

# Ultreia et Suseia! The Newsletter.

Vol 3. No 2.

April, 2023 Christchurch Camino Group



‘Sometimes when you lose your way, you find yourself,’ Mandy Hale

## Editorial

### Just Follow the Yellow Arrows

Pilgrims on the Camino Frances have the priest Elias Varina Sampedro to thank for the yellow arrows which guide them along the way. He was responsible for researching the medieval route and then painting the yellow arrows. His tomb may be found in the church at O’Cebreiro.

In France pilgrims follow the horizontal red and white stripes, (*balises*) markers for the GR walking routes. In the case of the Chemin Le Puy pilgrims are on the G65. (See image.) These markers also indicate the direction to take at intersections. Unlike the Camino routes in Spain those in France are marked in both directions. Another useful feature in France is a red and white cross which indicates directions not to take. The GR 65 avoids shops and bars and will often send pilgrims on more scenic loops. Observant walkers will notice the GR stripes often accompanying the yellow arrows as they make their way from St Jean Pied de Port to Zubiri. **Image:** Above: The San Salvador Camino



Often a yellow scallop shell symbol on a blue background will also be observed as a route marker. Walkers, on the Primitivo need to be aware that the rays of the shell point in different directions when crossing from the Asturias into Galicia. In the former the rays converge in the direction of travel but in Galicia the opposite is true. The pilgrim turns in the direction that the lines diverge.

On the Portuguese pilgrims will come across two sets of arrows as they head from Lisbon northwards. Blue arrows, often on the same pole point the way to Fatima.

Sometimes the mind wanders and an arrow is missed. Or the arrow might be hidden from view by a parked car. Often it is in plain sight and due to a moment's distraction, missed. A useful strategy is to back track until the last arrow is sighted. In cities the yellow arrows are often replaced by scallop shelled metal markers embedded in the pavement.

Once home and as we continue our journey, vigilance is required if we are to follow the waymarks which are possibly staring us in the face.

Ultreia Suseia  
Philip

**Banner Image:** The San Salvador Camino  
**Image:** Signage on Chemin Le Puy

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### Noticeboard

#### Scheduled 2023 Christchurch Camino Group Meeting Dates

The following are the remaining scheduled meeting dates for 2023: Monday 21 August, Monday 20 November, Rooms 2 & 3 Upper Riccarton library entry via the library or in the Sydenham Room on the same dates if South is still in operation. (Just check the 21 August agenda.)

#### ETIAS Requirement

From 2024 (check the website for the latest date) all visitors from visa waiver countries visiting schengen countries in Europe will be required to apply for, and purchase in advance (€7) an ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System). Please see <https://www.etiasvisa.com/> to see the ramifications for you and check the commencement date.

### **Future Agenda Items**

A big thank you to those who have made suggestions regarding future meeting topics. Waiting in the wings are topics including: Meseta – Skip or Savour? Arriving in Santiago de Compostela: Euphoria or Blues? Architecture on the Camino: Stop/Detour/ Ignore? We also wish to keep a focus on tales of returned pilgrims' journeys. Please send topics you would like addressed and/or offers of presenting one of your pilgrim journeys to Philip: [chchcaminogroup@gmail.com](mailto:chchcaminogroup@gmail.com)



**Image:** Waipara Vineyard Trail. Photo: Dave.

### **Christchurch Camino Walking Group**

The Christchurch Camino Walking Group meets on the third Sunday of the month, usually at 10 am. The walks are a mixture of flat and hill walks around Christchurch and surrounding areas. They provide an opportunity to try out new walks, and exercise with people who share a love for the Camino. Walks are usually completed by around 3 pm.

Please contact Cecilia for more information and to join the separate mailing list:

[chchcaminogroup@gmail.com](mailto:chchcaminogroup@gmail.com)

### **Advice Given to Pilgrims**

We wish to emphasise that all information and answers given by our presenters, organisers, meeting participants and in our newsletter are provided in good faith, and have been found to work for them/us on that particular occasion.

The information provided is a starting point for your research so that there is a range of possibilities to investigate and adapt to suit individual circumstances.

### **Ultreia et Suseia Newsletter Camino Items of Interest**

Please submit any items of Camino interest for consideration of inclusion in our quarterly newsletter to Philip at: [chchcaminogroup@gmail.com](mailto:chchcaminogroup@gmail.com) Time these to arrive at least a week before a scheduled meeting.

## Christchurch Camino Group Meeting Follow Up Monday 3 April 2023

In recognition of the "People" theme of the February newsletter a short film by Emma Buglisi on her Camino Frances was rescreened before the meeting commenced [3 min 50 sec]. (It appears to have been removed from Vimeo.)

A total of 38 (a record) gathered in a warm Sydenham Room for what could be our final meeting in this lovely venue. Please see alternative arrangements in the 'Notices' section of this newsletter. The following **Apologies** were received: Sandra, Gemma, Belinda.

Deb led the **Departing Pilgrim Ceremony**. This would have to be the largest contingent the group has seen! We wish you a Buen Camino! **Returning Pilgrim Ceremony**. There were no Returning pilgrims.

