

Canberra Friends of the Camino Newsletter July 2016



NEXT CAMINO GATHERING

**Saturday 16 July 2016 at 3:00 pm for 3:30 pm @
the Spanish Australian Club of Canberra**

WHAT IS THE CAMINO GATHERING?

The Camino Gathering is a regular meeting for those interested in the 1,000 year old Spanish pilgrims walks through northern Spain called the Camino de Santiago. In recent years pilgrim numbers have grown to over 200,000 per year with walkers from around the world walking some part of the Caminos leading to Santiago and numbers continue to increase. There are many Camino routes in Spain but they all end in the Galician capital city of Santiago De Compostela (Saint James of the Field of Stars). The Camino can range from 100km walk to over 1,500km and can be done walking, cycling or on horseback.

Program

- ◆ **Pre-meet social and drinks**
- ◆ **New members introduction**
- ◆ **Show and Tell**
- ◆ **Presentation - Doug Fitzgerald will be talking about his recently completed pilgrimage.**

Ramblings with Wal Wolzak

Since our June 2016 meeting a number of Canberra Friends of the Camino have returned from their pilgrimages. Doug Fitzgerald will be talking about his pilgrimage at our June meeting and share his and wife Elaine's experiences, tips, tricks and perhaps the odd disaster story.. From all accounts the Camino Frances is becoming busier and busier as popularity grows and the Way is taking on Hollywood popularity proportions. Notwithstanding that the Holy Father declared 2016 an extraordinary Holy Year which would have attracted many extra pilgrims to commit to walk the Way the tourist industry is also pushing the pilgrims walks and thereby changing the very nature of the Camino Frances that some will have experienced in earlier and less busy years. Today there are bus tours, guided tours, baggage assisted tours, five star tours and all of these eat into the available accommodation along the



route. Doug experienced large numbers of pilgrims/ walkers during the first days out of Saint Jean Pied de Port and difficulty in finding a bed in an albergue or local hotels and pensions unless he was able to arrive at an early hour. This pressure on facilities and services may taper off during normal years and the shoulder seasons from end February to end April and September to end November when the pleasant autumn weather gives way to the colder winter months. If you are considering walking the Camino Frances then give thought to the time of year and possibly undertaking one of the other routes less travelled. Having walked a winter Camino with almost no other walkers I can honestly say that although it was cold and sometimes miserable weather the joy of solitude was a gift which has left a lasting memory.

Pope Francis declares 2016 a Holy Year of Mercy

Regarded by many as the "Pope of Mercy," Francis made the surprise announcement in St. Peter's Basilica while celebrating a penitential service on Friday 13 March 2015 of an extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy. Traditionally, every 25 years the popes proclaim a holy year, which features special celebrations and [pilgrimages](#), calls for repentance, and the offer of special opportunities to experience God's grace through confession. The jubilee began on 8 December 2015, the day Catholics celebrated the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and ends on 20 November 2016, on the feast of Christ the King.

The tradition of Holy Years started 700 years ago. Since then, the Catholic Church has celebrated 26 jubilees. Of those, only three were "extraordinary", the last in 1983 to mark the 1,950 years after the death of Jesus.

Cities on the Camino

After leaving Pamplona the Way takes you to the summit of Alto Del Perdon ('Mount of Forgiveness'), 780m. The climb to the summit is an arduous one and can be quite treacherous if the ground is muddy after heavy rains. The views however are spectacular and well worth the effort involved as you get

**All are welcome to come along and enjoy good company, Spanish wines and beers and riveting Conversation with likeminded Pilgrims! Check out the 'Canberra Friends' website for updates:
www.canberracamino.webs.com**

Canberra Friends of the Camino De Santiago meet @

Spanish Australian Club of Canberra ACT Inc

5 Narupai Place, Narrabundah, ACT, 2604 ph: (02) 62956506



extensive panoramic vistas of the surrounding countryside as far as the Pyrenees. On the summit of Alto del Perdon is an iconic sculpture dedicated to all pilgrims who walk the Camino de Santiago. The long metal sculpture representing pilgrims on foot and horse reflects the historical and eternal nature of the walk. There is a Spanish inscription on it "donde se cruza el camino del viento con el de las estrellas" meaning "where the path of the wind crosses that of the stars". It is one of the great landmarks of the Camino.



