

Christchurch Camino Group Record

10 August, 2026.



Image: Westmorland Wetlands. Christchurch Camino Walking Group, August.

August Gathering Record

Philip welcomed everyone to a warm room and thanked them for turning out on a cold evening. Following the **Welcome** the following **Apologies** were received: Gythlian, Clare and Steve, Steve S. Belinda, Elizabeth, Frances, Sue and Rob. A **Returning Pilgrims' Ceremony** was held and highlights were shared. **Departing Pilgrims' Ceremony** ~ there were four pilgrims (Julie, Sue, John (all Frances,) and Pauline, (Camino Croatia), departing before our next meeting in November. Cecilia presented the **Christchurch Camino Walking Group Report** detailing the group's recent activities since our last meeting: May; Packhorse from Kaituna Valley, June; Cashmere Hills and Heathcote River walk, July; Te Ara Otakaro Avon walk, August; Westmorland/Halswell Quarry Circuit. Offers of new walks for the 2027 programme are welcome. Cecilia: chchcaminogroup@gmail.com

chchcamino.net: Alan reminded everyone of the domain name for our group's website. He is keen to develop an interactive community and urged us to make use of the comments section. He is developing a search function so that specific information from our website can be readily accessed. Alan requested Camino related contributions: images, poems, stories and articles and these may be emailed to: Alan at chchcamino@gmail.com

Journey Presentations

Presentation 1

Panel

Three recently returned pilgrims: Jennifer and Graham (Frances) and Philip (Piedmont, Aragonese, Sanabres = 634.2]) presented aspects of their respective Caminos: Route, challenges, highlight, lows, advice which would have been useful: **Philip** pivoted from the

Piedmont after walking 348.2 km due to a number of physical and mental challenges. (Also a low.) These included almost no pilgrims or shops, carrying 4 to 5 meals and 1.8 l of water, in the mid Pyrenees route climbing and descending hundreds of metres instead of valley walking which became clear was not an original pilgrim route, being rejected from accommodation as he had not walked far enough! This was a very beautiful trail and watching the Pyrenees gradually fill the landscape was a highlight, as was arriving in Santiago on the Sanabres, and entering the cathedral. A low was becoming temporarily separated from one of his trail runners on the plane! Useful advice from his last host in the Pyrennes, "When in the mountains expect mountains!"

Graham and Jennifer G. We purposefully took our time and had 42 walking days with 2 rest days J. We walked in the light, arriving between 1 - 4 pm to avoid the worst of the heat. We stayed in a mixture of bunkrooms and private. G. Smaller towns offered better value €25; bed, dinner, breakfast. G. Biggest challenge was the food: lots of bread, pastries, late meals, community meals were 7pm. Purchase frozen meals from supermarket, a solution. J. Heat of day. 38°. Always at least low to mid 30's. Faulty water fountains. Feet – purchased new footwear. G. Friendly people were a highlight, walking in history and the historic buildings.

J. The joy of having photographs and stories of their own to share, Excitement was building as we approached Santiago and this was tempered by ill health news of a close family member from home. This had to be managed. And the "what now" feeling upon arrival Santiago. I wasn't anticipating hills *all* along the way! And the change in atmosphere with the large numbers on the Camino over the last 100 km. G. and J. Be wary of utilising money machines in small towns. It could be costly! [With the note taking assistance of Deb]

7.50 pm

'Walking the del Norte and on to the Primitivo.' ~ Hammond

Hammond presented a thoughtful and comprehensive account of his time on these two (three if the time on the Frances is counted) Caminos. And made more impressive due to having been home only 3 weeks! Each stage was accompanied by excellent photographs. They illustrated his encounters with a range of pilgrims, a fierce dog, 10 days of brutal hill work, the sublime Guggenheim at Bilbao, quaint ferries, pilgrim pack queues at albergues, tempting beaches like Poebena, impressive Roman city walls in Lugo to name a few. Instead of a photographic image there was an Oscar winning performance of "Mr Snorer," whose sole task was to beat Hammond into submission. He was able to make use of his recommended Altus poncho with the full front zip during his 3 days of rain. Having practised at home this was put on with ease. He recommends undergoing "forced" hydration before leaving the albergue. (Although some would need to be reassured of a nearby "green" room!). Temperatures at times were in the high 30's necessitating 5.30 am rising and departing at 6 am with the oncoming light. Hammond took the shorter, mountainous Hospitales route and was rewarded with misty valley views. There were several lessons. He recommends stopping and attending to hotspots instantly. Failure to do so resulted in an avoidable 2 weeks of blister care. The del Norte in particular struggles to cope with tourists and pilgrims. The solution is to book ahead and avoid the lengthy queues. Hammond advocates carrying a small padlock for the lockers following an unfortunate encounter with a brazen thief in a "public" hostel.

The evening concluded with a lively **Small Group Discussion**.

Noticeboard

Scheduled 2026 Christchurch Camino Group Gathering Dates

The following are the remaining scheduled meeting dates for 2026:
9 November. Our venue for 2026 will be meeting Rooms 2 & 3
Upper Riccarton library, entry via the library main doors.



Website

We have a website: chchcamino.net It contains lots of useful information regarding Camino preparation. Alan, who curates it, welcomes contributions. Please forward any correspondence to: chchcaminogroup@gmail.com , email contact including photos: chchcamino@gmail.com

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 surroundings . 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: Christchurch Camino Walking Group on the Westmorland/Halswell Quarry Trail.

Advice Given to Pilgrims

We wish to emphasise that all information and answers given by our presenters, organisers, meeting participants, in our meeting record and on our website 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.

Future Topic/s

Early next year we wish to feature worthwhile apps for use on your Camino. Apps can be useful in: Finding information about your chosen Camino (History, terrain, distance between towns), Travel, Accommodation, Finding your way, Off line maps, Safety, Translation, Between pilgrim communication, Directions around town upon arrival, etc. Physical SIM cards, eSIMs and best forms of currency will also be discussed at some point. It is envisaged that in one session up to 2 maybe 3 apps will be presented by each presenter. In Session 2 there would be a workshop where attendees, in small groups would elect to further their knowledge, download and explore the apps. If you would like to share your apps with the group please contact Philip at: chchcaminogroup@gmail.com

www.chchcamino.net

chchcaminogroup@gmail.com

Unsubscribe: If you wish to unsubscribe email Deb at chchcaminogroup@gmail.com



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