In **Things to Share** Philip passed around his sun protection gloves. (Active Ice Spectrum Sun Gloves.) They are available from Bivouac. Hammond demonstrated the use of his Pacer Poles. See [www.pacerpole.com](http://www.pacerpole.com) Anne showed us a copy of 'North to South, Hiking New Zealand's 3000 Kilometre Te Araroa Trail.' Stefan Fairweather, 2018, Christchurch City Libraries 993FAI, [5 copies]

Philip showed a printout of 'Spanish Caminos Cash Machine Fees '23'. This has been included as an attachment. Please be aware it says in the small print that the fee information was collected from Europeans only. Still, it will make a place to start. (Deutsche Bank in Spain and Germany is free for Westpac customers.) Updated copies of the 'Christchurch Camino Group Information Sheet V6' were made available.

Cecilia reported on the latest activities of the **Christchurch Camino Walking group**. Seven walked the Bealey Spur track in the Arthur's Pass National Park.

Cecilia mentioned the possibility that the walking group date might change from the third week to the second. Currently our date clashes with 'The Hero's Camino' ZOOM call. (Check out their website for an explanation of their philosophy and programme: [heroscaminos.com](http://heroscaminos.com) )

Our walking group is more of a Camino social group than a Tramping club.

### Our first Whole Group presentation was '**Walking the Camino Frances ~ Some Suggestions and Highlights from My Walk**' ~ Midge

Midge completed her first Camino on the Frances in September/October 2022. Her presentation was divided into 5 subtopics: The Idea, Planning, Equipment, Training, The Walk.

While holidaying in France with her daughter she notice some yellow arrows, and pilgrims. This prompted an investigation, and the rest is history!

Late summer/early autumn was chosen as the weather was settled and the grape harvest underway. Midge preferred to utilise the services of a travel agent as they have access to deals and there is somewhere to go if things turn pear-shaped. She found John Brierley's guidebook very useful and placed post it stickers on pages of interest. Several items were displayed. Midge recommends Injinji socks with individual toes, made from merino with a little nylon and lycra. They are available from Further Faster, 57 Buchan Street, Sydenham. The Original Hikers Wool was purchased from Frances Nation upstairs in the Arts Centre. Midge recommends taking a notebook in which to record costs etc.

As Midge enjoys walking and the outdoors, training was an easy aspect of her preparation. She found she built her fitness on the Camino as she walked.

My Walk was the final topic. Midge loved the 'People' aspect of her Camino. She recommends pilgrims seek out albergues which have communal meals. One such place was in San Sol.

She fondly remembers the publican who provided her with a salad, wine and bread even though the kitchen was closed. The Refugio Gaucelmo in Rabanal del Camino with its English afternoon tea in the garden brings back memories as does the chapel directly opposite. The Museo de la Evolution near Atapuerca was another highlight. Midge purchased a walking pole and one day it disappeared from the lobby. She was given a replacement and became quite attached to it. Unfortunately it went missing on the return flight to Paris. Perhaps following its own adventure it will make its way back to Midge.

In the **Camino Buddies** session attendees were asked to turn to the person on their right and seek their opinion regarding: the most useful action/resource prior to undertaking their Camino/The key factor which contributed to their successful Camino/s.

Our second **Whole Group activity** was a **panel discussion**. The topic was '**Secrets For Successful Caminos: Planning, Preparing, Walking/Experiencing, Reflecting/Improving.**' The panelists were: Gythlian, Hammond, Jan and Philip. Often panelists agreed with a point so to avoid duplication points were listed once.

#### **What were the key resources to assist with my planning?**

Jan ~ took a minimalist approach preferring to make discoveries along the way

Hammond ~ said he was a preparation freak and was always asking people who have walked for tips

Gythlian ~ referred to guidebooks, purchasing her own, found Brierley particularly useful

Philip ~ decide on reason for walking and seek out resources to help eg. Websites,apps, books, YouTube videos.

#### **How can I prepare my body so its well looked after?**

Mixed answers ~ general fitness, do some training 1-2 months before walk, add in your pack with increasing weight, light packs, buy one size bigger shoes, buy what suits your feet eg. Wide fitting trail runner/boot, wear in your footwear, visit therapeutic massage therapist for muscle testing and exercises specifically for you. ([movewell.net.nz](http://movewell.net.nz) Ushma Cromarty).

#### **What do I put the success of my Camino down to?**

Jan ~A good companion, avoiding getting bogged down with routines, keeping an open mind

Hammond ~ being prepared physically,

Gythlian ~ Great company, footwear that worked for me.

Philip ~ Being open to the spiritual on the trail, visiting every open church, and mass when offered, particularly with a pilgrim blessing. (The Mass in English in Santiago de Compostela.

Father Manny will bless you if you cross your arms across your chest to indicate you're not taking the host.)

#### **How can I make the most of my Camino experience?**

Jan ~ open mind, open to new experiences, don't rush, realise plans may change, read relevant literature, and most important take the opportunity to meet new people.

