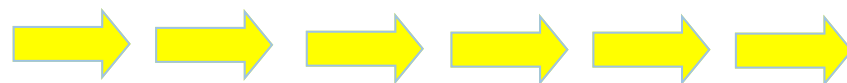




Camino Chronicle



Australian Friends of the Camino

Newsletter No 36, March 2021





CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

International travel is still in the future for us, perhaps not even in the near future, but there are signs beginning to appear that we can start looking with more optimism at the plans we have shelved for the past 12 months.

For me, 2020 was not how I had planned or expected. I had planned to begin walking the Caminho Portuguese, from Tomar, in March last year, but, as for so many, Covid19 thwarted those plans. My plan was to begin walking on the Caminho Nascente from Tomar to Fátima and from there head North on the Caminho do Norte to Coimbra, connecting with the Caminho Portuguese there to head to Santiago de Compostela.

Recently we received the new website address for dos Caminho do Fátima - <https://www.caminho.com.pt/> Many people are unaware of these different paths, but it is well worth exploring them as a possibility for a Camino. Not only is there the route I had planned from Tomar to Fátima (Caminho Nascente), but there is another to Fátima from Lisboa (Caminho do Tejo), and yet another from Nazaré, on the coast, to Fátima (Caminho Poente).

These words appear on the home page of the website and I was struck how relevant they are in these Covid times; - *"Facta non verba" - Deeds not words. Practice kindness, be generous, help and allow yourself to be helped, keep the "Caminho" clean. Be a pilgrim and take the "Spirit of the Pilgrim" into your life.* At times like this, we can practice these things - kindness, generosity, and helpfulness are all traits that we appreciate both in everyday life, and on the Way, wherever it is. Not only do we need to be kind to our companions, at home, at work, and in our community, but we need to be kind to ourselves in these tougher times. Lending a helping hand comes easily, but perhaps it is not so easy to accept help for some of us, and though we don't have a Caminho at our back door, as Clean Up Australia Day approaches, we can do our bit to keep our community, and its paths, tidy.

In one sense, maintaining the pilgrim spirit is perhaps more difficult in these covid times. Deeds are indeed important. Caught up with the rules and regulations governing us all, unable to visit friends and family easily combined with social distancing, all conspire to isolate us. However, that very isolation means that we have time to contemplate, research, and perhaps above all - be still. Stillness gives us time to nurture and maintain that pilgrim spirit. As we navigate our way through to more normal times, look with optimism to the future, relish the enforced stillness, and start to dream.

¡Buen Camino!
Janet Leitch OAM (SA)

Cover photo: Celtic warrior Breoghan
looking over Santiago from
Monte De Viso (see article pp4-7)



We welcome your stories and photos ~ send to the editor,
Alison Bell at editor@afotc.org



INTRODUCING.. THE VICTORIAN CAMINO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Planning for the AFotC Camino Conference (16-18 September, 2022)
is well underway by the Victorian Camino Conference Committee.
This seems like a good time to introduce ourselves to you.



From left to right are Ken Greene, Peter Millington, Ines Jewell, Beverley Exell, Robyn Greene, Judy Dans, and Alison Kinghorn. Members Denis (Wally) Walters, Joanne Cashman, Rob Jorritsma and Ian Wilson were not able to be in the photo.

The photo was taken outside one of the accommodation blocks at the wonderful Lake Dewar conference centre. This was our second visit to Lake Dewar and confirmed our excitement about this as the venue for our Camino conference. Lake Dewar Lodge is set in tranquil bushland in the Pentland Hills just out of Bacchus Marsh to the west of Melbourne
(<https://camps.ymca.org.au/lake-dewar-lodge>)

The committee is loaded with ideas, experience, talent, skills and most of all enthusiasm. We look forward to continuing the planning to bring you a full program with much to stimulate, discuss and excite.
Stay tuned for further updates.

Peter Millington (VIC)





A VIEW OF SANTIAGO FROM A RESIDENT AUSSIE

Hello Aussie Pilgrims! I am Garry, an Aussie who has been living here in Santiago de Compostela for many many years. I organise a self-guided and guided walks (and cycle rides) on the various Caminos... So here are my thoughts on Santiago, and the camino, during COVID.

Covid19 struck here, like most countries in March 2020 and resulted in a quick hard lockdown here in Santiago - all except food and medical places closed and we were only allowed out for essential reasons. This was a hard 2 months where we were all missing being outside. By mid-May, things fortunately relaxed and we were allowed to walk (with masks on!) for an hour a day. The first day out walking I was a bit nervous, but also nervous as a child, and everyone was looking at each other somewhat suspiciously. The Covid isolation motivated many people to walk regularly for the first time, and some trails were somewhat crowded. As the days passed we soon got used to the new conduction and to keeping clear of each other and notably anyone not wearing the mandatory face mask.

Santiago is of course famous for its amazing Cathedral and the Caminos (I count 7 Caminos including 3 different entrances for the Camino Portugues), but it could also be known for its splendid parks, children's playgrounds and the many and varied non-Camino walking trails. I counted 6 parks within 1km of my home, plus a wonderful walking path along the Sar stream and its tributaries. The oldest park, La Alameda, is a fine park for a stroll, known for its Cathedral photospot next to a massive gum tree, the 'Dos Marias' statue and the small Santa Susana chapel.



