



Pilgrim Footprints

Thank you to everyone who sent in suggestions for naming your newsletter! What a great list the members had to choose from. **Congratulations to Catherine Kaloutsky** who sent in the winning choice, and a big thank you to everyone who participated. (now we just need a cool header)

Notes From A Busy President

Update On The Camino Inglés From A Coruña

In the Spring 2017 issue of this newsletter I wrote about the Camino Inglés route from A Coruña. To recap - there are two starting points for the Camino Inglés, from Ferrol and from A Coruña.

The distance from Ferrol to Santiago is 110 km and so pilgrims walking from there qualify for the Compostela. The distance from A Coruña is only 73 km, too short to meet the 100 km requirement set by the Cathedral. **Cont'd on page 3**



Canadians Giving Back to our Beloved Camino

As London, Ontario's hardworking coordinator, Tom Friesen, put it so well:

"I believe strongly that pilgrims are not "low-rent" tourists out for an inexpensive vacation. Therefore giving back to the Camino, becomes a part of the experience while we are there and after we return."

Individual provincial groups have traditionally been independent and, at this point, no one has a complete handle on exactly the quality and amount of the donations Canadians have "given back" to the camino.

But we do know donations have recently included the following:

- significant donations to the albergue at Miraz over a period of several years
- unexpected surplus after 3 Camino 101 sessions and a hospitalero training session in Victoria, in addition to other monies saved. Over \$3,375 was sent **this year** to help with renovations at Foncebadon and Tabára.
- London has sent every dollar that has gone into their donation jug to Monestario (a parochial albergue 100 kms. north of Sevilla) since it opened in 2011. In addition, art has been donated by Wanda, Al and Dayton all from the London area.
- Two groups have donated money to Bercianos
- Fredericton supports their local hospice and an African school project with any extra monies they have on hand and encourage local members to assist as well.

Money sent to the camino helps with renovations in the albergues, new mattresses, sheets, clothes washers and spinners, hot water heaters, microwaves and more, including extra food for pilgrims who don't have any. In addition, dozens of Canadians have worked as hospitaleros, in albergues on several routes and in the main office in Santiago de Compostela. And at least one Vancouver Canadian has helped re-paint the yellow arrows on one stretch of the camino.

Congratulations Canadian Pilgrims! We're proud of you.

Camino Inglés - Cont'd from Page 1**Wendy Loly**

In December 2016 there was a new ruling from the Cathedral that pilgrims who have walked 30km in their home country before walking the 73km from A Coruña to Santiago are eligible for the Compostela. The question was – what constitutes acceptable proof that you have walked this extra 30km at home?

Since then I have been investigating the availability of 'inked stamps' or 'sellos' here in Victoria and in Canada. It seems that many churches here DO have some kind of stamp or seal, or at the very least – a return address stamp used on their outgoing mail.

These would all be acceptable at the Pilgrim Office in Santiago. Other options could include stamps from town halls or parks. In May I used the return address stamp from a local Anglican cathedral, and it was considered satisfactory.

Pilgrims need to have a minimum of two stamps in Canada before beginning to walk from A Coruña, and more would be even better. Each stamp must be dated and initialed by the clerk who issues it. These will be examined at the Pilgrim Office to verify that the extra distance has indeed been covered. And you must also get two stamps each day in Spain.

This is a pleasant route that can be easily walked in 3-5 days. A Coruña is a historic city with lots to explore before you begin walking. Waymarkings are minimal (well – honestly - almost non-existent) getting out of A Coruña. Use Johnnie Walker's guide, available from the Confraternity of St. James bookshop, to get out of town. After that it is well marked, through rural farmland and leafy woodlands, with a few villages with bars and accommodations along the way. There is one elevation rise of about 300 meters going into Bruma, and it is otherwise gently rolling. It could be combined with walking onward to Finisterre and Muxia for a longer walk.



Correos – Post Office in Spain

Wendy Loly

“Camino con Correos”

As I set off in May for yet another Camino I realized that my knee wasn't going to carry me through the whole walk. And so I reluctantly made the decision to get some help in carrying my pack. I arranged for pack transfer with Correos, the Spanish post office, giving me the opportunity to see first-hand some of the services that are available to pilgrims from them. They have truly listened to pilgrims needs, and have embraced the pilgrimage in implementing many ways to assist pilgrims. They have an excellent website explaining all their services in English. All my pack transfers went very smoothly. When I arrived in Santiago I met with a couple of their managers and had an informative tour of the post office facility in Santiago.