Hammond ~ While walking live in the present moment, not thinking about yesterday or tomorrow, and involve yourself in whatever is happening. Whatever you are experiencing, experience it fully, and really accept with open arms whatever and whoever that special moment brings.

Gythlian ~ Preparation, anticipation knowing it will be a time of reflection, new people, new experiences, "self time"...think about what is realistic in terms of pace, accommodation, contingencies, insurance, etc.. so you set off with the greatest peace of mind.

Philip ~ Begin with shorter distances, walk on natural surfaces where possible, seek out communal dinners, be aware of the impact of landscape, cycles of nature and daily rhythms.

#### **For subsequent Caminos what do I wish to do differently?**

Jan ~ Take more breaks, stay in a convent

Hammond ~ Connect with more people, initiate more conversations instead of waiting for others to engage first

Gythlian ~ Be more relaxed about accommodation. My last Camino was an anxious time regarding accommodation post Covid lockdowns.

Philip ~ Switch to aeroplane mode on the phone to assist staying in the moment.

The evening concluded with **Small Group Discussion**. This was a time for asking questions, sharing information and reminiscing in a smaller setting. Judging by the buzz in the room there was plenty to discuss.

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## Featured Topic

### Following the Arrows ~ A Question of Route Authenticity!

The question of the authenticity of a particular route has been raised in a variety of forums. I had been tempted to consider walking the Variante Espiritual on the Portuguese by returned pilgrims lavishing praise for its beauty. One particular stretch has the title 'Route of Stone and Water,' and the praise is well deserved. But is this route truly authentic? Rebekah Scott, a resident on the Meseta says it lacks historical credibility and that its all about the money such a route will bring to the area. She makes a good point. But so does Sylvia Nielsen in her post on the 'Camino Pilgrim Discussion Group.' Here she says today's pilgrims are making history. By walking this route they are in the process of creating authenticity!

In the same post Rebekah dismisses the authenticity of the Via Podiensis from Le Puy-en-Velay. However in my research before walking I read that centuries ago the history of this route was deliberately suppressed and that indeed another route (Via Lemovicensis from Vezelay) gained ascendancy and therefore authenticity. So perhaps further research is required. What I do know though is that while being a challenge the Le Puy route is beautiful and very rewarding. John Brierley in answer to my question during a recent Zoom meeting wasn't at all concerned about route authenticity. He pointed out that originally pilgrims set out from home taking the most convenient route for them.

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## Major Route Options

There are times on our Camino when we are faced with major route options and decisions. On the del Norte a huge decision is required at the Oviedo turn off. Here the route prematurely leaves the coast and heads inland towards Oviedo and the beginning of the Primitivo. A further option is to visit Oviedo and then take the route to Gijon which is back on the del Norte.

On the Portuguese pilgrims are faced with three options when departing Porto: Camino Central, Camino de la Costa, Senda Litoral. The route chosen will depend on the pilgrim's preferences, (and maybe the weather at the time.) The Espiritual decision comes around 2 kilometres after Pontevedra. This does require an additional day so may be out of the question for those with time constraints.

Those walking to Finisterre and Muxia face a major decision, whether to walk to Finisterre or Muxia first. For those wishing to finish by walking to the end of the earth, walking to Muxia first makes sense.

However walking to Finisterre first gives beautiful sea views from Cee onwards and then walking on to Muxia will provide a more reflective environment, provided the locals are not celebrating a festival! [Note: there are more frequent buses to Santiago de Compostela from Finisterre. There is an early morning bus from Muxia.] **Image:** Finisterre or Muxia?



## Walking the Variante Espiritual

The following book describes in detail what the route is like when the decision is made to turn from the Camino Portuguese on to the Variante Espiritual.

**'Sauntering the Variant Espiritual of the Camino de Santiago**, Kenneth Cline, 2021, Amazon Kindle, and Paperback.

The author and his wife in May/June 2019 walked the Espiritual Variante which leaves the Portuguese at Pontevedra and rejoins it at Pontecesures near Padron. It purports to follow the route taken by the body of St James. A chapter is devoted to how and why this route was, in 2013 accepted by the church as an official route. This is the first book I've come across which has this route as its focus. There is a route map, great photographs and plenty of information about historic buildings, bridges and square. There are also appendices dealing with Volunteering at the Pilgrims Office, St James, Accommodation along the Variante Espiritual.

I declined to walk the Variante in 2017. It was an additional day and I had already walked from Lisbon. I hadn't heard of this route so the decision was easily made. However once in Santiago the glowing descriptions of those who had walked it kindled an interest, particularly the glamorous sounding 'Path of Stone and Water.' At the conclusion of my San Salvador, Primitivo and Finisterre Caminos in 2018 I took a bus to Valenca, the last town in Portugal. I visited the fort, and walked across the bridge into Spain and on to Tui. The next day I continued along the Portuguese Central and this time followed the yellow arrows onto the Variante Espiritual. As Valenca is well over 100km from Santiago de Compostela I qualified for a Compostela. (It pays to book the Valenca bus as this bus route from Santiago de Compostela is popular.)