Puente de La Reina

Puente la Reina "the crossroads of the ways" lies between Pamplona and Estella on the Way to Santiago de Compostela. It is a medieval town where the two main routes on the way to Santiago converge, the French Way (Spanish: Camino Francés), the most popular route, and the Aragonese Way. It is one of the towns with the greatest affinity with Compostela in Navarre.

Queen Muniadona, wife of King Sancho III, gave her name to the town. She built the six-arched bridge over the Río Arga for the use of pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. The constant transit of pilgrims, the scallop shells and the walking sticks all form part of the urban landscape of this town, which is just 24 kilometers south-west of Pamplona. Walking along the narrow Rúa Mayor is a delightful experience that allows you to discover architectural gems such as the [churches of the Crucifix, St. James and St. Peter](#) and beautiful buildings adorned with details highlighting the influence of the Pilgrim's Way. However, the Romanesque bridge across the river Arga is the most amazing sight of all. It is one of the most beautiful and distinguished examples of Romanesque architecture on the way to Santiago and gives its name to this town of barely 2,500 inhabitants, which is close to the other points of interest such as [Eunate](#), Andelos and the Cerco de Artajona.

Puente la Reina originated and exists for the Pilgrim's Way to Santiago de Compostela. Even today the influence of pilgrimages to Santiago continues to symbolize the town, which forms the crossroads at the convergence of the Orreaga/

Roncesvalles (from Paris) and Somport (from Toulouse) routes.

Founded in the twelfth century by Alfonso I 'el Batallador', it has kept to its original urban layout. This urban structure is a genuine example of a street-based town, a town built around its main street rather than around a protective castle.

The main street, or Rúa Mayor, which leads on to the bridge, is both a thoroughfare and a monument. Narrow and shadowed and hemmed in by noble houses, the street begins with the church of the Crucifix, a construction of Templar origin with two naves, one Romanesque and the other Gothic. Before entering the church, take a look at the Romanesque doorway which exhibits a wealth of ornamentation, and note the decoration of the central archivolt, whose main motifs are the pilgrims' shells. Inside, observe the crucifix with its unusual wooden cross in a "Y" shape which, the story goes, was donated by some German pilgrims who had carried it on their shoulders during their pilgrimage.

Following the Pilgrim's Way along the Rúa Mayor you will come to the church of Santiago, where only some exterior walls and two lovely doors remain from the primitive Romanesque church. The rest of the building was built in the 17th century, except for the upper part of the tower which dates from the 18th century. Inside the church there are two polychrome carvings of St. James the Apostle, known as "beltza" (black) due to his dark skin, and St. Bartholomew.

Your steps will take you to the Plaza Mena or Mayor, an engaging, lively square with a porticoed gallery from the 18th century and some attractive buildings such as the "Casa de los Cubiertos". After crossing the square, you will come to the third big church in Puente la Reina, the church of St. Peter (14th century) which houses some interesting altarpieces.

The Rúa Mayor ends at the magnificent bridge, built in the eleventh century over the river Arga to make it easier for pilgrims to leave the town. Cross over it and listen to the water flowing in silence while imagining all the pilgrims that the bridge has bade farewell to throughout its history. Afterwards,



from the banks of the river, you can admire this superb piece of Romanesque engineering with its six mid-point arches, the most easterly of which is underground.