Main Correos post office at 4 Rúa do Franco in Santiago and
The privileged view from roof of Correos post office building in Santiago.



Transferring backpacks (PAQ Mochila): If you need assistance in transporting your pack, perhaps due to injury or other issues, Correos offers this service along all major Camino routes in Spain. For a minimal cost they will pick up your pack in the morning and drop it off at your next destination later in the day.

It is possible to arrange this for only one day, for several days or your whole route – as long as you know where you intend to stay. Some municipal albergues don't allow these drops but there is usually a nearby bar that can accommodate the service, and the post office personnel can advise about this. You can communicate with them on-line, by e-mail or by phone in English.

Luggage transfer (PAQ Peregrino): If you find your backpack is too heavy you can mail a box of extra unneeded items to yourself in Santiago (or any other post office along the route), to pick up when you arrive there. Post offices sell boxes in several sizes. The parcel is held free for 15 days and then the cost is one euro/day for storage.

Continued from page 4

This service can also apply to suitcases, so if you wish to have some 'tourist' clothes for an extended stay in Spain after your Camino, the post office will transport your luggage to Santiago and store it for you until your arrival. This can be arranged from any post office or from the Correos office in the Barajas Airport in Madrid.

Suitcases or parcels up to 15 kg: 17.97 Euros

Suitcases or parcels up to 25 kg: 26.60 Euros



Bicycle transport (PAQ Bicicleta): Correos can send your bicycle to your designated starting or finishing point within Spain. Bike boxes and packing materials are available at the post offices. If you rent a bike in Spain, when you reach Santiago the post office will return it to your rental agency.



Continued from page 5

Left luggage: The post office at 4 Rúa do Franco in Santiago is two minutes from the Cathedral, and it offers a locker service for backpacks, suitcases, trekking poles or bicycles. These items are not permitted inside the Cathedral but they can be stored temporarily or even for a few days at this central location. From Easter until October 31st this service is available every day, including Sundays and holidays. More limited hours from November to Easter. Backpacks – two euros/day; Trekking poles – one euro/day



Stamping credentials: You can visit any post office along your route to stamp your pilgrim passport. There are over 150 Correos offices along all the Camino routes, and some have special sellos for their city or region.

And a final offering for avid stamp collectors – a **Camino Philatelic Passport**. This does NOT replace your official credential but is a special offer for those wishing to collect the 14 special Camino stamps issued by the Spanish Post Office. Each represents an emblematic place along the Camino Francés, with a final stamp and postmark available in Santiago.



Continued from Page 6

Check out all Correos services on their website:

http://www.elcaminoconcorreos.com/index_en.php?_ga=2.267408013.2072846319.1497137041-952331075.1435445189

Other luggage services:

Ivar's left luggage: If you are walking in Spain, France or Portugal you can send luggage or boxes ahead to Santiago to be stored for up to 60 days by Ivar Rekve, the owner of the Camino Forum.

<http://www.casaivar.com/luggage-storage-in-santiago-de-compostela/index.html>

Transportation

- In Spain - Jacotrans (jacotrans.com); Caminofacil <http://www.caminofacil.net/en/>
- In France – from St. Jean Pied-de-Port over the Pyrenees try Express Bourricot <http://www.expressbourricot.com>
- In Portugal - <http://tuitrans.com/?lang=en>

This website lists some other services and has some good advice.

<http://www.theroadtosantiago.com/sending-your-backpack-ahead.html>

Or just Google your route name + luggage transfer to find even more options.

Buen Camino to all! *Picture below from Camino Inglés*



Vancouver and District Pilgrims Prepare For Their Caminos Among New Friends

Vancouver coordinators hold two meetings a year to provide information and answer questions for anyone who is interested in walking the caminos to Santiago. But they also plan one or two long walks almost EVERY weekend – through hot sun, wind, rain and bears - for any past, present or future pilgrims who want to take part.

They walk the historic walks throughout the communities of Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, Surrey and more; through the cities, along the waterside and up the challenging North Shore mountain paths.

The groups change from week to week, but the enthusiasm never wanes. Energetic co-coordinator Donna Coutts is the instigator of all of these walks, is one of the Canadian hospitaleros, and our own contributor to repainting the yellow camino arrows. Enjoy a few pictures of their weekly walks.