## Variations on the Camino de Santiago

John Brierley in his guidebooks outlined the philosophy behind his route options in at least two separate sections of his **'A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago Camino Frances'** guidebook, (16<sup>th</sup> edition, 2019). On p 7 he discusses new "scenic" paths, and marks these with green dots. He calls them *parque fluvial* which means riverside park, and less common. He cites his alternatives into Pamplona and Burgos as examples. He also adds that they will suit pilgrims seeking more solitude as they are paths "less travelled." For this edition he has also added 'purple paths' for those "seeking the silence of nature and a more solitary and reflective experience." These he warns should only be attempted by seasoned pilgrims with hiking or orienteering experience.

On p 39 he discusses the map symbols and his dotted coloured line system. This includes a more complete explanation than that previously given on p 7. A route marked with grey dots indicates road, or roadside walking.

As I walked along the Camino Frances for my second time in 2019, I was of the mindset to take the more scenic options where I determined I had the skill set to do so, and was richly rewarded. It didn't always happen though. For instance I ended up walking the traditional route into Burgos rather than the scenic riverside one as I missed the opticon signaling the route. Sometimes the additional kilometres for the scenic route indicated on the sign might be a factor, and in turn this could be influenced by the weather at the time, and even by a desire to continue walking with present company. The trail markers often label these routes as "Complementario." Dave Whitson in his **'Northern Caminos'** guidebook points out that the yellow arrows on the del Norte direct pilgrims on the most direct route. As an alternative he suggests following the red and white GR signs along more scenic and often coastal routes. While this does add kilometres the pilgrim is richly rewarded.

## A Rewarding Detour

The detour to the church at Enuate is highly recommended. As a general rule I'm inclined not to walk any further than necessary. (I'm definitely rethinking this one!) However there are exceptions. Enuate and Samos spring to mind. Signs and yellow arrows in the village of Muruzabal point the way to Enuate. Brierley says it's plus 3.1km. The road is easy walking, quiet and bisects farmland. The church of Santa Maria de Enuate is octagonal in shape with a freestanding outer porch and delicate pillars surrounding it. Inside its very tranquil and for me one of the highlights of the Camino Frances. A pathway which commences behind the church ultimately rejoins the Camino. There is no retracing of steps.



## Detour ~ Interesting Places

### An Early Morning Walk Through Castrillo de Polvazares

Between Astorga and Molinaseca are found remnants of **Maragato culture**. Watch out for the distinctive dress, cuisine and village architecture.

Brierley had recommended making the detour visit to Castrillo de Polvazares and so here I was just after dawn making my way down the main street. The village at that hour was devoid of all life. In some ways I felt I was an extra on a film set. This Maragato village is stunning and lived up to Brierley's high praise. The path leads out of the village and eventually rejoins the main Camino for the walk into the town of Santa Catalina de Somoza. Further ahead is Rabanal del Camino, another Maragato village.



**Image:** Castrillo de Polvazares

## Three Options Upon Leaving Villafranca del Bierzo on the Camino Frances

The thought of walking alongside the highway on the official route was a factor in turning on to the Ruta Pradela. While this involved a 400m ascent, rising to 930m the guidebook promised sunshine, great views and a pine forest. The third option was the Camino Dragonete which was for experienced walkers only, a highest point of 1095m and its first albergue at 26.3 km.

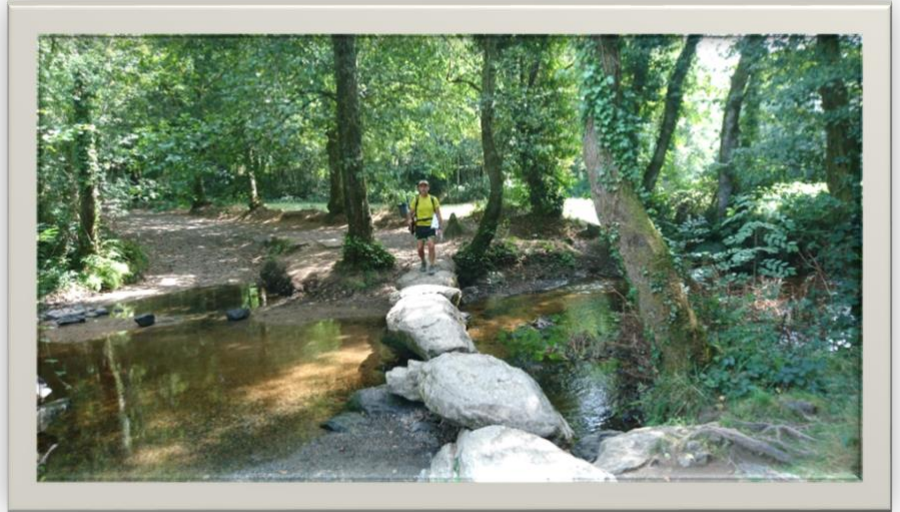
The Pradela scenic route begins with a steep path straight up from the city street and is easy to miss. In terms of difficulty it was similar to walking on the Port Hills. It was July, and hot. I sought shelter in the pine forest shade while I rested. I had decided to stay overnight at the Lamas albergue in the village of Pradela. There were two of us in the bunkroom, and the albergue featured a bar and

“restaurant.” I decided that I would head for La Faba the next day which is at 960m on the path to O’Cebreiro, and 23 km approximately from Pradela. A very worthwhile and recommended variation.