When it was originally built it had three defensive towers, one of which featured the renaissance image of the Virgin of Puy, or Txori (bird in Basque), which is kept in the parish church of St. Peter. Legend tells us that a bird used to visit the image every day, removing the cobwebs with its wings and washing the Virgin's face with its beak after collecting water from the river Arga.

If you visit Puente la Reina between 24th and 30th July you will find it immersed in the hubbub of its patron saint's festivities. If you choose the last weekend in September, you will coincide with the celebration of its fairs, with their famous 'pitchfork races'. To really get involved in the fiesta you need to sit yourself down at a good table with some Piquillo red peppers and vegetables grown in the local market gardens.

The English version of Book V of the 12th Century Codex Calixtinus



The Codex Calixtinus is a 12th-century illuminated manuscript formerly attributed to Pope Callixtus II, though now believed to have been arranged by the French scholar Aymeric Picaud. The principal author is actually given as 'Scriptor I'.

It was intended as an anthology of background detail and advice for pilgrims following the Way of St. James to the shrine of the apostle Saint James the Great, located in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, Galicia (Spain). The codex is alternatively known as the Liber Sancti Jacobi, or the Book of Saint James. The collection includes sermons, reports of miracles and liturgical texts associated with Saint James, and a set of polyphonic musical pieces. In it are also found descriptions of the route, works of art to be seen along the way, and the customs of the local people.

Book I: Book of the Liturgies

Book II: Book of the Miracles

Book III: Transfer of the body to Santiago

Book IV: The History of Charlemagne and Roland

Book V: A Guide for the Traveller

The book was stolen from its security case in the cathedral's archives on 3 July 2011 and retrieved almost exactly a year later on 4 July 2012. A former cathedral employee was convicted of the theft of the codex and of €2.4 million from collection boxes, and was sentenced to ten years in prison in February 2015.

Chapters IV to VI

Chapter IV. The Three Hostels of the World.

God has set up three supports for the world's poor: the hostels of Jerusalem, of Mont-Joux and of Santa Christa on the Somport Pass, all placed where they are most needed. They are holy places, houses of God where holy pilgrims can refresh, the destitute can relax, the sick can receive comfort, the dead can be prayed for, and the living given help.

Chapter V. People who repaired the road.

Here are the names of certain travellers who, in the time of Archbishop Diego of Santiago, and Emperor Alfonso of Spain and Galicia, and of Pope Calixtus, restored the road to Santiago from Rabanel to Portomarin, out of faithful love of God and the Apostle, since the year of Our Lord 1120, in the reign of Alfonso, King of Aragon, and Louis the Fat, King of the French: Andréas, Rotgerius, Alvitus, Fortus, Arnaldus, Stephanus, and Petrus, who rebuilt the bridge over the Mino destroyed by Queen Urraca. May the souls of these men and their assistants rest in peace.

Chapter VI. The Good and Bad Rivers on the Camino.

The Rivers

These are the rivers on the Camino de Santiago from Puerta de Ciza and from the Somport pass:

From Somport flows the healthy water of the River Aragon, which irrigates Spain. From Puerto de Ciza to Pamplona pours pure water known as the river Runa. Both the Runa and the river Arga run down to Puente la Reina.

FACEBOOK:

The Canberra Friends of the Camino De Santiago is on Facebook. To join us on Facebook:

- 1 Go to 'Like Pages' in your Facebook account.
- 2 Search for 'Canberra Friends of the Camino'
- 3 Once on the 'Canberra Friends of the Camino' page click on Like Page.

You will then receive our regular post in your Facebook account.

The horses die at Rio Salada.

At a place called Lorca, to the east, flows the river known as the Salt Stream. Be careful not to drink it or water your horse there, because the river is lethal. On its banks, as we were going to Santiago, we found two Navarrese sitting there, sharpening their knives, waiting to skin the horses of pilgrims which die after drinking the water. When we asked, they lied and said the water was safe to drink. So we watered our horses, and two died at once, which the men then skinned.