Santiago Cathedral and Pedroso from Via De La Plata entrance

Slightly further away from the centre, 2-5 kms, there are several hills with multiple walking paths, notably Monte de Pedroso and Monte de Viso. Monte Pedroso is the prominent hill to the north-west with antennas on it and splendid views over the Santiago old area as well as the Cathedral. Monte de Viso is 2kms from the French Camino's Mt Joy (Monte do Gozo) and has views over Santiago and the 'City of Culture'... a modern, and still



Santiago Cathedral from Monte Pio



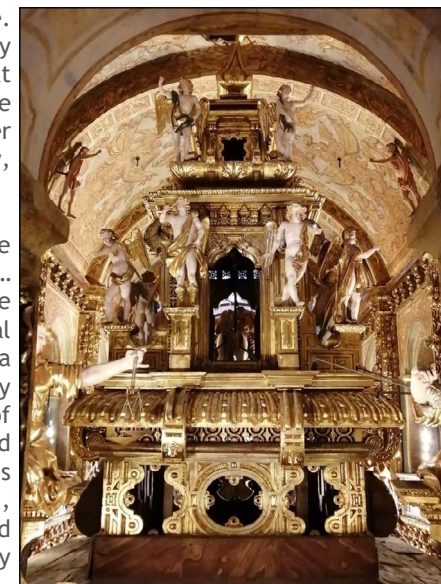
Pilgrim sculptures, Mt Joy (new path)

unfinished group of buildings which many pilgrims see to the left as they arrive on the French Camino. Monte de Viso now has an interesting 'Mythological trail' complete with elves, witches and other creatures from Galician folklore. Celtic warrior Breoghan stands prominent near the summit, looking over and protecting Galician from invaders.

Over summer Covid fortunately subsided a lot and we could travel a bit... it was great to get back to the beaches. I was lucky to visit the lovely La Concha beach in Donostia/San Sebastian and also the pristine cool water beaches in western Galicia, the 'Rias Baixas' or lower estuaries. I also managed to do quite a few local walks and some mountain biking and road cycling.

As Autumn arrived, the Covid second wave hit us and as winter came, a stronger third wave has developed, possibly because of the new strain of the virus from the UK. For now, we are allowed to walk but not past the council boundary of Santiago...but that does allow a vast number of walks. Cafes and bars are open only for terrace service and must close at 6pm, but soon may be shut entirely. Almost all elderly people in care homes have been vaccinated... as well as staff... and some have had the second dose. Medical frontline staff are currently getting vaccinated. We are hoping that with the vaccine, travel will be more possible come spring and by summer there will be some return to normality, both on the Camino and in general life.

St James's tomb in Santiago Cathedral



The Cathedral works on the main facade have finished and it does look splendid... and inside as well... the colours are more radiant and alive. The famous Cathedral 'Door of Pardon' is open, this being a special Holy Year, when St James Day (25 July) falls on a Sunday. Because of Covid, the Holy Year has been extended until the end of 2022. Cathedral masses have restarted (with Covid restrictions), Pilgrims' Mass as usual at 12noon and 19.30pm. There is a mass in English daily



New Camino path leaving from Mt Joy

at 10.30am in the Pilgrims' Office.

The main 'French' camino has been vastly improved going down from Mount Joy (Monte de Gozo) dropping down between trees then on a nice cement path and then crosses over the train line and motorway on a path vastly improved from the old rotten timbers that over the years had many of us worried about falling over. Improvements have also been made on the Portugues Camino through Conxo (entering Santiago) and the English Camino north of Santiago through the industrial estate.

I called into the Pilgrim's Office recently and the friendly chap there told me that a few pilgrims are arriving daily, despite Santiago being closed at the perimeter. Most pilgrims are Spanish or from other parts or other nationalities but resident in Europe.

In December 2020 I spoke with a young Argentinian chap who managed to walk the whole French Camino from St Jean-Pied-de-Port with no problems - was St James protecting him?

I have many clients booking my guided and self-guided trips from May onwards... with more interest in Autumn - September and October. They are mostly from the UK, Ireland, USA and Canada. Many Aussie clients are still waiting to see how the vaccine will roll out there and international travel will resume... some have decided to delay to next year. Accommodation on the Camino will probably reopen more around Easter but it's likely pilgrim albergues will have some restrictions for a while... so some pilgrims will use small pensions, casa rurales and hotels. All accommodation are preparing thorough special Covid measures of cleaning and organising to keep people at a suitable 'social distance'. Masks will probably remain compulsory, though of course when I am walking and there is no one around, I lower the mask and put it on quickly again when I am near anyone.

I started walking and cycling the Camino

Sacred Peak from Monte De Viso



Santiago Cathedral from Alameda Park

in Spring 2003 and since then have been on the various Caminos many times each year. Although some friends and clients did manage to walk the Camino in 2020 I didn't because of safety reasons, my first time not on the camino in all those years. So I, like many, miss the Camino and its endless appeal of countryside, chapels, cuisine and camaraderie.

I believe the Camino will bounce back during this year and will help people overcome the psychological effects many during this

have suffered difficult time.

To finish, I will quote some prose written several years ago by a now deceased priest which is hanging on the wall of the picturesque chapel in the small mountain hamlet of La Faba, on the French Camino, on the lovely walk up to O Cebreiro. There is an outstanding view from the Chapel and the pleasant albergue next door, looking back down over the Bierzo valley. The view adds to the mysticism of the chapel location. The priest wrote: "Although I may have walked all the Caminos, crossing mountains and valleys from from east to west, if I hadn't discovered the liberty of being myself, I haven't arrived anywhere".

I hope to see more Aussies back on the Camino. Keep walking and cycling and stay safe!

