

Ultreia et Suseia! The Newsletter.

Vol 4. No. 1.

January, 2024, Christchurch Camino Group



‘Your outer journey may contain a million steps; your inner journey only has one: the step you are taking right now.’ Eckhart Tolle

Editorial

Travelling Light

An important part of my pilgrimage on the Camino is the inner journey. Pilgrims on their return readily speak about their experiences on the physical Camino. We eagerly share details of packing lists and blister prevention and how successful our preparations had been. How often though do we discuss the journey within, which is happening simultaneously? From my experience not much. Once on the Camino I’ve been surprised how fellow pilgrims will share deeply personal insights and details of their lives. It is quite astonishing really. People sharing thoughts and concerns with almost complete strangers that they had dared not broach with lifelong friends. I’m not immune. I’ve given thought to why this might be. Tentative conclusions reached include the degree of openness we might exhibit on the Camino, a shared goal and experience, uninterrupted time, and probably a factor is ‘like ships that pass in the night,’ we may never see these confidantes again.

Some thoughts regarding optimal preparation for both the outer and inner journeys are discussed below, in the article, ‘Setting Optimal Conditions for the Inner Journey.’

Ultreia Philip

Image: Portuguese landscape near Golega.

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Noticeboard

Scheduled 2024 Christchurch Camino Group Gathering Dates

The following are the remaining scheduled gathering dates for 2024: Monday 8 April, Monday 26 August, Monday 25 November. The April meeting venue is the Sydenham Room, South Library.

Christchurch Camino Walking Group

The Christchurch Camino Walking Group is for people who have a Camino interest and attend our quarterly meetings. We meet on the second 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



Image: Walking on the 360 trail near the Groyne.

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 can be adapted to suit individual circumstances.

2024 Gathering Contributions Request

We welcome presentations from our returned pilgrims. We would love to hear about your experiences. Please contact Philip: chchcaminogroup@gmail.com

It is not unusual for the Camino to be influencing changes in the pilgrim's life long after the footsteps have fallen silent. If you are willing to share we would love to hear about your continuing journey.

Christchurch Camino Group January 29, 2024 Gathering, Follow Up

Our biggest attendance, 45, gathered to listen discuss and share all things Camino on a very warm evening. Following the **Welcome** the following **Apology** was received; Gythlian.

Incoming Mail: Gonzalo and Astrid who attended the meeting in February 2020 and now live in Auckland, had a memorable 5 weeks on the Frances between 1 May and 5 June, 2023.

Congratulations and Buen Camino from the Christchurch network.

A **Returning Pilgrims' Ceremony** was held for the following pilgrims: Elizabeth, Clare, Steve, Liz, Sue and Catherine.

Departing Pilgrims' Ceremony ~ there were no pilgrims departing before our next meeting on the 8 April.

Cecilia presented the **Christchurch Camino Walking Group Report** detailing the groups recent activities. In November the picturesque Rakaia Gorge Walkway was the focus. The final activity scheduled for 2023 was a picnic at Iron Ridge Quarry. Due to inclement weather a pot luck "indoor picnic" was held at a venue in the city instead. A Tapas pot luck evening in January proved to be a most enjoyable way to commence the 2024 year. The Hero's Journey was mentioned briefly. To find out more consult heroscamino.com



Image: Rakaia Gorge Walkway ~ Marie-Therese

Journey Presentations

Steve and Claire's presentation was titled ~ **'Del Norte – A "Trail" by Ordeal.' Pilgrims' Progress Through Adversity.**

Clare and Steve began walking the Camino del Norte on 31 May, 2023. Their intention was to cross over to the Primitivo Camino.

However Clare injured her Achilles tendon and later experienced compensatory pain in the opposite knee so these plans were abandoned due to the more demanding aspects of that Camino

route. A bag weighing 4 kgs was shipped to Ivar in Santiago de Compostela helped lighten the packs. A combination of less demanding trails, shorter days and rest days meant they were able to complete the Del Norte. The Norte has some great seaside and mountain landscapes. The first three weeks in particular were quite strenuous with many ascents and descents.

In comparison to the Frances and Portuguese from Porto, there were; fewer pilgrims (and they were younger 20 – 40), fewer pilgrims accommodations and restaurants, focus on tourists in the Basque country, more road and sidewalk walking, more demanding physically, so much so that they were both showered with praise for their endeavours. This Camino was found to be less

spiritual. Highlights of the route included: beautiful beaches; San Sebastián, Pobena, obtaining tickets to Tito Bustillo Caves to see Palaeolithic cave drawings near Ribadesella, Guernica, visiting Ermita de San Miguel de Arretxinaga built around three huge megalithic stones, viewing the Guggenheim Museum. Steve and Clare arrived in Santiago de Compostela on 16 July some 7 days later than planned. A rewarding experience but not the best choice for a first Camino.