Maps and the Camino

by Bryson Guptill

On many popular Camino forums, you will encounter Camino veterans who dismiss the idea of taking a map on your pilgrimage. "The Camino is well marked", they will say. "Just follow the yellow arrows".

We walked the Camino Francés in the fall of 2016, and we still found parts of the route confusing despite the arrows. In my opinion, walking without a map is like walking without a water bottle – you could do it, but why would you?



(Author sampling grapes given by a farmer.)

It's true that there are lots of scallop shell signs, and there are plenty of yellow arrows, but staying on route is more complicated than just heading west. Without a map, you'll find yourself asking, "Which way is that scallop shell pointing?" "Are those yellow arrows way markers, or are they just pointing to someone's Casa or Albergue?" "How do we know which Camino route we should take?"

When we were planning our route, I noticed the John Brierley book uses a mapping convention called "straight-line maps". Each of the daily stages start at the bottom of the page and end at the top, no matter the direction you're heading. This makes for efficient use of paper, but confuses people who are used to navigating from maps where south is at the bottom of the page

Cont'd on page 7

In fact, the Camino heads mostly west (except when you're heading over the Pyrenees which is south from St. Jean Pied de Port). On some days you may head north, west and south - all within a few kilometers. On those days, a straight-line map is just an invitation to get lost!

I decided to use "**north is up**" in my guidebook, but I soon found out why it's so difficult to build Camino maps that way. If you're looking at the map on your smart phone, the screen is long, but not very wide. Cramming a full day's walk onto an east to west screen that's 5-6 cm wide means you need to cram a lot of distance into a very small space.

If you're walking 25 kilometers (the average distance covered in each of the Brierley stages) the map scale must be 1:500,000 to fit your daily walk onto your phone screen. That's 10 times larger than the 1:50,000 scale used on most topographic maps.

A partial solution is to use a "slippery map" on your phone – a map you can slide left and right using your finger or your cursor. There is an excellent map app called Maps.me that provides a slippery map of the entire world.

This map is very handy as France and Spain can be downloaded in advance of your trip and you won't need an Internet connection to view it once it's on your phone.

Unfortunately, the standard base map used by Map.me (OpenStreetMap.org) doesn't show all the Camino route - not very helpful unless you've walked the route before. Fortunately, I created another solution. First, I made a GPS trace of the Camino Francés using the same base map used by Map.me. However, my GPS software (Retrace for BlackBerry) gave me the option of using a version of this map that does show the Camino Francés route (plus all the alternative routes).

The GPS on my phone dropped electronic "breadcrumbs" every 5 seconds. That gives lots of detail, but the size of the trace was enormous. It took nearly ten minutes to load every time I turned on my phone. If I stitched all the map segments side by side, I would have needed a phone screen that was 1 km wide!

Fortunately, the entire 800 km track was still intact when we returned to Canada. From this large file, I constructed an edited trace that showed our route, minus the places where we strayed off course. Then, with the help of a computer-programmer friend, I assembled a map of our route to match the route described in my guidebook. This map shows our 34 daily stops, the distances travelled between these stops, and all the Albergues and other places of interest along the way. Here's the link:

<http://caminofrances.info>

see details at link, and maps on next page



In addition to being free, our Camino map is being updated continuously by one or more of the 2 million people who contribute to the OpenStreetMap.org data base – this keeps information like the names and locations of Albergues as up to date as possible.

Not everyone will walk as far as we did every day - no worries! Use the map to plan your own personal itinerary and stop wherever and whenever you wish. The map shows the location of every town and every intersection along the route – you can even see each building if you want this much detail.

You can also slide the slippery map around to show the other Camino routes such as the Camino Portuguese, the Camino Norte, and the Camino Ingles. Since we've only done the Camino Francés, our map doesn't show our walk along these other routes – at least, not yet. Who knows – perhaps we'll finish all of them one of these days!

- written by Bryson Guptill, May 10, 2017 (brysonguptill@gmail.com)

Reporting From the Calgary Chapter

Hospitalero Session

Earlier this year, our Calgary Chapter, Canadian Company of Pilgrims association organized a 2 ½ day training course for introducing the prospective candidates to become potential hospitaleros/as. Our instructor, Tom Friesen (aka Tomás) had flown all the way from London, Ontario to spearhead and teach this course.

Our chapter's coordinator Judy hosted the Friday night social at her house. A spectacular assortment of Tapas and three different types of Paella for the discriminatory soul were offered. In a very casual and friendly setting, Tomás described our agenda for the course and everyone was ears and eyes.