Garry Budin, Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

NOTE: Since writing the article the Pilgrim's Office has been open on a very restricted timetable - when it's closed there is a QR scheme to register to get one's Compostela.

www.SpanishAdventures.com

Santiago Cathedral from Alameda Park in winter





CAMINO TREES

I was somewhere along the Meseta, the flat central plateau between Burgos and Astorga. The height of summer along the Camino Francés, and yet there wasn't a single pilgrim in sight. The weather was hot, dry and glorious. Fields of wheat as far as the eye could see. No cars, no tractors, just me and the singing birds. Minutes became hours, immersed in the beauty of stillness.



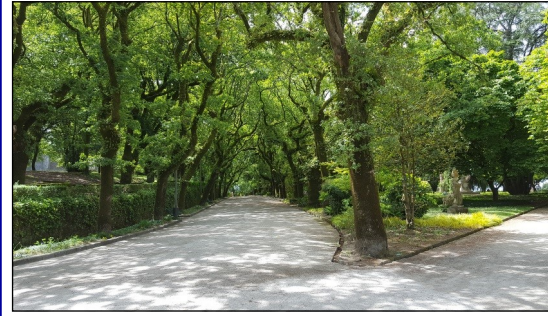
Suddenly, I spotted something in the distance. Was it one of those tiny towns that seem to materialise out of nowhere along the Meseta? No, that was no church top ahead. Instead, it was a single, solitary tree. I felt like I was in the desert seeing water for the first time. Perhaps my mind was playing tricks on me?

Coming closer, the tree appeared enormous against the background of everlasting sky. I soon realized the tree wasn't directly along the Camino path, but off in the middle of a field. No matter. It would be worth the detour. I headed for it, fantasising about the picnic I would have in the shade of its many branches. I came closer, admiring the strength and resilience of this lone tree.

Then it hit me like a punch in the stomach. I wasn't the only pilgrim to venture off the path to take refuge under this tree. The magnificent picnic rest stop I had imagined was more like a *restroom*, surrounded by used tissues and human waste. Heartbroken, I apologised to the tree, lingered a few moments in disbelief, and then turned and walked away.

I ruminated for days over how people could walk an ancient spiritual path and leave anything but footprints behind. I was determined to play a part in leaving the Camino in better condition than when I found it. Unfortunately, for all my good intentions, the last thing I wanted to do while walking all day, fully loaded with a backpack and trekking poles, was stop and collect some rubbish. Bending down with a full pack seemed a Herculean task. So it wasn't until years later when

I volunteered at an albergue in Galicia in 2018 that I got my chance. During the two-week commitment I assumed responsibility for the 3km stretch on either side of the albergue and rounded up a dozen bags of waste. Since then, I've collected nearly 100 bags along the Camino Francés.



The experience was transformative. I knew I was meant to be involved in the Camino beyond just walking it. I decided then that I would use part of the proceeds from my books to support maintenance efforts along the Camino. This year, I had planned to take a small group of Camino veterans with me to Spain to continue the trash pickup, but

alas, 2020 had other plans for us all.

While the Camino is resting, my newest venture in giving back to the Camino is with trees. By far the hardest part of the Camino cleanup effort for me was seeing trees surrounded by waste. Trees, as living beings, deserve better than this. They clean the air and provide valuable shade along the journey. In fact, a single tree can absorb 4.5kg of air pollutants a year. Trees are more than just the lungs of the Earth and storage vessels for carbon dioxide. They are a source of natural intelligence, ancient wisdom and healing properties. Spending time among trees can help boost our immune system, lower our blood pressure and even help us sleep better.

Although I can't pick up litter around the Camino de Santiago trees this year, I can team up with local groups in Spain to get more trees in the ground. From now through the end of April 2021, I am doing just that. I'm calling it my 'Global Regeneration with Trees' project, and I hope to inspire others to plant trees not only in Spain but around the world. With more than 32,000 hectares of trees being cut down every day, it will take more than just a few of us to regenerate the Earth. Here's how:

- ⇒ Plant a tree in your yard.
- ⇒ Protect ancient forests and the stewards who care for them.
- ⇒ Support tree-planting groups in your community.
- ⇒ Join others from around the planet who are restoring harmony and balance to the Earth, one tree at a time.

Karin Kiser (San Diego, CA)

Karin is the author of 10 books, including *Your Inner Camino* and *After the Camino*. A San Diego-based writer and personal development coach, she leads a 'Camino Cleanup' trip each fall along the Camino Francés. To learn more about planting trees along the Camino, email her at support@KarinKiser.com. Karin's books *Your Inner Camino* and *After the Camino* are available at www.CaminoChroniclesPress.com.





CAMINO FOR GOOD

As a member of the Australian Friends of the Camino, I was invited to share with you about Camino for Good. I am Lindsay Teychenne pictured on page 12 with Kelly Gilfillan in 2018. We are two of the co-founders, and are honoured to share money raised from the sale of our Virtual Camino de Santiago hiking app to provide desperately needed relief funds to Camino albergues.



How our company came about is a bit of a Camino tale, so I'd like to share our journey with you.

As Kelly says... **'The App is our business - providing relief to albergues is our mission.'**

At the time of writing, Camino for Good has provided relief funds to nine albergues to the tune of \$26,100 USD (\$33,513 AUD). We are hoping to do so much more.

The seed of the idea came from Susan DePue while she was 'racing' (walking) virtually with Kelly across Tennessee in May 2020. The event would have been an actual race but, rather than cancel due to the pandemic, the organisers got creative and made it virtual.

Kelly and Susan, both from Tennessee, originally met as walking buddies preparing for their first Camino in 2018. I met Susan a couple of times when our paths crossed in Spain and have since become friends.