### **Take the Right Hand Option**

On the Camino Frances between Melide and Arzua pilgrims are presented with a choice. I’ve taken both.

The recommended option to the right includes a stone slab footbridge over a very inviting stream. The bridge is situated in a glade and foot soaking on a really hot day is a most welcome activity.



### **An Adventurous Detour to ‘As Catedrais’**

On my 2016 del Norte Camino I stayed at the Ribadeo albergue which is the flat roofed building alongside the bridge connecting Asturias to Galicia.

There I heard about the fabled As Catedrais rock formations further along the coast. Luckily a signposted Camino deviation commenced right outside the albergue. (Now named the Ruta del Mar.) I had a late departure as I spent the morning filming and enjoying a local festival procession in central Ribadeo. I was determined to enjoy the walk along the coastline and

**Image:** Municipal albergue, Ribadeo



stopped for a beer and lemon to become immersed in the atmosphere and take in the view at a coastal inn. I made it to the beach late in the evening. The tide was out and I strolled through all the caves as the light faded. Now accommodation. Where was I to stay? A young boy out promenading with his grandfather pointed me in the direction of an inn. Unfortunately they were completo! Fortunately

the bartender referred me to a client who just happened to have a cancellation and I was soon installed in my luxurious accommodation with balcony sea view.

Next morning my second viewing from down on the beach was thwarted by zealous ticket collectors who minutes before my arrival had taken up position. Entry was by ticket only. And they had all been allocated! Off I went to spend the day at a beach further up the coast. On the way a visit to a Tourist Information kiosk resulted in directions to rejoin the Camino. I was late leaving the beach. The Camino had headed inland and this was my last opportunity for a swim until Finisterre.

After stopping for wine and crisps and then walking into the twilight I realised I wouldn't make the albergue before closing. A "Plan B" was called for. It was a full moon and so I decided to stay inside a bar until closing and walk through the night. This would be a wonderful opportunity to walk under the stars. I departed when the last glass had been washed. It was so cold I had put my next day's clothes on too. The moon provided adequate light and all was going well until I missed one arrow.

I was lost! As I retraced my steps I set off all the barking dogs in Christendom. It was on my second circuit that I spotted the elusive arrow, and found the albergue. It was 4 am and I lay back on my pack which was propped against a convenient tree outside the albergue. At around 6 am out popped the first pilgrim. Before departing she gave me the position of her vacated bunk. I slept until around 9 am when the cleaner gave the metal bunk a resounding blow with her broom. Everyone else had departed. She thought I was a tardy pilgrim! I scurried outside with my belongings and sat on a bench in the sun. I noticed the kind cleaner had closed the self locking door on some newspaper. And I was soon asleep on 'my' bunk!



**Note:** 'As Catedrais' is a top Spanish attraction. There were lines of parked coaches on the day of my visit. The beach is limited to 5000 tickets (free) per day to be booked in advance, between the 1 July and 30 September and during Easter. Tickets can be booked on line. They are also available from accommodation providers but not the municipal albergue, and from the shuttle bus. Walking there does not qualify for a ticket! (As I found out.)

**Image:** One part of As Catedrais

### **Taking Diversions/Side Trips While Walking the Camino**

I was interested in Dee Nolan's (author of 'A Food Lover's Guide Along the Camino to Santiago de Compostela,') suggestion regarding making side trips from the Camino Frances to perhaps a winery. In this case to the medieval village of Elciego to view a Frank Gehry designed hotel, and also visit Bodegas Marques de Riscal winery. I Googled 'Camino side trips' and stumbled across a Camino Forum conversation which included bus departure times and a 'how to do it?' Obviously this practice is more common than I had thought!

On my Le Puy pilgrimage my French walking buddies had planned an overnight side trip involving a bus journey to Rocamadour a beautiful small cliff top village. Now I'm wondering if my concept of walking a pilgrimage is too narrow! For me I have relished the opportunity to eschew motorized transport. I enter a different zone after weeks of walking. Life moves at a different pace, a different rhythm. And I end up measuring distance by the time it will take to walk it.

I remember riding the bus from Muxia to Santiago de Compostela hanging on for fear of life and limb after 5 - 6 weeks living at walking pace. I'm sure the bus was only travelling around 40 km an hour on those narrow roads!

I'm all for visiting places of interest that can be reached on foot. On my Camino Norte pilgrimage I was the only one who took the picturesque 10 km approximately walk from Ribadeo along the coastal track to visit the As Catedrais rock formations at Praia de Augas Santas beach. (See article above.) Although I did make an exception and rode a bus from Tomar to Fatima on my 2017 Lisbon to Santiago de Compostela Portugues Camino. This added to my knowledge regarding pilgrimage to Marion shrines, the majority arriving on some form of transport. Later I learned that the 88 Temples pilgrimage on the island of Shikoku in Japan has most pilgrims travelling in large groups by coach.