On the following two days, our volunteers prepared delicious Spanish meals, including a fabulous Caldo Gallego enjoyed by all.

Tomás went into extensive discussions on how to stay fair, neutral and kind not just to the Pilgrims but to the town's vendors, etc and he emphasized that hospitaleros must always try to recognize the goodness in others.

Continued from page 12



Continued from page 13

Many other topics were discussed and presented. Judy talked about the Hospitalero/Albergue priorities and procedures. Monique discussed the importance of getting acquainted with the albergue details before your predecessor walks out the door, and Donna presented the topic on First Aid for the body.

Below you can see our group of volunteers who made it so special for us: Right to Left: Frank, Judy, Donna, Monique and Marianna. They all kindly shared their experiences and patiently answered everybody's questions. Thank you!



And here are the new Hospitaleros/as ready to serve in Spain!



Continued from page 14

Legacy Trail Training Walk (Calgary)

Jackie and Harvey Siemens led the Legacy Trail Walk on April 8 & 9. Eleven pilgrims participated in this walk from Canmore to Banff and great weather was a plus! The forecast had looked pretty bleak but Saturday we had mostly sun and Sunday the rain held off although we did get some snow. Still a beautiful day over all!! The trail was nice and clear aside from one short stretch with a bit of melting snow. The jury is still out on how far we actually walked but we believe it was close to 24kms each day. Everyone enjoyed walking and getting to know the other pilgrims so much! It really was like a mini Camino!



Our Chapter Update We had a great gathering at our Spring Chapter Meeting. We enjoyed a delightful singing session with Tom Friesen, the Chapter Coordinator for London, Ontario, who offered the opportunity to make us feel like we were walking the Camino once again. We also watched the short film, "Phil's Camino". This is an inspirational film to those with physical challenges as well as those who are just wanting to live more fully. We are grateful for the Canadian Company of Pilgrims for providing us a copy of the movie.

We are looking forward to our annual St. James' Day Celebration, on Sunday, July 23. Church service followed by coffee and a walk in our beautiful Foothills countryside and potluck lunch. Everyone is welcome to join us anytime during the day. Details to be announced later in June.

Please check our CALGARY CHAPTER FACEBOOK. Our Facebook page contains up-to-date information on local activities as well as articles and tips for taking the pilgrim trail. Check us out and like us at <https://www.facebook.com/calgarypilgrims/>

Last but not least, some of our members are currently in Spain doing their Camino pilgrimage; we want to wish them best of luck! You can follow many of their stories on our Facebook Page. And we are also very excited for those who will be serving as Hospitaleros in the upcoming months: Marlene and our Chapter Coordinator, Judy will be serving in Rabanal, Monique and Michael in Zamora, Marianna in Salamanca and Mary-Louise in Burgos. Good luck to All!

The Gift

by Elaine Hopkins

This is a story about not booking ahead. Last year, I have this mad idea about walking from my home in London, England to Santiago. I set off in mid-March, walk to the English coast, catch a ferry, and start walking down through France.

Every time I stop, my hosts tell me that I'm the first pilgrim of the season. I like that: it makes me feel like a trail-blazer. I'm in go with the flow mode, so I'm not booking ahead. I have a couple of narrow escapes because France is a Catholic country that has all these religious holidays I know nothing about. Then I realise that Easter's coming up, so I do book ahead. I set off on Easter Monday, confident that I have a bed at the end of my 20 kilometres because I've spoken to Monsieur on the phone and he's said 'oui' (yes). But when I arrive, Madame says 'non'.

I sit down with my guidebook and discover that, in 20 kilometres' time, there's a town with four hotels. What could possibly go wrong? Hotel one is closed; hotel two is closed; hotel three is closed; hotel four - which is the station hotel - is closed. At this point, I'm beginning to think that Brexit might be a good idea. Hotels in England would not be closed on Easter Monday. I go to the centre of town. It's dead. But I have my father's mantra running through my head. And my father's mantra is: there is always something you can do.

I sit down with my guidebook again. There's a B&B run by an English couple a mere five kilometres away. Perfect. I phone to make sure. The English lady tells me that pilgrims are not welcome in her establishment. Well, that's one in the eye for national solidarity. By this time, it's getting later, and darker, and colder. To make matters worse, the hobos are bringing their dogs in from the surrounding countryside. They're eyeing me as competition for the available accommodation. It's a stark choice between the church porch and the public toilets. But there's always something you can do, right?