Susan shared her idea with Kelly. The premise was 200,000+ people will not be able to walk the Camino in 2020 due to the pandemic, so why not provide them the experience virtually. As they walked "across" Tennessee, they were spurred on by the on-line tools to record their daily distance and track progress to eventually complete 1000 miles walking locally.

Classic shell marker



Early one morning, I got an excited video message from Kelly about the idea of creating an on-line Virtual Camino experience. We need someone with data experience she said - I WAS IN.

We quickly decided, inspired by the GoFundMe project that Margaret Caffryn initiated for Casa Susi pre-pandemic, that it would be a great way to raise funds for the albergues hit hard by restrictions in global travel. Sue from Casa Susi was one of the first people I reached out to for advice. Eventually, [Casa Susi](#) was one of the first albergues we could help and have become great supporters.

We needed a multi talented and experienced team. Two people became three, and three became five with veteran pilgrims Bill Austin and his amazing daughter Shaylyn joining. A lifelong friend of Kelly's, Bill was the person who inspired Kelly to consider the Camino.



Camino for Good partners began to set up the business structure and engaged a development company, F1V. The Camino provided this too, as Kelly's daughter's partner introduced her to F1V. The principals had an interesting connection to the project. Veronica, originally from Madrid, had always dreamed of hiking the Camino. She and Fabio were so inspired by the mission they decided to join us, providing their expertise for the project. The five have thus become seven.



Beautiful Camino landscape

We may very well be the first official **virtual Camino family**.

The work and effort involved presented many challenges (much like the Camino). Our learning curve was huge. However, our belief in the importance of what we were undertaking empowered us to accept that we were up to whatever obstacles lay ahead. As a group we are proud to have contributed thousands of professional hours in this labour of 'love of the Camino'.

We decided early on that we wanted to create a great product that gives regular incentives for virtual pilgrims to 'keep on walking' for their own personal health benefit while also experiencing a genuine story of life on the Camino.

John Brierley gave his permission and encouragement to quote from his popular guidebooks and we collected audio stories from pilgrims from around the world including Tassie's very own Meredith, Brett and Laura.

We wanted to let our virtual pilgrims know what life was like along the Way. We wanted them to engage with each other. We wanted people who may have never walked the Camino to have a taste of what being a pilgrim is like - **'to touch and be touched by the best of humanity'**.

To that end, Camino for Good has become more than the Virtual Camino App. It is the website, newsletters, blogs, Zoom Cafés, Instagram and Facebook presence and private forums that bind our ever growing community providing support, advice and information.



Our personal Camino photos bring the Virtual Camino to life. In that screenshot from the app, (*see left*) the vibrant lady on the right is Linda Eedes, another member of my 2018 Camino family. Linda is a professional photographer from South Africa who eagerly and freely provided about 3000 photos for us to select from to tell the story within the app. To Kelly's left is Ann Broiche from California. All three ladies on the right, due to the Camino, are now friends for life.



As for the lady far left... I have no idea who she is - she just wanted to join in with the Yoga sisterhood at that moment and then she was gone. I remember she was an Aussie and by her accent I suspect from Queensland.

Like any business, it is the volume of sales that determines how effective Camino for Good's mission will be. We believe we have created a unique and ever-evolving product with genuine competitive market value. That we are able to 'do good' with the proceeds is a great source of joy for each of us.

The effectiveness of our marketing strategy has contributed to its initial success. The publicity work continues. Our latest campaign, [March to Santiago - A Journey of Hope and Healing](#), starts on 1 March and enters Santiago in July for the Feast of St James week festivities (virtually). The March will be supported with simple weekly meditative reflection exercises to inspire and validate the spiritual essence of the Camino.

The future? More routes, more images, more stories, more connection. Watch this space!

Ultreia and Buen Camino!

Lindsay Teychenne (TAS)

<https://caminoforgood.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/caminoforgood>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/376228543514435>

Kelly's Cathedral photo

Lindsay and Kelly on the Camino together



... gradually it dawned on me that the voyage I needed to make began in my own neighbourhood, within a few minutes' walk of my front door. It had been there all the time, under my nose, even as I made other abortive attempts to discover a starting point.

James Attlee, *Isolarion: A different Oxford journey*
 High Wycombe, UK; And Other Stories; 2020]



3 Day Retreat @ Glenella Blackheath, Blue Mountains

5 – 8 May 2021

Was your Camino experience an amazing experience? Were you inspired to make big changes after you returned home? Then, somehow life got in the way and these aspirations weren't fulfilled. Would you love to reconnect with your Camino and relook at how to fulfil your dreams?

Yes! Then come join our 3 day retreat in the Blue Mountains we're calling **Camino Reconnect**.

This is an inaugural event that's being developed because we keep bumping into others who feel the same way: not only did we have an amazing time walking the Camino but really got 'into the zone' so much so that we reviewed some aspects of our lives back home that we wanted to re-visit, but things have got in the way so we've not fully implemented them.

So we're designing the retreat to allow each participant to reconnect with their own Camino experiences, get back in touch with the emotional experiences but also the resulting aspirations; rekindle enthusiasm for implementing aspirational life changes and build further confidence and resilience to do so; and, develop an individualised support strategy to continue to walk and grow further on the journey towards their individual goals.



Mark Freeman

Retreat cost of \$375 includes:

- 3 nights accommodation (shared)
- 3 dinners + 3 lunches,
- welcome pack + workshop materials,
- workshop convenors, guest speakers, evening entertainment, walks and outdoor activities.

