



PILGRIM FOOTPRINTS

Canadian Company of Pilgrims 2019

Annual General Meeting

We are pleased to announce that the Canadian Company of Pilgrims (CCoP) Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on:

Saturday, January 26, 2019, in Victoria BC

Location: The Salvation Army Victoria Citadel, 4030 Douglas St., Victoria BC,

Time: 9:30 am – 10:30 am PST

(Doors will be open at 9:00 for voter registration*)

*In order to vote at the AGM you must be a paid up annual member of CCoP at the time of the meeting.

Advance Online Voting is available HERE: <https://www.santiago.ca/ccop-agm-2019/#!form/2019AGMVotingForm> from January 9th to 23rd, 2019

If you are not currently a member you can join online at:

<https://www.santiago.ca/member-sign-up/#join>

Annual memberships will also be available at the door on January 26th
- \$10 each (cash or cheque only).

AGM SPEAKER : Doug Steinburg (Victoria Chapter of CCoP)

My Swiss Camino - Doug is an inveterate pilgrim, having done 16 Caminos, some as short as 350 km and some just over 1000 km. He has also served as a hospitalero on the Vezelay route. His most recent Camino was in Switzerland, from Basel to Geneva in Summer 2018. Doug's presentation is open to both members and non-members. Seating is limited.

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EXCITING NEW BENEFITS FOR CCOP MEMBERS!

Effective January 1st, if you are a member of CCoP, you can take advantage of these terrific money saving benefits.

- 15% discount on many Air Canada flights heading to Europe from March until the end of October 2019***
- discounts on WestJet and Delta for both National and International flights**
- discounts for Avis and Budget car rentals**
- insurance benefits, including Travel insurance (with no age restrictions), Group Medical Insurance, Group Home insurance**

*** some restrictions may apply**

Please check the membership page for details.

Reminder: WEBSITE CHANGES! THE WEBSITE IS NEW AND IMPROVED!

If you haven't visited the CCoP website in the last few months, this is a reminder that **your old password no longer works**.

Some of the new features include a member profile where you can:

- join a specific chapter
- manage your email lists
- share with us your camino experiences
- and print a personalized membership card

Some things you should know before signing into your profile:

- The password you had prior to September no longer works. The first step to accessing your account is to choose **Request Password** on the membership sign-in screen. You will receive a password that you can change after you sign in.
- As part of the conversion, we automatically assigned you to a chapter near you. If there wasn't one nearby, we assigned you to National Member only. You can change this at any time.
- You can only be a member of one chapter although you can join multiple mailing lists.
- If you were on The National Email list, you remained on the list for the national newsletters.
- If you are getting emails from your local chapter, you are still on that list however it may not yet reflect currently on your profile. Within a couple of months from the changeover (September 2018) that portion of the system will be updated, but you will still receive emails from your local chapter.

Take a couple of minutes and update your profile today if you haven't already done so!

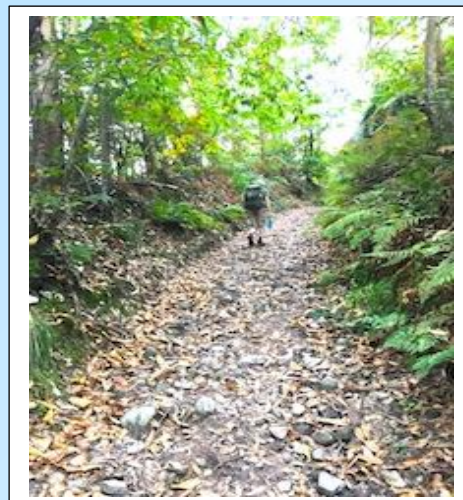
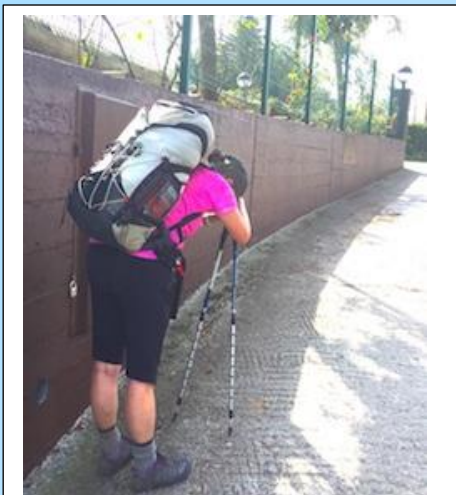
Many of you will remember **Jane Christmas'** enjoyable tale of her journey along the Camino Frances which she wrote about in ***What The Psychic Told The Pilgrim***. Following in her own entertaining style is a summary of her experience on the Camino Norte.