And I know there's something I can do because right at the bottom of my rucksack there's a scrappy piece of paper with the details of French families who welcome pilgrims into their home.

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Continued from previous page But you're meant to have booked ahead, and I haven't done that. I come over all English and decide that I can't possibly ask people to put me up at such short notice. But what I can do is ask for details of a taxi company. So I phone Madame. We get off on the wrong foot. She's expecting a call from her daughter. I'm obviously not her daughter - not with a French accent like mine.

Things go from bad to worse. She says irritably: "Why on earth are you asking me about taxis?" And I blurt out: "Because I'm a pilgrim and I need a bed for the night". Madame says in a tone of absolute astonishment: "Don't you want to stay with us?" I come over even more English and say: "I couldn't possibly ask you to do that for me". Madame says: "Well, we do have to get up at 6.00 tomorrow morning, so perhaps it isn't convenient for you". "No, no; it's wonderfully convenient. I'd love to stay with you."

Madame tells me to wait in the church porch. Forty-five minutes later, a car pulls up and I see this couple in their eighties get out. I feel ashamed and embarrassed at my own incompetence. I don't know why I'm bothered because Madame and Monsieur are dancing in delight. They bundle me into the car; they bundle me up in a blanket. Within seconds, we're talking about the Camino. It's as though we've known each other all our lives. At their house, they start stripping the bed, running me a bath, and piling the table with fine, French food.

I ask if I'm the first pilgrim, and they confirm that I am. About ten minutes later, a thought strikes me. I ask if I'm their first pilgrim of the season or their first pilgrim ever. They look at me. And, in that moment, they're not 80; they're eight. Their eyes have that bright, shiny look that usually only children under eight have. "You're our first pilgrim ever.....and we've been praying that you would come." And I understand something that I've never even thought of before. It's this: sometimes, we are as much a gift to other people as they are to us.

<https://elainehopkinsauthor.com/>

(Editor's note: this is not to suggest that we should expect to always be received as if we are a gift to others along the camino.)

American Pilgrims on the Camino Perspectives on the Annual Gathering 2017

By Ivor Lockhart Winnipeg Chapter Coordinator

Last month I attended the 20th Annual Gathering of the American Pilgrims on Camino, held this year at the Calvin Centre in Hampton, Georgia, south of Atlanta, from March 23rd to 26th.

There were 170 of us in attendance. From outside the U.S., there were two from the United Kingdom, two from Spain, and one from Canada.

The theme of the gathering was “The Camino Community: Past, Present and Future”. Over the course of the gathering there were over two dozen presentations and events to take in – a busy schedule, indeed! Among the highlights, from my perspective, were the following.

Thursday evening, we were treated to a high energy demonstration of flamenco dancing presented by Atlanta-based Caló Gitano Flamenco, who demonstrated how flamenco has influenced, and been influenced by, other forms of music.

Lanzada Calatayud and Rafael Sanchez from A Coruña, Spain gave a detailed presentation on the Camino Inglés and, in particular, on improvements being made to it. Their desire is for this to become a viable alternative route to Santiago.

Veriditas-certified labyrinth educator Linda Fitts introduced us to the labyrinth and explained how it can be integrated into the Camino Life. Later in the day, she offered us the opportunity to walk a large canvas replica of the medieval labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, in France.

Of the many Camino 5 X 5 Pilgrim presentations (5 slides in 5 minutes) given Friday evening, the one by Elaine Hopkins, from the Confraternity of Saint James, stood out for me. Elaine related an event during her pilgrimage through France as an example of how we can be as much a gift to others as they are to us. She spoke from memory but has written out her presentation, and it will appear in the next CCoP newsletter.

Expat American Rebekah Scott presented a thought-provoking look at the early years of the modern Camino and how it has changed, in particular with respect to ‘Camino hospitality’. She offered both despair and hope for the Camino’s future.

Meditation and yoga practitioners Miriam Gallet and Jessica Swan led us in practicing asanas to take with us on the Camino, during which yours truly discovered that it’s easier to get down on the floor than it is to get up again.