Camino Reconnect
 Registrations open on

1 March 2021.

MORE INFO & TO BOOK :

<https://www.trybooking.com/BPDSX>



Margaret Bouttell

Meet our **Camino Reconnect** organisers and convenors - Mark, Margaret and Dieter.

In addition to a short walk each day and observing a sunrise or sunset, we will be doing some individual and small group work.

For this inaugural event we are limiting numbers to 20.

Note: we are only accepting pilgrims who have walked a Camino in Europe for a minimum of 14 days.



Dieter Weinand

IN PARTNERSHIP
 WITH:



GLENELLA





The Awkwardness of 'Santiago Matamoros'

We sometimes joke that over the centuries poor St James got so many makeovers, he's become a costume-party version of himself. The historical James was a fisherman from Galilee who followed Jesus as a disciple, one of the inner circle of twelve. Iconography in Eastern Orthodox churches still shows him simply as an apostle, one of Christ's closest companions and spiritual heirs. The discovery of his tomb in Compostela in the ninth century yielded new images of a 'Western' James. The first monumental statue of Santiago that shows him as a travelling preacher, outfitted like the pilgrims on their way to visit his shrine, is probably the one at Santa Marta de Tera near Zamora, from the 11thC. His classic image in the 12thC Pórtico de la Gloria, however, skips the usual pilgrim accessories like travelling bag, shoulder cape, scallop shell, hat and gourd. The James of the Pórtico is a missionary bishop with a scroll in his right hand and a tau-shaped staff under his left. The St James that makes us squirm today is Santiago Matamoros, a mounted warrior, the 'Slayer of Moors'. Images of this militant James survive by the thousands in paintings and sculpture. The earliest representation of St James mounted on a horse is carved on the stone wall of the cathedral's south transept. It shows no defeated foes, just worshipers kneeling before a robed rider holding a sword of victory. Visiting pilgrims may notice several other Matamoros images inside the cathedral, including one shrewdly surrounded by banks of flowers (*see above*) that conceal his trampled foes. Another set of vividly painted wooden Matamoros figures crowns the baldachin high above the main altar. How did simple St James find himself mounted on a horse and saddled with this violent reputation? Protective warrior saints were everywhere in the Middle Ages, and Spain loved similar images of St George and St Martin as well as plenty of others. A re-costumed St James got the same treatment, perhaps in part to forestall competition. Popular explanations into our own days tell of a warrior James who protected the Camino and its pilgrims from raiding parties from the non-Christian south. The appearance of Santiago aiding Christian troops at the mythic Battle of Clavijo (844AD) was first promoted long after that skirmish was fought. By the time Santiago Matamoros became a staple in mass-produced religious art in the fifteenth century, the Moorish threat in Spain was nearly extinguished. A close examination of the conquered Muslims in the artwork shows men wearing turbans, which were never a Moorish accessory. Turbans were Turkish headgear, and it was the Muslim Ottoman Empire that rattled Europeans at the end of the Middle Ages, so they became the enemies trampled under the hooves of Santiago's horse. A final linguistic note: "Matamoros" sounds upsetting in English, but its impact is milder in Spanish. There are lots of compound words like matamoscas (flyswatter), matarratas (rat poison), and matasellos (postmark, stamp cancellation mark). There are funny ones too, like matapasionas ('passion killer,' underwear), matasanos ('healthy-person killer,' a quack doctor), and matasuegras ('mother-in-law killer,' a party noisemaker). Saints are endlessly flexible characters, so modern pilgrims can generously shrug off old nicknames and release James from his military service and garb. A civilian again, he is free to be the companionable apostle and fellow pilgrim of old.



George Greenia Williamsburg, VA

Reprinted with permission from *La Concha (American Pilgrims on the Camino)* Sept2020



INTERESTING PILGRIMAGE & HIKING TRAIL WEBSITES

British Pilgrimage Trust

Home Page

<https://britishpilgrimage.org/>

Britain's Pilgrim Routes

<https://britishpilgrimage.org/routes/> "View routes on map" or "View routes in gallery"

<https://britishpilgrimage.org/cathedral-day-routes/>

Hiking Trails in Europe

<https://hiking.waymarkedtrails.org/#?map=6!50.7964!7.2849>

Routes

<https://hiking.waymarkedtrails.org/#routelist?ids=38791,8274518&map=6!50.9248!7.5143>

Deutsche

Home page

<http://www.deutsche-jakobswege.de/>

Routes (wege) / Map Page

<http://www.deutsche-jakobswege.de/wege-uebersicht.html>

World Pilgrimage Guide – Sacred sites of Europe

<https://sacredsites.com/europe/index.html>

Spain Update (daily updates by an Australian living in Spain)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgEaq-tpUPE>

Gronze

<https://www.gronze.com/camino-frances>

Camhinos de Fatima – new website

<https://www.caminho.com.pt/>

BBC Radio broadcast – In Our Time podcasts

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000s9qp>

My Camino – Weekly Podcasts by Dan Mullins

<https://player.whooshkaa.com/shows/my-camino-the-podcast>

Way of St James (Buen Camino)

Phone App developed by Carlos Mencos

Australian Ignatian Trail Pilgrimages

<https://sevenhillretreat.com.au/index.php/trail-pilgrimage>

Collated by Janet Leitch OAM (SA)





EVER WONDERED ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE YELLOW ARROWS ALONG THE CAMINO?