Elizabeth ~ 'via Francigena: 420 km on the trail to Rome.'

Elizabeth presented a comprehensive picture of what it was like to walk from Lucca to Rome (420 km) on this pilgrim route over 28 days with temperatures over 30° in Italy. (She walked with Gythlian in September.)

There were a number of aspects which would be familiar to Camino pilgrims. Pilgrims have a booklet for stamps and this is presented in Rome for the Testamonium. There are albergues, although fewer than on the Frances and Portuguese. Food and accommodation is more expensive and there are fewer drinking fountains, and cafes. The cost was up to \$NZ150 per day. This included Airbnb and Booking.com accommodation options.

There were challenges; heat, walking on busy roads, climbing hills at the end of the day, warm coffee, bedding mix ups, not so friendly dogs. And there were highlights; Door of the Day, the arches ~ in town walls, bridges, aqueducts, etc., medieval towns, Rest Days - at Siena, Bolsena (lake), and great pharmacies.

Elizabeth also gave some background to the route. The Via Francigena is 2000 km long and follows the route taken by Sigeric in 990 AD between Canterbury and Rome. The route crosses 4 countries; England, France, Switzerland and Italy. In 1994 it was designated a "cultural route; to promote unity. It is well signposted.

Pauline ~ 'Travelling Light on the Camino Frances' A solo journey with a 28 litre pack weighing 6.2 kgs while maintaining a stylish fashion sense.

Pauline was rather like a magician pulling countless rabbits out of a hat, or even like the Television advertiser who intoned, ' Wait there's more! For the length of the talk, 20 minutes, Pauline kept producing further items from various pockets of her Macpack "Rapaki" pack. Everyone was in awe! The 6.2kgs was achieved through hard work and discipline! Pauline weighed each item, and considered the number of uses it might have before it made the cut. Clothing items were selected for practicality, weight and colour coordination. There was an evening wear ensemble, which Pauline wore for our presentation. She remained blister and injury free throughout her Camino, in part due to the light pack. Pauline had a suitcase with items for her after Camino travels and this was left in the UK. She walked in June and July last year. She carried a rain jacket, and an umbrella (mainly for sun protection) and a quilt instead of a sleeping bag (583g).

Pauline carried walking poles which she had labeled with her email address. She also recommended lacing trail runners with colored laces to reduce the risk of a pilgrim taking them from the shoe rack in error. We would have to agree with the French pilgrim who told Pauline that she was the most elegant woman on the Camino.

Philip made reference to **'The Soul of a Pilgrim: Eight Practices for the Journey Within,'** Christine Valters Paintner, 263 PAI, Christchurch City Libraries, (3 copies). In Chapter 2 Paintner discusses 'The Practice of Packing Lightly,' in terms of the *inner journey*; attitudes, beliefs, expectations.

The evening concluded with a shortened **Small Group Discussion** session.

New attendees are invited to write to chchcaminogroup@gmail.com for a PDF on Information for Prospective Pilgrims V7. This contains a list of Camino resources and references.

Featured Topic

Some Thoughts on My Inner Journey

I suppose I've been on a pilgrimage most of my life seeking answers to those big questions; Who am I? What is life's purpose etc? In 2011 I was in Cambodia motoring up the Sangkae river on a day long run from the river port of Battambang to Tonle Sap lake and on to Siem Reap. A new friend had encouraged me to record my experiences in poetry. So there was plenty of time to practice! I was backpacking solo and this journey included walking along narrow springy planks to gain entry to river boats etc. So I wrote 'Travelling Light!' and 'Travelling Solo.' In 2013 I walked my first Camino. Once home I was reflecting on my journey along the Camino Frances. It was then I grasped the deeper meaning of what I had written two years earlier. 'Travelling Light!' Wow! I was around seven days in on my Camino when it dawned on me. My pack weighing 8.5 kg was too heavy for me to carry comfortably 860 km. A quick visit to the post office saw just over one kg dispatched to Santiago de Compostela. It had been a painful process laying out my already meager possessions on my bunk and making the necessary cull. A similar process occurred mentally as I walked. Long stretches of solitude and silence provided uninterrupted time to sift and sort ideas, review habits and discard unwanted mental baggage.

And as for 'Travelling Solo,' this described exactly what had happened to me on the Camino, 'rich interactions with furnace-like focus,' occurred frequently and with a variety of pilgrims.

Travelling Light

Like a seasoned traveller
unwanted baggage is shed,
ideas and practices
accumulated through childhood
carried forward as part of 'me,'
and no longer wanted on voyage.