Estella to Logrono

At Estella runs the Ega, with sweet, safe and excellent water. Through the town of Los Arcos flows deadly water. Outside the town near the first hostel, after leaving the village but before coming to the hostel, is a river fatal to both horses and men who drink it.

At the town of Torres del Rio in Navarre flows a river deadly to horses and men, and at the village of Cuevas is a similar death-bringing stream. At Logrono there is a huge river called the Ebro which is healthy and which abounds in fish.

All the rivers between Estella and Logrono are lethal to men and horses, but their fish is approved to eat.

Perils of local food

In Spain and Galicia, don't eat the fish called a 'barbus', or the one the Poitevins call an 'alosa' and the Italians 'clipia', or any eel, or tench, because without doubt you will immediately die or fall very sick. If by luck anyone eats and doesn't get sick, they're healthier than most or have stayed longer in the country. For all fish, beef and pork in Spain and Galicia make foreigners ill.

Good Rivers in Castilla y Leon

The rivers which are sweet and safe to drink are locally named as the following: the Pisuerga, which flows at Puente de Itero; the Carrion; the Cea at Sahagun; the Esla at Mansilla de las Mulas; the Porma, at the big bridge between Mansilla and Leon; the Torio, which flows near Leon below the Jewish quarter; the Bernesga, which flows by the same city, but on the other side, towards Astorga; the Sil at Ponferrada in the Green Valley; the Cua that flows by Cacabelos; the Burbia at the bridge at Villafranca; the Valcarce that flows in the Valcarce valley; and the Mino, which flows by Portomarin.

Ablutions at Lavacolla

There is a river in a wooded place two miles from Santiago called Lavacolla, in which French pilgrims, out of respect for the Apostle, wash not only their private parts but, stripping off their clothes, clean all the dirt from their bodies.

Rivers around Santiago

The river Sar, between Monte de Gozo and Santiago, is healthy, and the river Sarela, which flows from the other side of the city, to the west, is said to be safe.

I have described these rivers thus, so that pilgrims setting out for Santiago can learn to avoid the dangerous ones and choose those healthy for themselves and their animals.

Spain Public Holidays for August/September 2016

Aug 5	Fri	<u>Our Lady of Africa</u>	Local	Ceuta
Aug 14	Sun	<u>The Day of Cantabria</u>	Local	Cantabria
Aug 15	Mon	<u>Assumption of Mary</u>	National	
Sep 2	Fri	<u>Independent City of Ceuta</u>	Local	Ceuta
Sep 8	Thu	<u>Day of Asturias</u>	Local	Asturias
Sep 8	Thu	<u>Day of Extremadura</u>	Local	Extremadura
Sep 8	Thu	<u>Virgin of Victory</u>	Local	Melilla
Sep 11	Sun	<u>Day of Catalonia</u>	Local	Catalonia
Sep 12	Mon	<u>Eid-al-Adha</u>	Local	Melilla
Sep 13	Tue	<u>Eid-al-Adha</u>	Local	Ceuta
Sep 15	Thu	<u>Nuestra Señora de la Bien Aparecida</u>	Local	Cantabria
Sep 17	Sat	<u>Day of Melilla</u>	Local	Melilla

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Contributions on topics related to the Camino are always welcomed any time to this newsletter. We will place your article or letter in the next available newsletter. Please send text in Word, RTF or plain text along with photos to: canberracamino@gmail.com.

Santiago and Pilgrimage in Germany



Camino sign in Zons an ancient village on the Rhine



Camino pilgrim sign outside Cologne near Leverkusen



Fellow pilgrims from 2010 Camino in Germany



Santiago in Hannover Cathedral

Thank you to the **Spanish Australian Club of Canberra ACT Inc.** who continue to support this Friends group through the provision of free use of Club rooms and electronic equipment for our monthly meetings. **Doug Fitzgerald and Wal Wolzak** on behalf of the **Canberra Friends of the Camino De Santiago.**