Since the Middle Ages pilgrims have walked to Santiago de Compostela to honour the apostle Saint James and to gain spiritual indulgences. Originally, they started from their own front door, following in the footsteps of previous walkers. Due to the lack of signage along the way they often sought out other pilgrims, and walked in groups to support each other, and for safety from roaming bandits. It was a dangerous undertaking - many pilgrims become lost or were attacked and robbed, and many died before reaching the tomb of Saint James.



As the pilgrimage route became more popular, some markers began to appear along the way including crosses and mounds of stones. These were useful in the warmer seasons but during winter many were covered by snow.

The distinctive yellow arrows that are now so common on the Camino are a comparatively recent symbol introduced in the 1980s by Don Elías Valiña, the parish priest of O Cebreiro. He was one of the most important figures in the revival of the modern pilgrimage, and also put the mountain town of O Cebreiro back on the map as one of the great landmarks of the French route. Originally from Sarria, Don Elías settled in O Cebreiro as a priest, and was passionate about the history of the Camino. His doctoral thesis completed in 1962 was entitled "The Way of Santiago: a historical-juridical study".

In 1984, he began what became a lifelong commitment to identify the original sections of the pilgrimage route, much of which had become lost or impassable, and to waymark the trail all the way between Roncesvalles and Santiago de Compostela. Working closely with local parishes and mayors, and encouraging support from various associations of Friends of the Way, he started marking the original Camino route in the vicinity of O Cebreiro, pointing the direction to Santiago with simple yellow arrows painted on walls, rocks, trees or even on the pathway itself.

Local folklore says that Don Elías started painting the yellow arrows using leftover paint given to him by workers signposting roads in the O Cebreiro area. However José Manuel López Valiña, a descendant of the parish priest, believes the choice of the yellow colour was not entirely by chance. According to José: "In his first outings to explore the terrain and signpost the Route, my uncle realised that it was necessary to use something for attracting a lot of attention and which would last for a lifetime. When he arrived in France, he saw that yellow was the colour used to signpost mountain routes, so he decided to paint the Camino de Santiago route in that colour".



Supposedly when Don Elías finished in the Galicia region, he still had a lot of paint left so he continued with the same colour painting arrows along the entire Camino Francés route. Some say he drove across northern Spain in his Citroën 2CV packed with yellow paint, adding arrows at all the tricky crossroads.

To ensure the continuity of his work he initiated the development of regional groups and associations to maintain the signage within each section of the Camino. He also travelled to many European universities and conferences promoting the importance of the Camino de Santiago.

Today Don Elías' simple yellow arrows are the most recognisable and distinctive symbol used on all Camino routes. Don Elías' contributions to the Camino were formally acknowledged when he was named 'Commissar of the Way of Saint James' for the I Encuentro Xacobeo held in Compostela in 1985. In addition to his work way-marking along the Camino route Don Elías also played a significant part in the restoration of the village of O Cebreiro, leading to the opening of the Ethnographic Museum there in 1971.

In his last will, Don Elías asked his family to ensure that the use of yellow arrows on the Way was not lost, a request which his descendants continue to carry out with the help of associations of Friends of the Way of Saint James.

There is an amusing anecdote told about Don Elías when he was way-marking in the Pyrenees - when stopped by the Civil Guards with a can of yellow paint in his hand while drawing yellow arrows along a pathway, they asked him what he was doing so close to the French border. He replied, "Preparing for a great invasion". Don Elías died in 1989, so he did not get to see his vision for an 'invasion' fully accomplished, but he would have been pleased to see the thousands of pilgrims of all ages and nationalities following his yellow arrows to Santiago every year.

Judy Dans (VIC)

NOTE - From 2021 the scallop shell and the yellow arrow will be the only two official symbols of the various Camino pilgrimage routes - the scallop shell to signpost that the pilgrim is on a Camino pilgrimage route, and the yellow arrow to signpost the direction to Santiago. This follows a decision by the Jacobean Council (Consejo Jacobeo) which met in León as part of the 2021 Holy Year preparations.

Bust of Don Elías Valiña Sampedro located in the churchyard at O Cebreiro





**STONEMASONS HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR:
A SELFIE SET IN STONE: HIDDEN PORTRAIT BY
CHEEKY MASON FOUND IN SPAIN 900 YEARS ON**

Working on medieval buildings often provides surprises, and sometimes these bring you face to face with the people who actually built the cathedrals and churches. There's gaming boards carved into the stonework that entertained the workshop on their breaks, and sketches to work out problems of geometry or show an apprentice how to design a spiral, or draw a right angle. Masons' marks, the ciphers cut into the stone blocks that told the paymaster how much a mason needed to be paid, or proved that his work was satisfactory, show up on the stonework if you look carefully. Other marks guided the construction of complex elements in the building, and allowed the whole process to work without written instructions.

Dr Jenny Alexander, Reader in Art History from Warwick University, was heading up a team of recorders working on a project in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, in the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Northern Spain, tasked with finding new information about the construction of the east end of the building.

The project was funded by the Galician regional government, and brought together an expert team of art-historians, sculpture specialists and building archaeologists to answer questions about how it was built. As a leading authority on masons' marks, Dr Alexander was brought in to record and analyse the distribution of these marks to demonstrate the sequence of building, and determine how significant changes in design were to its completion. She and her team examined the east end stone by stone, using raking light to make the marks visible, when suddenly they found themselves looking into the face of one of the stonemasons who'd made these marks.

The capitals in the upper part of the building are pretty similar, as if their height in the building meant that they didn't need to be very special, but here was one with a little figure emerging from the foliage and hanging onto the corner volute, a perfect image of a mason,



smiling as if at his nerve for putting himself on the capital. Carvings at ground level are very serious since they were seen by the clergy and important people, and Compostela is famous for its fabulous Portico de la Gloria, but up here in the gallery a different set of rules applied since the clergy wouldn't notice a little figure half hidden in the foliage.