Years of self examination
pressing through uncharted territory,
sees the emergence of a new self-
understanding.
What remains, is in essence,
love, light, laughter, compassion
peace and patience in a place called Now!

© Philip, 2011

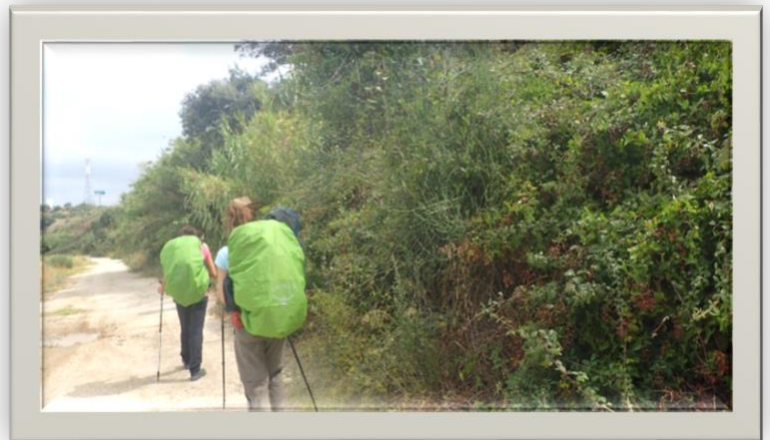


Image: Portuguese Coastal

Travelling Solo

Travelling solo offers freedom to choose
Who will I be?
How long will I stay?
Will I link up with you?

Like moths to a flame
an invisible attraction brings like-
minded people closer,
to reveal over time,
deep understandings and unspoken
connections.

Rich interactions and furnace-like
focus
ensures that friendships reach an
intensity
unknown in normal times.
Parting is part of the process
and, richly rewarded we move on.

© Philip, 2011

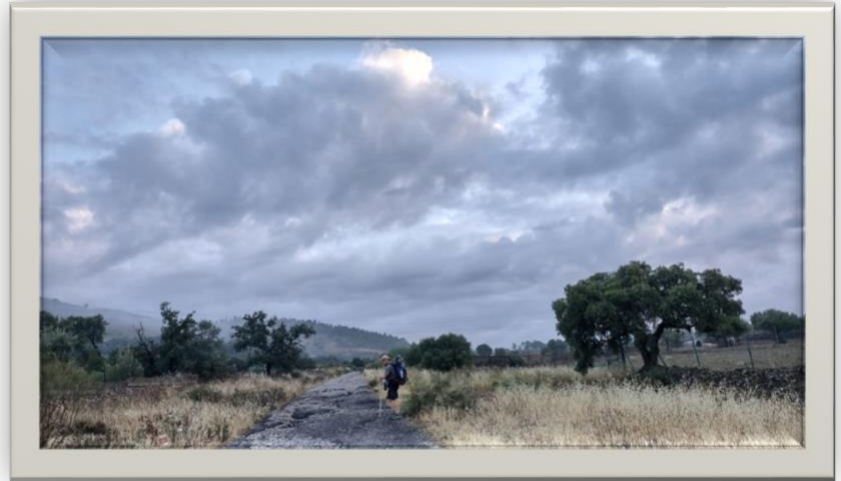


Image: via de la Plata

On the Camino there was the opportunity to enjoy long periods of silence and stillness providing time for reflection and contemplation. As well pilgrims would magically appear and engage in deep conversation as the kilometres ticked by.

Stillness

The transition is made.
Imperceptibly I move into the stillness of Now!
Where there is no future and no past.

Others are called into my presence,
attracted by invisible rays of energy.
We dance like moths and move into the light.
There is no future and no past.

At times I am drawn to others
Some ancient recognition?
Deep and intimate thoughts are shared
as we travel through the landscape.
Another call is heard and answered.
There is no future and no past.

The process is repeated
old souls exchange greetings and enrich the occasion
with new understandings.
There is no future, there is no past.
Just Now!

© Philip, 2011



Image: v9ia de la Plata

Deep friendships would form on the Camino and then circumstances would dictate a parting of the ways. Some pilgrims were walking for a week, others had a different pace, and priorities. I came to see that this was all part of the process known as, “letting go.”

Letting Go

Letting go, letting go
of the old and outmoded
being open to the new.
Trusting in the universe and letting go.

Letting go, letting go
walking alongside fellow pilgrims
sharing thoughts of spiritual hope.
Keeping pace for a time,
and letting go.

© Philip, 2013

Image: The meseta.



Walking the meseta in particular provided an ideal opportunity to continue the letting go process. There is time to review and discard outmoded practices and beliefs. And to begin righting wrongdoing.