Once home I viewed some images of Rocamadour and saw what I had missed. So is it time for a rethink!

### **A Portuguese Detour to Herbon Monastery**

Take the detour prior to Padron to Herbon and stay at the Monasterio Franciscano de Herbon donativo (5.7km return.) Detailed

directions are given in the

Brierley guidebook. A

communal dinner and

breakfast is available. There is

a church next door and a

blessing is bestowed. Pilgrims

comment on the tranquility of the whole experience.

Yellow arrows mark the way

back to Padron.

I found this to be a wonderful

communal experience. The

day of my stay happened to

coincide with a celebration in

the church next door of St

Francis, the monastery's patron

saint. Following the mass and pilgrim blessing all pilgrims received a handsome certificate and

then both pilgrims and congregation were treated to a delicious supper. ( I see reference to a

private school being housed in the monastery buildings so it would pay to check if the albergue

is still functioning.)



**Image:** Herbon monastery and donativo albergue

## Article

### Variety of Way Markers on the Camino de Santiago – A Photo Essay

Way marking on the main Camino de Santiago routes is so thorough now that it is fairly difficult to become lost. Areas which require careful observation are in the larger cities where way markers can be embedded in footpaths. Pilgrims often find themselves busy negotiating



crowded footpaths and markers are easily missed. Pilgrims will notice a variety of official and unofficial markers, some of them quite innovative. I have followed official looking arrows which led me to a commercial off route entity.

#### Image:

The painted footpath arrows in Leon separate those pilgrims deviating to the San Salvador from those continuing on the Camino Frances.



## Way-marker Story

One of the prized pictures on the Camino Frances has to be the 100km way marker. Another sought after photo is this 000,00 way-mark near the lighthouse at Finisterre (Fisterra in Gallego). Remember to have your credential with you to collect the stamp depicting the marker. (This was from a street vendor so may not always be available) The name of the town comes from the Latin words "finis" and "terrae" (end and earth). For medieval pilgrims this cape was thought to be the end of the world. It was also their turn around point as they were now faced with walking home. For many modern day pilgrims this is the end of their journey. They will return to Santiago de Compostela in one of the buses available throughout the day. Some will make the 29 km journey on foot to the seaside town of Muxia and board a bus from there to Santiago.

I have made the 4 kilometre walk to the lighthouse several times. On my last visit in 2019 I was fortunate enough to be there for the rising of the full moon. I went from viewing a magnificent sunset while perched on a rock to turning an watching an equally moving moon rising from the ocean. Thanks Sandra for the tip!

**Image:** Way marker 00 at the Lighthouse, Finisterre.



## Featured Article

### What Happens When the Yellow Arrows Cease?

While walking the Camino we happily follow the yellow arrows. We see clearly the direction the trail is taking and we learn to trust. And there is a growing confidence within, that with a yellow arrow in sight, all is well and as it should be. But what happens when the marked trail ends? Our journey or Camino continues without the benefit of a clearly way marked path. Where do we look for guidance when our life throws up a series of questions marks? While on the Camino we may have gained clarity about our life's situation, and concluded that changes to our old way of doing things needed to occur. However apart from easily adopted minor modifications, making the bigger changes might be beyond our capabilities. We might see what requires changing but lack the power or influence to bring these about. Perhaps having a mentor who listens to our story might assist us to negotiate our way through this tricky terrain and bring our Camino learnings into our everyday life.



For others the Camino may affirm that the path they were on prior to walking is the correct one. For them the loss of the arrows is not such a big deal.

The quotes below are from **'Pilgrim Stories, On and Off the Road to Santiago,'** and have been selected for their relevance to the situation many returning pilgrims find themselves in.

Getting use to life at home entails putting into context the discoveries made during the pilgrimage as well as becoming accustomed to the rhythms of society.' p 185

'But it is clear that the return home is an essential part of pilgrimage: one needs to be back in the daily routine to appreciate the Camino.'

p186

Retelling [of personal stories] plays an important part in the return, whereby one is able to reinterpret, process the experiences, and create oneself a pilgrim at the same time.'

...questions usually oriented toward the superficial (food, weather, lodgings).

...but only rarely does the pilgrim have the opportunity to process what has occurred on a more deeply personal level.

p187

Despite the positive aspects of retelling, pilgrims repeatedly comment on their inability to transmit the experiences of the Camino on a deep level because no one really understands."

**'Pilgrim Stories, On and Off the Road to Santiago,'** Nancy Louise Frey, 946 FRE, Christchurch City Libraries, [3 copies]

### **Other Homecoming Quotes**

'Wherever you stop walking is merely your turn-around place. Your journey continues and the road stretches before you. Pick up your pack and continue to walk *your* Camino.' Alexander John Shaia

'Experience is not what happens to you, it is what you do with what happens to you.' Aldous Huxley

'The challenge is to learn how to carry over the quality of the journey into everyday life.' Phil Cousineau

### **Other Resources**

**Returning from Camino,'** Alexander John Shaia, 263 SHA, Christchurch City Libraries, (1 copy)

This book is a rare find. Its purpose is to act as a guide to those pilgrims who are seeking something while walking the Camino. They may not be able to articulate exactly what it is prior to departure but they know something is amiss..