Figures of the ordinary workmen like this are quite a rare find, they are often hidden in plain sight and turn up in parts of buildings most often used by stonemasons and people studying the building, and they bring you face to face with a real person from the past.

Dr Jennifer S Alexander FSA (UK)
Reader, History of Art, Warwick University (UK)





SUNSHINE COAST CAMINO GROUP



The Sunshine Coast Camino Group was formed by a couple of passionate walkers in March of 2013, after returning from their own Camino experience. They were genuinely surprised at the interest and excitement of like-minded people, with about 30 people turning up to a meeting point, in a local park. The sparks ignited and from that moment, the group took on a momentum of its own, growing to over 400 members at present.

Below is the opening statement and invitation to join the Sunshine Coast Camino Group on our Facebook page.

Welcome to the SUNSHINE COAST CAMINO GROUP

We are a support group for Camino pilgrims and people wishing to do long distance treks throughout Australia and around the world. We are based on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland and all prospective and returned pilgrims are very welcome to attend the weekly walks and Community Meetings held by the group.

We are passionate about Caminos as well as the many other long walks both in Australia and Abroad. Our gatherings provide an opportunity to learn about the many Caminos and long walks available to us and we love members to share information about their journeys and adventures.

Many of us are experienced long-distance walkers and can relate to your fears, your doubts, your excitement and your wonderment at the goal you have set yourself.

We request that our members become an integral part of our very special group in the following ways:

- Walk regularly with the group or at least once a term;
- Be prepared to lead a walk in the future, with support, at least once a year;
- Attend our Quarterly Meetings and provide input if possible.

Walks each Saturday will help you to prepare for a Camino or any other long-distance trek. The date and time of these walks will be posted on our FB group by the Monday before the walk. You will have the opportunity to speak to members who are experienced in long-distance walking, receive information on what to take with you and how to pack your bag! You will also make some awesome friends!

Whether you are planning a journey or returning from your beautiful adventure we would love you to join us!



Members on one of our more strenuous training walks up Brandenburg Road winding up out of Mooloolool Valley

Our quarterly meetings attract around 80 members each time and the weekly Saturday walks up to 30 members.

Our weekends away are highly attended because they offer a wonderful opportunity to have a joint adventure and camaraderie. Numbers are often governed by accommodation availability. Occasionally, we

do longer walks away with our most recent being 13 days, walking from Kilkivan to Ipswich, 305 km, exploring the rail trails.

Covid, of course, has altered the way we connect but has not diminished our enthusiasm for all things Camino related, for example Zoom meetings and more walk options with fewer participants.

Social events are always popular, doing such things as cruising the Noosa River, playing barefoot bowls, high ropes with adventure training as well as games days. Many in the group take advantage of first aid and resuscitation training and a number are hospitalero-trained. Each year we fundraise for a worthy cause and support members with their passions or needs.

We are always on the lookout for opportunities to learn from other members' experiences and knowledge. Our hope is to have many more journeys on the various Caminos around the world and to be able to support Australian endeavours to foster, coordinate and resource the promotion, awareness and facilitation of the Camino.

¡Buen Camino!

David Lupton (Qld)
SCCG Member



Part of the group on the way up Mt Emu, Peregrine Beach



DID YOU KNOW...

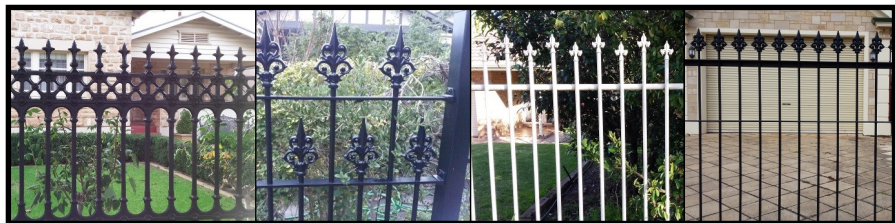
The ubiquitous (& beautiful) Fleur de Lis



On my morning walks, I am constantly reminded of the Camino as I walk past the iron fences with the iconic fleur-de-lis incorporated into many of our modern fence designs. I find it fascinating how this symbol has spanned the ages, and has slipped into the 21st century with us (or myself anyway!) hardly noticing or thinking about its connotations with the past. It is everywhere! For starters, have a look at the World Scouting symbol (*above right*).

Most of us probably think of the fleur-de-lis as a symbol of royalty, heraldry and especially France. However the design can be found in many places long before heraldic times, even as far back as Mesopotamia. It came to symbolise royalty particularly in France and the High Middle Ages due to St Joan of Arc's coat of arms and Louis IX. As rulers started to adopt the symbol and use it on their emblems (eg sceptres), saintliness became connected with royalty. It is to this day a symbol of France and continues to appear in the arms of the King of Spain. It has also become a symbol of other political systems eg Florence and Bosnia.

But back to Camino history... the St James cross (*top left*) was the emblem of the 12thC military Order of Santiago and is also called the Cross of the Knights of Santiago, as well as the Spanish Cross. Often this cross design bears a heart-like ornament on its top. The insignia of the Order of Santiago (originating with the Knights Templars, who were founded in 12thC and disbanded in the 14thC—google Friday 13th for more history!) is a bright red cross simulating a sword with the shape of a fleur-de-lis on the handle and on the arms. The cross of the Royal Standard had a Mediterranean scallop in the centre and another one at the end of each arm. Their symbol was a cross of St James, a red cross terminating in a sword, and a shell which they doubtless owed to their connection with the pilgrimage of St James. The three fleur de lis represent 'honour without stain' or spotless honour, in reference to the moral features of the apostle's character. The knights wore the stamp of the cross on their banners and white capes, their initial objective being to protect the pilgrims of St James' Way and defend Christendom. The sword represents the knightly character of the apostle and refers his martyrdom, since he was decapitated by sword. It can also symbolise taking the sword in the name of Christ.