The medieval music of the Camino was explained and demonstrated in excellent fashion by baritone Constantine Kokenes, an Atlanta area physician who specializes in Medieval and Latin Chant in his spare time. He concluded his presentation by leading us in singing₂ the Hymnus Peregrinorum (Hymn of the Pilgrims) from the Codex Calixtinus. **Cont’ on 23**

Cont' from page 22

On the Sunday, we witnessed and engaged in an emotional Shell Ceremony where 11 APoC members received their shell and a Camino blessing in preparation for their Camino this year.

My thanks to the APoC Board Members – the “backbone” of these annual gatherings – whose organizational skills and hard work throughout the event ensured that everything ran as well as it did. Anyone contemplating attending one of these gatherings should be prepared for long days and short nights. This gathering was not only about the presentations but equally as much about bringing together fellow pilgrims and helping to make the world a better place. And that takes time and effort on everyone's part.

Next year's gathering takes place April 12th to 15th in Scottsdale, Arizona.

By June 30 2017, **112,120** pilgrims had walked into Santiago.

- In 2016, **100,950** had arrived by the end of June
- Each month shows that between 60 and 65 % are walking the Camino Frances, 10 to 25% are walking the Camino Portugues, and the Norte, Via de la Plata, Inglés and Primitivo, all hover between 2 and 5%

YOU KNOW WHERE TO GO IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A QUIET, MEDITATIVE CAMINO – HINT - NOT THE CAMINO FRANCES!

HELP MAKE YOUR NEWSLETTER INTERESTING!

What's going on in the rest of the country with past and potential camino pilgrims?

- Tell us your stories.
- What impacted you?
- Why did you go?
- What did you learn?
- What are your best hints?
- Send us your favourite pictures.

Everybody – please tell me what you like or don't like about the newsletter. What would help to make it interesting and/or useful for you? Contact cecelia@santiago.ca

Thank you.

The Other Side of the Pilgrim Experience – Hospitalero Reflections by Tom Friesen

Memorable Pilgrims: There are some pilgrims that leave a lasting impression. I encourage the hospitaleros we train to remember the good and forget the people who provide a negative experience in the albergue.

Repeat customers: I remember an American from Massachusetts. He entered Villalcarlos de Sirga and saw my partners' Canadian flag pañuelo and commented, "I had a Canadian hospitalero in Foncebadon three years ago and he let me read 'The Road Not Taken'. I had been mopping behind the door and popped my head out, 'Oh hi again Dan, How is this Camino going?'"

Positive Feedback: I have met pilgrims that I have served in other contexts – conferences and hospitalero trainings for example. Hearing: "That night in Grañon/Zamora/Foncebadon was the best night I had on the Camino or 'I am here as a hospitalero because I wanted to give people the reception you gave me' gives one tremendous satisfaction.

Pilgrims in Physical Need: I remember a young man who was limping badly. We tried to convince him to buy a hiking pole at the local store but he felt it was too expensive for him. Just after he left, we found a broken pole in the corner barrel. We used some old batteries as spacers and duct tape to hold it in place and drove the pole to him further down the road. His first words were: "No, no, I do not want to take your pole". When we showed him it was a repair of an old broken pole, he was wiping his eyes as he thanked us.

Pilgrims in Spiritual Need: I had a pilgrim who was a professional singer ask to sing Ave Maria at the church mass. The priest was fine with that after he heard him sing. Later on he sang in the choir loft as the pilgrims were settling in to sleep. Just as he finished he confided, "When I was singing Ave Maria, that was for my daughter Marie; she died recently."

Pilgrims whose Donation is Unusual: A familiar figure is a large French pilgrim named Serge. A couple of years ago when I met him in Najera, he was on his 28th Camino. His donativo, bags of garbage he had picked up along the way. As a hospitalero turned pilgrim, I later appreciated how clean the Camino was after Serge had passed by.

Hospitalero Pilgrims: Often hospitaleros are walking as pilgrims. They wear the muñequito which is our symbol of service and can often be drafted into helping out. I remember a young woman identifying as a hospitalera at my first posting in 2006. She was German and had very good Spanish as a result of living in Madrid for the past year. I remembered her from the previous year when she was just starting in Ponferrada with almost no Spanish. I told her that she had inspired me to try the work since my Spanish was better than hers at the time of our service. It had a wrap around feeling that she had served me and now I had the chance to offer her hospitality.

Pilgrims who become Friends: Some of the pilgrims I have met remain in contact and are friends from all over the world. I try to welcome pilgrims as if they are entering my home. Sometimes fortunately, they have a chance to return the favour.

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