Each year whilst walking the Camino I set myself some intentions. A repeat offender is a determination to be open, and non-judgmental. This poem was partially written during a stopover by the hotel pool in Siem Reap, Cambodia and completed once home.

A Lesson in Acceptance

A forgotten poem fragment rises to the surface
of the collected papers.
One and a half years have passed.
Anticipation abounds, what messages
did it portend for the “new” me!

A remembrance flickers into life
as a picture forms of a callow English youth,
tattoo on his left arm, frolicking in the hotel pool, beer in hand,
inebriated beyond his mother’s recognition,
still heading home from the New Zealand Rugby World Cup.
He is frowned upon with disapproving eyes!

A repentant figure emerges into the glaring afternoon light..
Dark glasses conceal alcohol fuelled eyes.
His feet dangle in the azure sparkling water,
as profuse apologies for any possible profanities,
or lewd behaviour, which may have offended,
are offered to the grey haired codger.
'The angels can wait for a moment,'

a permanent "thank you" for the spared life
of a beloved father emblazoned on a grateful son's inner arm,
says it all ~ never judge a book by its cover!

© Philip, 2014

While walking alone on the Camino there was time to bring to mind hurtful words spoken in haste, or actions regretted, and to make an internal request for forgiveness. 'Naked Before God,' utilises metaphor to describe how the layers are stripped away to reveal the Authentic Self.

Naked Before God

Clothes are divested.

Simultaneously sins and misdemeanors
are recounted, and placed before God for absolution.

More is revealed as the discard pile gains in stature.

Nothing is hidden.

Every hair and skin blemish is on show,
symbolising a transcendence over darkness and concealment,
allowing love to shine.

© Philip, 2013

I realised that the universe was filled with abundance and ever expanding, and that I could be an active participant whilst walking, seeking, contemplating and discussing. That within me there was a well of deep knowing waiting to be drawn upon. And on the Camino as in SE Asia, and at home there were guides, potential walking companions, available to act like the stars above and illuminate the way.

Gifts to the Star Gazer

Heavenly displays continue to fascinate
providing a glimpse of never ending beauty.
An idea is born as the stargazer's
persistence reveals possibilities and
unending potential.

Stars emerge, their qualities slowly
revealed,
as light replaces shadow
each joining the glittering galaxy
stretching across the universe.

© Philip, 2013



Interestingly the act of walking on the Camino with intention, was mimicking my earlier S E Asian experience. I was again drawn to people on and off the Camino interested in spiritual matters. This time though there was an abundance of time to engage.

Near and Far

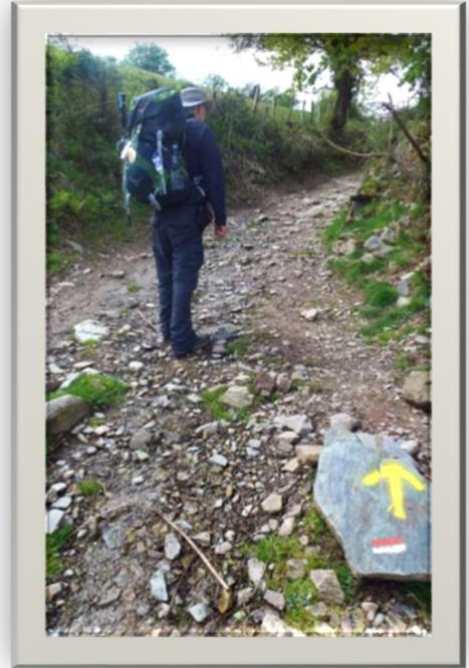
As I walk in the pure land,
people emerge from the shadows,
friends of many a year, cast in a different light.

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.

The whole concept of “Letting Go,” had continued to fascinate me. I read that in order for there to be space for the new, ideas and possessions surplus to requirements needed to go. I had been pondering and acting on this over the years. At the beach I chanced upon the remnants of a tree washed up by the tide. I photographed it and began to draft a poem to describe my thoughts on the “Letting process,” which I was able to see clearly within this log.



Death of Ego

Beached by an unseen force,
lashed by the elements
stripped of bark
foliage and individuality
now lying on a distant shore
for nature's next instalment.
I Am That.

© Philip, 2014.

On the Frances in 2013 I had walked with a pilgrim who was carrying, and reading, '**A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose,**' by Eckhart Tolle.

He led a conversation which discussed Tolle's appeal to crack open our ego and 'let it go'. He talked about being ego dominated. Coincidentally on my stopover I had visited a Hindu temple in Little India, Singapore. I was standing mesmerised by a statue of Ganesha when I was guided to one side. A worshipper had a coconut in his hand and charged towards a stainless steel lined bin and released it. The coconut smashed with shards of shell and coconut milk flying through the air. I later found out he was symbolically cracking open his ego.