**Keeping the Camino Flame Alive in Your Heart,** by Nancy Frey, [www.walkingtopresence.com](http://www.walkingtopresence.com)  
Nancy Frey shares a method for returned pilgrims to enter or access the stored inner landscape of our Camino experience. The simple to follow instructions best performed in an area of nature near your home are listed in paragraph 2.

I recently experienced an activity designed to utilise our Camino Stories to solve current issues in our lives. It's called **'Finding Golden Arrows for Life in Our Camino Stories.'** The meeting was by Zoom and both examples that were shared hit the mark ~ one being mine. This activity warrants further exploration as it appears to be a powerful tool to make use of once home.

## References

**Leigh Brennan** on My Camino the Podcast 20/4/21. Leigh explicitly discusses her reintegration following her Camino.

**'Returning From the Camino: Lessons from a Life-Changing Journey,'** Theresa A. Fersch, 2021, eBook, Amazon, US\$ 6.99.

This book was written 5 years following Theresa's return from Camino. (She had published an account of her journey in the meantime, see below.) In my experience it is rare to find a book which is devoted to: 'So I've reached Santiago what next!' For Theresa it was post Camino blues and brain fog. In the following chapters we hear about her disconnect from almost everything. She had difficulty in finding anyone who was firstly interested and secondly could relate to her experiences. The book includes the lessons she learned, the steps Theresa took to find her new direction and purpose.

A positive read which may help with some guidelines for those pilgrims who find themselves in similar situations.

**'Sunrise in Spain: Finding the Good Life Hiking the Camino de Santiago,'** 2014, Theresa A Fersch, Jessica Heid which is a day by day account of her pilgrimage, and published soon after.

**'Camino de Santiago - A Mini-Movie – A First Time Camino Pilgrim,'** robscamino, You Tube, July, 2015. [37.35]

The final section contains Rob's after Camino reflections.

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## Article

**Things to Do In Astorga** (on the Camino Frances)

- Sight the open air Roman ruins at the entry to Astorga.
- Watch the two metal figures of the 17<sup>th</sup> century clock atop the Baroque Ayuntamiento (town hall) ring in the hour. View from a table in the square while partaking of refreshments.
- Visit the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century Catedral de Santa Maria, with its exterior, cloister and museum.
- View the city's Roman walls. (Some are behind the cathedral.)
- Sight/visit the Bishop's Palace designed by Gaudi (alongside the cathedral). This building now houses an important pilgrim museum.



**Image:** Episcopal Palace, Astorga.

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## Camino Story

### Detour to Fatima

I had deliberately ignored the blue arrows painted on the same sign post as the yellow ones. What interest did I have in making that detour? I was already walking from Lisbon to Santiago de Compostela along the Camino Portugues. That was far enough! However upon arrival in Tomar I had begun to reconsider the decision. Fatima after all was a world famous pilgrimage destination, nearby being the Capella das Aparicoes marking the spot where the Virgin Mary

allegedly appeared in 1917 to three small children. I was very unlikely to pass this way again. So I purchased a return bus ticket to Fatima. A very good decision as it happens. Here I was able to witness what arrival at a sacred site truly means. I joined a group on a small 'Noddy' train to visit the field where the Virgin Mary appeared, toured the various basilicas which have sprung up to attend to the needs of the devout, visited the tombs of two of the children and attended a mass at the 8000 seat Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity. I was amazed at the sight of some pilgrims advancing across the plaza meekly on their hands and knees as they made their way along the marble pathway to the Chapel of the Apparitions! I did my best to engage with the Holy while surrounded by the inevitable commercialism. I'm pleased I went.

### Resource

'Getting Lost on the Camino de Santiago,' robscamino, YouTube, [11.13]

A discussion regarding resources to assist the pilgrim find their way to the chosen destination.

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### Camino Poem

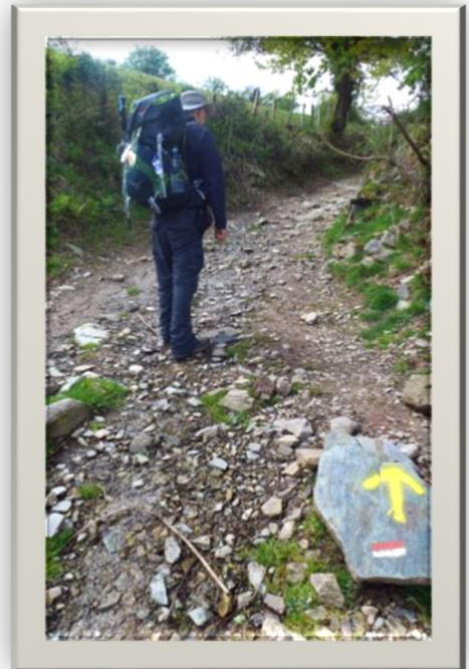
#### Near and Far

As I walk in the pure land,  
people emerge from the shadows,  
friends of many a year, cast in a different light.