The Camino Norte

by Jane Christmas

About two days into the Camino Norte I revisited a personal vow made three years earlier: ***Never do anything like this again***. The vow was uttered by my body on Peru's Machu Picchu trail as my legs wobbled and juddered from steep and precarious climbs up and down an endless run of stone steps leading out of the Sacred Valley and up into the Andes. It was a trek that also involved camping. I detest camping. However, I agreed to go having rationalized the trek as being only 82 kilometres, and lasting just four days. Compared to four weeks and 790 kilometres on the Camino Frances, Machu Picchu would be a snap. It wasn't. My body screamed for mercy the entire way.

I never learn. A few months ago, I stepped onto the Camino Norte. I rationalized that trek, too: sure it was 833 kilometres, and was harder than the Frances, but it would be different this time: I would not be under time constraints, and I would have the comfort of my husband and our two friends as company. By Day Two reality hit: I had forgotten how easy a cosy foursome can splinter as each person copes with her/his level of fitness and physical ability; how punishing those climbs can be, especially with 16 kilos on your back and the sun boring into you. Had I even taken into account that I was 14 years older than I was on my first Camino? Drenched in sweat, heart hammering wildly, calf muscles throbbing from exertion and sunburn, I paused on the road to Zarautz, bent over my walking poles, and wept. (cont.d on page 5)

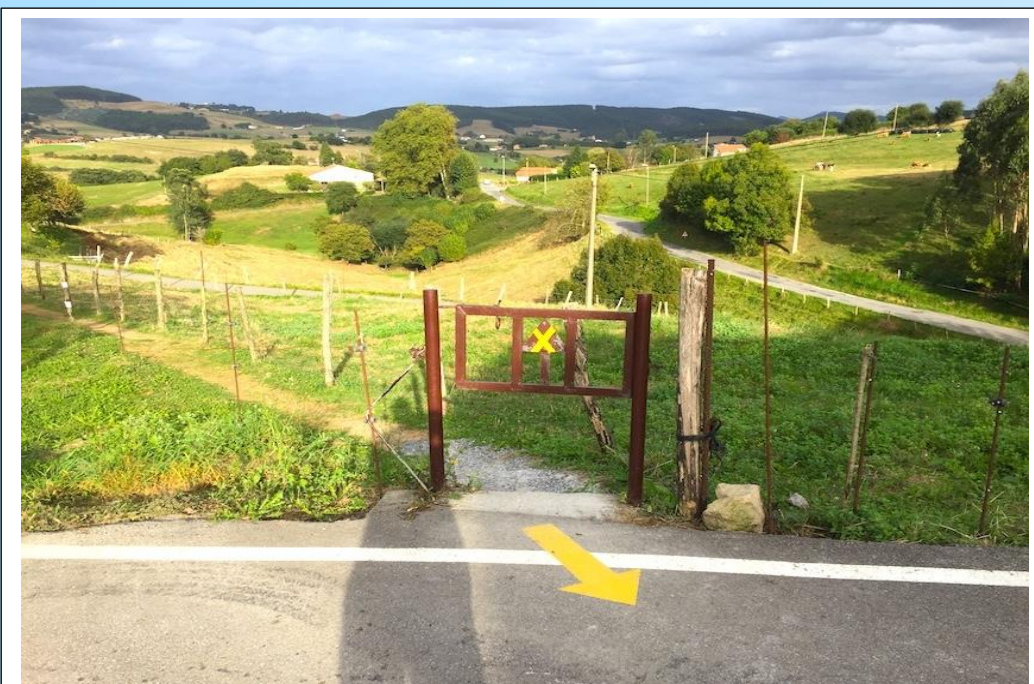


(cont'd from page 4 – The Camino Norte by Jane Christmas)

When people tell you that the Camino Norte is, physically, the toughest of the Caminos, believe them. If you monitor your daily activity via an iPhone app you will quickly amass statistics showing that you have climbed the equivalent of 72, 85, even 145 flights of stairs. The first eight days, from Irun to Bilboa, are murder with its relentless steep, rocky climbs.

Like the Frances, the scenery is breath-taking and varied, but as the Norte's route pushes further up and into the remote, mountainous Basque countryside the terrain is so difficult you barely register the beauty. After Bilboa things get more bearable. And eventually it gets doable, then possible, and finally even enjoyable.