I snatched an opportunity to flick through the pilgrim's book and determined to purchase a copy once back in London. I remember devouring the book, and setting about implementing the ideas given regarding downsizing my ego. The following poem resulted.

Soul Chrysalis

Soul emerges
from its flimsy wrappings
the restricting cage destroyed.
Impediments to flowing pure light
Are lifted in mind and body.

© Philip, 2019

Once home as I continued on this inner journey of letting go, and integrating new learnings, it was easy to slip into old habits. Without the yellow arrows to provide direction and fellow pilgrims for support it was tempting to settle for the status quo.

Moving Beyond

Familiar pathways provide security
and a knowing certainty.
Stepping beyond them,
leaving comforting signs and familiar settings
is a leap of faith.

New signs are noticed, accepted unconditionally
and fully experienced by the pilgrim.
Securely grounded in a new reality,
centred on what matters,
the path becomes a cherished gift
offered to the universe, with gratitude.

© Philip, 2016

My most illuminating and enlightening experience occurred once home and at a shopping mall of all places! With much determination the process of transformation continues and was expressed in this 2018 poem.



Becoming

Stars announce their presence by Being.
Prominent through their magnificence.
Largely hidden from city dwellers,
seemingly constant in form,
they join the evolving dance.

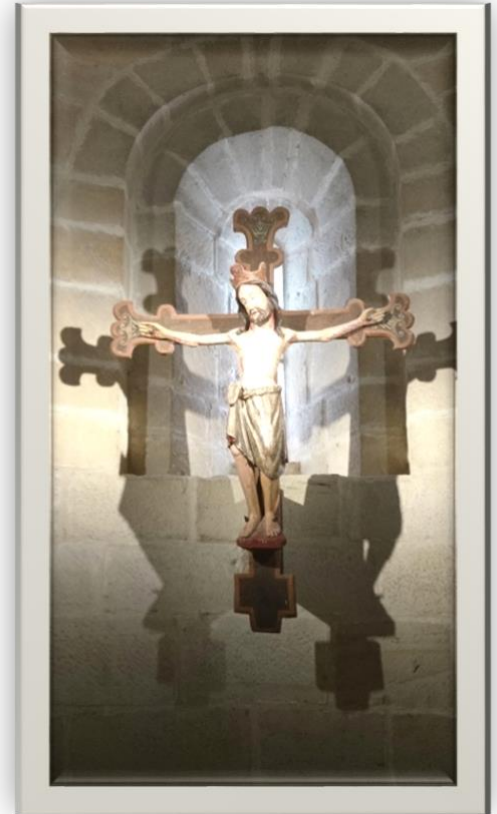
Standing firmly on the Ground of Being,
enveloped in blackness
save for the light from distant stars
an awareness of divine presence intensifies.

Hiding nothing, declaring everything
gaining by losing, expanding and transforming
while open to peace and stillness,
the supplicant surrenders, dissolving into Oneness.

© Philip, 2018

Images: Church ceiling Eunate, Camino Frances, North
Canterbury beach, Crucifix Torres del Rio.

(A number of these poems have appeared previously in 'Ultreia
Suseia The Newsletter,' in a different context.)



Useful References for the Inner Journey

Camino Talks with John Brierley - Part 1 – My personal journey on the Camino de Santiago, 2014, Follow the Camino, YouTube [10.17]

'Camino Talks with John Brierley - Why We Need to Slow Down,' Follow the Camino, [25.53]

Some interesting points regarding slowing down and being open to the experience. Includes some general questions about walking various routes.

My Camino – the podcast, **'Grant Kitchen walked the Camino – now he's living the dream,'** 12 August, 2018, [54 mins], Apple Podcasts.

Grant Kitchen speaks of his journey along the Camino Frances, a journey which changed his life. He discusses his book, **'The Dream, A Practical Guide to Achieving Your Life's Purpose,'** which details the necessary steps and tools required to turn dreams into reality.

The YouTube talk **'Preparing for the Inner Journey,'** by Monty Dojeiji is a great resource for reviewing progress being made on the inner journey.

'Camino 101 – Preparing for the Inner Journey,' Monty Dojeiji, YouTube, [42.26]

'A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago A Practical & Mystical Manual for the Modern-day Pilgrim, John Brierley, 946 BRI Christchurch City Libraries, [1 copy]

'A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose,' by Eckhart Tolle Christchurch City Libraries, 158.1 TOL (2 copies)

'The Power of Now, A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment,' Eckhart Tolle, Christchurch City Libraries, 158.1 TOL, [3 copies]

'Stillness Speaks, Whispers of Now,' Eckhart Tolle, Christchurch City Libraries, 291.44 TOL, [3 copies]

'Into the Thin, A Pilgrimage Walk Across Northern Spain,' Stephen Drew, 946 DRE, 2020, Christchurch City Libraries, (3 copies.)