Confidently I stride across the terrain  
gaining a sense of purpose and self,  
while watching for potholes, and lurking debris.

Gradually and with reflective practice  
more of the landscape is traversed  
and bounteous rewards continue to flow.

© Philip 2014.



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### Camino Tip

#### Finding The Way

Seek out the whereabouts of the first arrow for tomorrow's journey. This is particularly important if you are departing in the dark. Another strategy is wait until others leave the accommodation and follow them until you are all securely on the trail! I'm certain there's a tech solution too.

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### Resources

#### Buen Camino App

An interesting app with lots of route information. Booking.com reservations/bookings can be made from the app. Route profiles, distances etc. Worth exploring to see if it meets your needs.

## Reviews

### Books

**'Off the Road, A Modern-day Walk Down the Pilgrim's Route into Spain,'** Jack Hitt, Downloadable Audiobook, 1994, [1 copy]

I found it a trial to give the attention this carefully crafted book in audio format requires and deserves. I've yet to complete it.

**'Go Your Own Way: Following in the Footsteps of Martin Sheen on the Way of St James,'** John Lloyd, 2020, Kindle, US\$3.27

John is walking from St Jean Pied de Port to Santiago de Compostela. He writes about his journey as it happened, day by day. He has a conversational almost tongue in cheek writing style which makes for easy reading. Most pages have photographs which round out the text. He finishes each day with a list of what did, or didn't happen which adds to the humour. I was interested to see he bumped in to our Gythlian and Elizabeth along the Way. An entertaining read.

**'Pilgrimage: Journeys of Meaning,'** Peter Stanford, 2021, Christchurch City Libraries, 203.5 STA, [2 copies]

The Introduction includes a thoughtful discussion regarding the definition of pilgrimage, and possible benefits for pilgrims. There are 13 pilgrimages discussed, each with their own chapter. The first is the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Like the other chapters Stanford delves into the history and legends associated with the route while imparting some general information. This provides a framework for understanding the existence of each route and the ebb and flow in popularity over the centuries.

Provides useful background material for a number of the world's great pilgrimage routes.

**'along the way, a collection of letters for the journey,'** Nikki Banas, Christchurch City Libraries, 158 BAN, [2 copies]

This is essentially a guide book for the inner journey. I noticed from the library synopsis that this could be a valuable read in preparation for a transformative Camino. Chapter headings include, The Path Ahead, Things to Carry, Getting Lost, Falls and Breaks, etc.

If you can cope with being addressed as "my sweet friend," then some great advice is awaiting.

**'Cycling the Ruta Via de la Plata, On and off-road options on the Camino from Seville to Santiago and Gijon,'** John Hayes, 2022, Christchurch City Libraries, 946 HAY, [1 copy]

Has some great summaries of what to see along the way.

### You Tube

**'Taking the Samos Detour, Camino Frances Vlog 4 [2021], The Most Magical of Days,'** Efrén Gonzalez, YouTube, 17.41]

This vlog shows the Samos diversion from the signpost through to Samos and then on to Sarria. There are dramatic shots of the Monastery.

**'3 | Camino Frances ebike, | From Tapas to Cathedrals: Exploring,'** Efrén Gonzalez, YouTube, [14.18]

My goodness what a menace! The speed with which Efrén passes pilgrims on foot is mind-boggling. Let's hope this doesn't catch on. This was Part 3 of a series which can be accessed via his YouTube channel.

**'Camino Provisions ~ Providing Camino Tips to help you plan and complete your walk, whether you're new or a seasoned pilgrim.'**

This is a website focusing on the Camino Frances. At the time of writing there were 28 videos covering a wide range of topics. I viewed their **'The Meseta: Highlights & Tips,'** Camino Provisions, YouTube, [18.21].

**'Camino de Santiago – My Nomadic Adventure – Day 1,'** Kyle Frankenfeld, YouTube, [13.01].

Kyle who is an Australian has a go pro and a drone and sets off to record his nomadic adventure. He has ADHD and his usual pattern is to be continually on the go. He chats about his discoveries and lessons as he becomes aware of them.

**'Camino de Santiago, The Portuguese Camino Camino from Porto,'** Harry James Roth, YouTube, [12.08]

Harry previously walked the Camino Francis in April 2022. (See August Newsletter). This time he is on the Senda Litoral. He's walking in October and due to the wind and rain walks the Central route out of Porto. This he regrets due to the highways and commercial areas.

**'We're Doing the Camino de Santiago AGAIN ( Portuguese Route),'** Lisa and Josh, YouTube, [18.30]

Lisa and Josh are always great value. They walk a mixture of the Senda Litoral and Central routes. Episodes are still dropping.

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[Back copies of the newsletter have been archived on our website. [www.chchcamino.net](http://www.chchcamino.net)]

'If we are facing in the right direction all we have to do is keep on walking.' Zen Proverb



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