/j/464302021>
- **Zoom Virtual Albergues** – Wednesdays at 17:00 GMT. 40 minutes of Camino conviviality with a mixture of American and European pilgrims. Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/95391703475>
Passcode: Kindness20
- **Zoom Wine Bars** – 2nd Tuesday of each month at 19:00 GMT. Very fun, informal chat about pilgrimage and all sorts of other things. Bring your own wine! Link: <https://zoom.us/j/95391703475>
- **Zoom Book Clubs** – 4th Tuesday of each month at 19:00 GMT. Free discussion groups about a particular Camino book. All of which are available from the CSJ Shop. Registration required through website – www.csj.org.uk/events
Currently scheduled:
March – *Yellow Arrow Fever*, Rudy Noriega
April – *Steps Out of Time*, Kate Soper
May – *Pilgrim Stories on and off the Road to Santiago*, Nancy Louise Frey
June – *Your Inner Camino & After the Camino*, Karin Kiser
- **Online Practical Pilgrim Webinars** – As advertised. A series of Zoom Webinars on different practical topics such as how to prepare, what to take with you, and staying safe.
- **Online Lecture Series** – As advertised. Short talks from pilgrim personalities on a great variety of topics, followed by Q&A sessions. Fundraiser events