This memoir is very well written and will bring back memories as Stephen describes his Camino journey. As promised in the title he does deliver regarding his inner journey.

Stephen discusses his book in the following podcasts.

Episode 47 - Into the Thin, The Camino Podcast, [54.14]

An interview with Stephen Drew. A walk towards love and away from guilt and shame.

Stephen Drew, - How the Camino helps us process grief and life's many challenges

Camino Café podcast, July 3, 2021. [56 min]

YouTube

'John Brierley - The Inner Journey + Bringing the #Camino Home,' The Camino Café Podcast, 2023, YouTube, [57.01]

John explains how his guidebooks came about including his simple maps, and spiritual insights. Highly recommended.

Camino de Santiago Faith Walk with Kristin and Peter – Film, YouTube, [1:42:57]

Kristin discusses the inner journey she experienced whilst walking the Camino Frances with husband Peter.

Article

Setting Optimal Conditions for the Inner Journey

Is there such a thing as too much planning and preparation for a pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago? If everything is known about the journey in advance where is the element of surprise? How will new learnings come about if the usual bumps are smoothed? These thoughts have sprung to mind, as one of the purposes of the Christchurch Camino Group is to assist pilgrims as they prepare!

I believe the short answer is yes. So then what is best to investigate prior to departure and what is best to leave for the Camino to provide? For Kiwis there is a huge financial commitment in the fare alone so surely it would be wise to ensure the success of the adventure as much as this is possible? So advice on types of footwear, blister avoidance, sorting weather conditions, carrying as little as possible, etc. would surely be useful prior knowledge. Knowing about key sights/sites and pilgrim practices would be a good thing, wouldn't it? For many we 'may not pass this way again.' It would be unfortunate to miss unique experiences due to knowledge deficits. With all that was happening each day I found it a mission to read my guide book in the evening. So I would advocate forming a basic knowledge regarding these things. To miss out on bringing a stone to place at the foot of Cruz de Ferro would be a pity as would missing the medieval frescoes in the collegiate church of San Isidora in Leon ~ which I did x 2!

Giving some thought to what happens after reaching Santiago de Compostela is an important consideration. Having *time* to reflect on what has just taken place is crucial. If circumstances permit taking time perhaps in retreat, to process the journey would be time well spent.

In terms of the inner journey preparation though, Karin Kiser advocates minimal preparation. She suggests giving consideration to the reason for hearing the call, and forming intentions. Other preparation like watching the film, 'The Way,' and reading Camino memoirs she believes will give rise to visual and mental frameworks which could be deleterious to your own experiences. By all means share, read about and reminisce upon return. Alexander John Shaia in his book, '**Returning From Camino,**' suggests readers in the chapter, 'Ways to Use the Guide,' read only where they are up to on their journey for similar reasons. John Brierley in his guidebooks includes a section 'Preparation for the inner journey.' This includes pertinent questions to aid reflection. In a reply to a question I posed, John said, 'The fewer extraneous elements the better.' He has counselled against external distractors like playlists, use of mobile phones for FaceTime etc. This was summarized by an observation from Tinkatinker on Ivar's Forum, 'The Camino was an opportunity to step out of the "normal" world. It seems to me, that the "normal" world has stepped onto the Camino and brought with it all the stuff we used to use Camino to leave behind.'

Reference

'**Returning From Camino,**' Alexander John Shaia, Christchurch City Libraries, 263 SHA [1 copy].

'**Your Inner Camino, Your pocket guide to inspiration and transformation along the Camino de Santiago,**' Karin Kiser, 2019, Camino Chronicles Press

In the foreword Karen indicates that this pocket book is designed to be read randomly as one walks. She advises against reading before commencing the pilgrimage. 'The exercises and contemplations are much more powerful when you are outside your daily habits and routines and on the Camino itself.'

This book offers a map of the journey within, to inspire when the going gets tough, and exercises and things to ponder whilst walking.

'**After the Camino, Your pocket guide to Integrating the Camino de Santiago into your daily life,**' Karin Kiser, 2019, Camino Chronicles Press

[If purchased as a pair including postage, US 20.95.]