It is said that the form of the insignia originated during the Crusade period, when the knights took small crosses with the bottoms sharpened to be able to nail them into the ground and carry out their daily devotions. Interestingly, the Order of Santiago still exists under the Spanish crown with currently 35 knights and 30 novices. Applicants must have noble ancestry and be practising Catholics, of legitimate birth including parents and grandparents, and not be descended from non-Christians.



Now, the big question (for purists): is the fleur-de-lis a lily or an iris? There has been much discussion over the centuries about its true derivations. Although lilies are never yellow in the wild, some irises are. *Lis* means lily in French and is the plural of the Latin *lilium*, while in English, the iris was often called fleur-de-lis or

flower-de-luce, not just because of its yellow colour but also because of its shape of the six petals, or leaves. Either way, the fleur-de-lis has been and is still used as a decorative design or symbol. Since it represented purity, it has long been associated with the Virgin Mary, although the colour changed from white to golden over time. Others debate it could also derive from the broom, lotus, or furze, while still others believe it represents a trident, an arrowhead, a double axe, or even a dove or a pigeon. The design itself with its three leaves/petals can be said to represent the Trinity or, in the reign of King Louis IX (St Louis), faith, wisdom and chivalry. However, a French historian also claimed it represented the medieval social classes: those who worked, those who fought and those who prayed. Finally, in heraldry, the fleur-de-lis has been taken to symbolise all the Christian Frankish kings, most notably Charlemagne, who of course is connected with the Camino and is supposed to have walked it as well as fighting along its trail.

Elsewhere this beautiful symbol appears on military insignia... on the coat of arms of many European countries and cities and in North America, the fleur-de-lis is often associated with areas formerly settled by France. In Mauritius, slaves were branded with a fleur-de-lis. It also appears in the logos of many organisations eg the emblem of the Scouting organisation where the classical description of the *lis* connects the compass rose with the purpose of Scouting's principles—namely that Scouting gives one's life direction.

Back to the modern day... in building and architecture, the fleur-de-lis is often placed on top of iron fence posts, as a pointed defence against intruders. It may ornament any tip, point or post with a decorative flourish, and indeed the derivations are delightful and almost endless. See how many you can espy when next walking along the streets around your suburb or town.

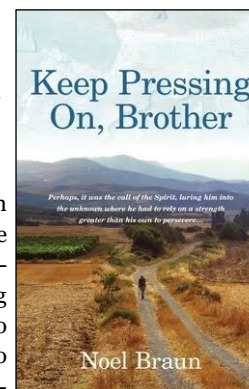
Alison Bell (SA)





BOOK REVIEW

Keep Pressing on, Brother: Noel Braun,
Sid Harta Publishers, Melbourne 2020, 317pp ISBN 978-1-
9255707-26-7, \$29.95 plus \$5.85 postage through
www.noelbraun.com.au



This book is the third Camino memoir by Australian octogenarian Noel Braun, who hails from Jindabyne in the Snowy Mountains. As recently as 2010, at 77 years Noel undertook his first Camino seeking to rediscover himself following the death of Maris, his beloved wife of 42 years. As it has for so many others, the unexpected addictiveness of the Camino challenge and experience took hold, and three Caminos followed, in 2011, 2013 and 2015. These are described in his earlier books *The Day was Made for Walking*, and *I Guess I'll Just Keep on Walking*, which now have attracted international publishing attention in Portuguese and Spanish.

In his most recent memoir, Noel's challenges, experiences and pilgrim interactions from his 2017 and 2019 Caminos from Vézelay to St Jean-Pied-dePort and Geneva to Le Puy-en-Velay were assisted by his fluent French, acquired only in his later years. The book also reflects his spiritually uplifting engagement and camaraderie with the people he meets and assists. This included, during his time as a voluntary hospitalier in France, using his culinary skills to feed and thus bring together his fellow pilgrims.

At the age of 84, Noel recognized his physical limitations, in terms of daily distances and backpack weight, but in 'pressing on' surprised other pilgrims. To that extent the outstanding record of his pilgrimage provides inspiration for others, but perhaps particularly for those who may hesitate about their first or subsequent Caminos because of age.

The oldest pilgrim on record to complete a Camino was 99, followed by a 93 woman with her 60 year old daughter. Many Camino walkers will have encountered pilgrims in their 60s, 70s, 80s and even 90s. When joyfully walking my first Camino in my 60s, I was surprised to meet a number of older pilgrims.

A highlight of those encounters was walking and talking with an 85 year old grandfather from Alicante accompanied by his 25 year old granddaughter from Madrid. Grandpa was fitter and faster than me, had a substantial backpack, but had poor eyesight. Granddaughter's responsibility was to ensure he did not fall into a hole!

Printed in Australia, *Keep Pressing on, Brother* is a pleasure to handle, with an attractive cover and colour photographs, good layout, and a very readable font. It has been well edited and proof read – overall it is a credit to the author and its Melbourne-based enabling publisher Sid Harta. Its only lack is an index – with so much information, commentary and reflection, it deserved one.

Alan Bundy (SA)