The Norte demands sterner stuff from its pilgrims. Geographically remote, the Norte quickly inculcates you with a sense of isolation and vulnerability. Of the 300,000-plus pilgrims who received a Compostela in 2017, the Norte garnered only about 5percent of pilgrim traffic compared to the Frances' 60 percent. The Norte lacks the moveable pilgrim tribe you find on the Frances; no collective enthusiasm to buoy you on those low days; few if any travelling companions. Cafés? They are few and far between. You might very well have to hike 10 km to get that morning café con leche. Another striking difference is that despite the Norte being an older route than the Frances, its history—political and spiritual—does not ooze as abundantly as it does on its sister route. (cont'd on page 6)

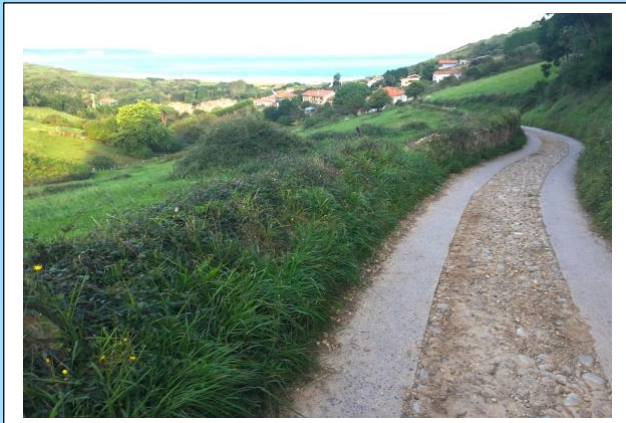


(cont'd from page 5 – The Camino Norte by Jane Christmas)

So what's the attraction if the Norte is so hard, long (at 833km), and isolating? Well, the scenery and the solitude. The route hugs Spain's raw, wild, northern coast with its necklace of secluded beaches and coves. The sight and sound of colossal waves pounding into rock faces, throwing their spray onto the cliffs never fails to thrill. Towns, villages, hamlets, farms are unspoiled by time and tourists. Hospitalieros have time to chat and dispense advice on routes, deviations, or albergues further along the road. The Norte attracts a different kind of pilgrim—often older, more travelled, a bit more meditative and chilled. They still snore.

Some practicalities to keep in mind:

- Be realistic about your fitness and health. It is a tough terrain so you will want to work at getting rid of any excess weight now.
- The best time to go is April to May or Sept. to Oct. Springtime means that light arrives earlier; by September the changing season is felt acutely in its dark mornings.
- The pilgrim season appears to have an end point on the Norte: During September and October we encountered shuttered cafés, pensions, hotels, even albergues.



The dearth of cafés and services disappears when the Norte joins the Frances at Arzua, but with it comes an awkward moment: Weeks of solitude, of pushing your body to extremes, of practicing being a less judgmental person evaporate at the sight of pilgrims with mini knapsacks (some of them hiking in flip flops!) prancing off the bus and crossing the street to the albergue. It is hard to break bread with folk who have not climbed those steps out of Pasajes or San Sebastian, or learned a word of Basque, or soothed their battered muscles at the beach in Deba, or spent a night in the astonishing monastery at Sobrado do Monxes.

Then again, who among us can truly understand another pilgrim's experience?

Jane Christmas

John Brierley Accepts CCoP Invitation

Many of you have used **John Brierley's** guide books on the caminos. Well now he's coming to Canada to speak to CCoP groups in March! In the words of our CCoP president, Wendy Loly:

"I want to let you know that guide-book author and Camino guru John Brierley has accepted our invitation to visit Canada in March 2019. **He will be speaking to CCoP chapters: in TORONTO on the evening of WEDNESDAY MARCH 6th,**
- **in VICTORIA on SATURDAY MARCH 9th, and**
- **in VANCOUVER on the evening on SUNDAY, MARCH 10th.**

I did offer John the opportunity to stop at other chapters, but he felt that three was enough of a trip for this time. So if you are in the neighbourhood on any of these dates, please plan to attend. These events will be listed on the CCoP Events page in early January, with an opportunity for advance registration. Venues are now lined up - with capacity of 240 in Toronto, 240 in Victoria and 300 in Vancouver. We expect all three venues to be filled to capacity (so book early if you'd like to attend).

John will be presenting a session on the Camino as "A Path of Awakening" to each chapter. Some of his *similar* previous presentations are available on YouTube, so you can get a flavour for his message there.

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2on7IMAHXE>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owGaBJqSieQ>

Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hrC7Hcb2C0>

I'm sorry that John won't be able to visit ALL CCoP chapters. It's a long journey from Halifax to Whitehorse! "

Camino Tip From Claire: Remember to stay hydrated. With all of the initial struggles it is easy to be unaware of when we are becoming dehydrated. A dry cough, dizziness, sore joints & headaches can all be signs we need more liquid.

The Board and Executive wish you all a happy and successful journey as you walk your life's camino in 2019.

Contact List – Board and Chapter Coordinators

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