'Karin Kiser, '**Lighten Your Load, and the Two Pocket Guides,**' My Camino the Podcast, 15 June, 2021, 9 August 2022,

Karin Kiser, '**Unplug Your Inner Robot - the secret to lasting happiness.**' My Camino the Podcast, 9 August, 2022

'**A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino Portugues, A Practical & Mystical Manual for the Modern Day Pilgrim,**' John Brierley, Christchurch City Libraries, 946 BRI, [1 copy]

Article

Some Thoughts on The Journey Within

Two interesting quotes from the book referenced below: Javier a memorable character said to Beebe, 'Remember that the Camino is what you make of it. It's not linear and it's not about starting in one place and ending up in Santiago de Compostela. It's about being where you are and being open to the road, its gifts, and its lessons.'

If the journey is not linear as Javier says, how does his explanation sit with you?



'Or what if the Golden Goose is within? Could that be what the Game of the Golden Goose guides us toward, finding our own Golden Goose through a path of inner spiritual transformation? p 292

Image: 'Game of the Goose Camino de Santiago,' Plaza de la Orca, Logrono. Photo Angela. (Take you own dice.)

Finding the Golden Goose is a **quest** rather like seeking the Holy Grail. Maybe as we seek we might find the grail within us, a cup overflowing with love.

Reference

'**The Way of the Wild Goose: Three Pilgrimages Following Geese, Stars and Hunches on the Camino de Santiago,**' Beebe Bahrami, 2022, Christchurch City Libraries, 203.5 BAH, [4 copies].

'**The Seven Basic Plots, Why We Tell Stories,**' Christopher Booker, eBook, Christchurch City Libraries, [1 copy]

Article

Some Te Araroa Trail Resources

Following the wonderful presentation at our November gathering by Gemma here are some follow-up resources which are readily available on YouTube and from Christchurch City Libraries.

Books

'**My Trail, Te Wai Pounamu, A Pilgrimage on the Te Araroa, South Island, Aotearoa, New Zealand,**' Scott Bryan, 993 SCO, Christchurch City Libraries, [5 Copies]

Scott is an engaging writer who quickly has the reader immersed in his adventure. As each day unfolds he describes the trail, the impact of the weather and the people he meets. He is a councillor on the Otago Regional Council and so has a good understanding of the flora and fauna and the issues regarding the environment he is traversing. Each chapter heading includes the geographical position, date, day number and distance walked. Maps and photographs, and a poem or two complement the text.

Scott takes several breaks from the trail, the final one lasting months due to Covid lockdowns.

'BeWILDered, Leaving everything behind for 3000km in the wilds of New Zealand,' Laura Waters, 2019, 993 WAT, Christchurch City Libraries, [4 copies]

Laura commences walking with a friend, who on the first day withdraws "temporarily." As her adventure unfolds and the kilometres tick by she shares her backstory. We get a detailed account of the trail, the trials and tribulations faced and meet her trail families. As icing on the cake we are privy to her inner journey. Being immersed in nature has a healing effect and Laura details how her experiences on the trail cause her to evaluate her self concept.

An excellent read.

YouTube

Te Araroa Trail You Tube Reviews (Reprinted from August, 2021)

'Up and Down - 3000 km on New Zealand's Longest Hiking Hiking Trail,' Dylan Moron, 2021, [20 min 59 secs] You Tube.

Enhanced by the very real photography, drone shots and excellent interviews with Te Araroa Trail walkers.

An informative and professional documentary, with stunning photography.

'One Foot in Front of the Other, – Te Araroa,' Jean Hacquart, October, 2020, [23 min 57 secs], YouTube.

Filmed to show the guts, and determination required, and reward for completing this adventure. Great use of walking poles! Wow what a stunningly beautiful, and wild country we live in! And then there is a surprise near the end. This guy is a legend!

A beautifully filmed and narrated film.

Te Araroa in 4 Minutes,' Thru-Hike,' Overview,' A Stray Life, YouTube, [4.12]

Great clips and interesting commentary. Provides an overall appreciation of the trail.

'Tom Hikes Te Araroa - The Reality of Thru-Hiking,' A Stray Life, YouTube, 2020, [10.13]

If you like laddish humour this is for you. Tom completes the trail unconventionally. (He had multiple body issues.)

'Te Araroa Trail Gear List: What to Pack for a Thru-Hike,' A Stray Life, 2021, YouTube, [20.20]

A comprehensive review of all the items utilised.

Hiking 3000km on Te Araroa in New Zealand,' Aaron Ross, YouTube, 2021, [1:20:6]

Thoughtful commentary which includes reflections, and comments about trail friends. Careful placements of the camera captures beautiful images. Comprehensive coverage including the Tongariro Crossing, hut life, and 5 days on the Wanganui River. He is quite honest about his ordeal crossing the Richmond range.

I found the music on the soundtrack to be irritating.

'How to Hike Te Araroa,' Aaron Ross, YouTube, [20.20]

An excellent resource for those beginning to make preparations. Aaron's reflections bear similarity to those one might make after a Camino.

Photo Essay

Madonna and Child Statuary on the Camino de Santiago



I became fascinated by the many representations of the Madonna and Child as I visited the Catholic churches, chapels and cathedrals and religious museums on the Camino de Santiago. I particularly enjoy viewing the 'Eastern' looking statues. I ended up with quite a collection of images!

Things to Do In: St Jean Pied de Port

St Jean Pied de Port is the ancient capital of the Basque region of Basse-Navarre. It is the starting point for most pilgrims walking the Camino Frances. It is also the end point for the Chemin Le Puy. This town with its medieval like atmosphere is worthy of some time if this is available.

- Visit the Pilgrims' Office for a stamped credential, list of current albergues and updated route information.
- Explore the historic walled town. The Brierley guide book has a town map showing numbered key sites/sights. There is a brief description of each in the text. Most are along the main street, Citadelle Rue D'Espagne.
- Have your photo taken at one of the town gates. (Crossing a threshold.)
- Visit Notre Dame Bout du Pont (XIVth C). Perhaps light a candle to symbolise the beginning of your journey. Maybe reflect on your pilgrimage purpose and intentions.
- Check out the route to be taken in the morning.





For great drone sequences of St Jean Pied de Port and the church interior see: **'29 |Via Podensis GR65 | Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port,'** Efrén Gonzalez, You Tube @ [12.55]

Image: St Jean Pied de Port

Camino Story

Travelling Too Light?

Visiting The Queens Gallery at Buckingham Palace following my Camino was a must when making a stopover in London. I had purchased my gallery ticket, when a wardrobe malfunction occurred. I sought out the nearest tailor who after surveying the issue announced that the said trousers would require an overnight stay. There was a slight problem. I only had one pair, and no shorts! The next day I duly delivered said trousers to the tailor while dressed in my swimming shorts with my long John's underneath, (it was October), and I was headed for the Palace. I like to think I gave the Queen reason for a smile as I made my way past her curtained windows.

Camino Tip

Tea Bags

I have often experienced difficulty obtaining a pot of black (gum boot) tea in cafes etc. So I take a plastic bag from home with at least 25 tea bags with tags and supply my own!

Resources

Del Norte/Primitivo

'The Santiago Pilgrimage, Walking the Immortal Way,' Jean-Christophe Rufin, Christchurch City Libraries, 946.1 RUF

Reviews

Books

Between the Chalk and the Sea, a Journey on foot into the past,' Gail Simmons, (2023), 942.29 SIM, Christchurch City Libraries, [3 copies]

Why is this book review appearing in a Camino publication? 'Described as England's *Camino*, this long distance footpath links prehistoric earthworks, abandoned monasteries, Saxon churches, ruined castles, and historic seaports. The author sets out to walk the 240 miles of this path named the "Old Way," over the four seasons. Gail puts her knowledge of Medieval history to good use as she weaves her 21st Century pilgrimage with that of Alice, a fictional medieval traveller. This storytelling device allows the author to seamlessly include lots of medieval detail. Ideal for those seeking a well written book with a change of country and "Camino."

'Stillness Speaks, Whispers of Now,' Eckhardt Tolle, Christchurch City Libraries, 291.44 TOL, [3 copies]

This slim volume is packed with 200 concise entries being the essence of Tolle's teachings.

YouTube

'Solo Female Pilgrim Safety on the Camino,' Nadine Walks, YouTube, [26.37]

Fairly long-winded. Some great tips however.

'I Made These 7 EPIC Mistakes on the Camino Frances,' Jen on the Run, YouTube, [9.21]

Great tips. She has further informative videos on her channel.

'Camino de Santiago: Ingles + Finisterre - | 8 days (215 km/134 mil), David Wen, 2023, YouTube, [16.48]

David is an excellent film maker and story teller. All the highlights.

'We Walk From Here,' – a film by Matthew Wayne Krause,' The Unsweet Karma Way, YouTube, [24.124].

One of a kind. This really is a film. A great story with emphasis on personal growth and Camino Magic.

'Camino de Santiago Documentary | Walk Through Fire,' Stefanie Hurtado, [2:02:19]

A leisurely look at walking the Camino Frances. I was impressed with the thoughtful commentary.

'Camino de Santiago Documentary | Perpetual Journey – A Semester on the Road to Santiago,' Chrysalis Media Arts, YouTube, [1.39.34]

Two tutors and six students walk the Camino commencing in France.

'Finding Connection by Disconnecting on the Camino de Santiago,' TEDx Talks, YouTube, 2021, [11.18]

An excellent talk by a teenage pilgrim.

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[Back copies of the newsletter have been archived on our website. www.chchcamino.net]

‘And you? When will you begin that long journey into yourself? Rumi



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