



Entre Nous

Winter 2012

WELCOME to the Winter edition of your new style newsletter where you will find a 'wintry' mix of articles focussing around 'Walking'.

We are introducing a 'Culture and Lifestyle' page which features food and book reviews, and also a page which includes local events in addition to the forthcoming ACIP events. Finally, on page 6 you will find our committee update page.

I hope you enjoy reading it!

Robert Brereton
President

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Talking of Walking

Set up in the very early days of ACIP, the Walking Group is still going strong with over 80 members, of whom 20-30 walk regularly. On the first Thursday of each month, they gather, walk and socialise for around 10km eating a well-earned lunch at the end. Alan Coy, Avis Blunden and Sue Foster are overall co-ordinators who select various walks from a wide area of the Dordogne. Members are always very welcome to participate with the selection and the leading of walks as happens from time to time. This year walkers set out - many holding batons in hand and joined by their variously behaved dogs - from a number of locations including Les Eyzies, Belvès, Rouffignac. Allas, Le Coux and Cadouin.

One of our younger members, Sue Knight, "specifically joined ACIP four years ago because I wanted to walk regularly. The exercise is great for me - it gets me out during the winter months and gives me



time-out from my busy summer work schedule. I love the changing scenery, passing interesting gardens, meeting new people and being able to catch up and chat with friends I otherwise would not see. I always take water, wear worn-in boots, layered clothes and trousers I can unzip to turn into shorts. And then there's lunch which I really enjoy; with no guilt at all because.... I deserve it"

The group largely, though not exclusively, follow the 'balises' or yellow way markers - many of which follow or connect to old pilgrim ways through the Dordogne to Santiago de Compostela.

Along the way, ACIP walkers get a real taste of this beautiful part of the Périgord "emerging from woods to find the stunning Château de Banne, coming upon a hidden hamlet, stopping to see a house with a traditional 'arc en voute' supporting its roof" says the appropriately named, David Walker. "And afterwards", David goes on, "enjoying a four course lunch for around 14 euros. On the walk that I organized recently, we ate at a typical old French hotel that some of us described as shabby chic". And "all the while we put the world to rights' in both English and French".

In a new departure, the group joined the Belvès walking group, Sentiers d'Antan, for their annual open walk in May this year. The day dawned exceedingly wet but this did not stop a handful of intrepid ACIP members who braved the weather and enjoyed a very warm welcome from their fellow French walkers. The group hopes for better weather next year.

If you are interested in joining, contact:
alan.coy@wanadoo.fr or avisb@orange.fr

One of our members, **Rebekah Calland-Breton**, has lived in France for ten years and has been a member of ACIP for six of these joining after she gave a fascinating Reflexology demonstration to the then Ladies Group.

She is a member of the Yoga, Walking, Film and Ladies Luncheon Groups, sometimes leading the yoga group. She has participated in French language learning groups and helps out at social events and at the Vide Grenier.

Rebekah walks every day, whatever the weather, near her home in Trémolat. She even walks when she is on holiday. *"Walking every day has been part of my life for many years. Beginning seriously in the UK to help my daughter lose weight, we walked early mornings before she went off to college. Now I am keen to continue this habit as with five family members becoming diabetic, I don't want to be number six. (And anyway) my mornings do not feel 'in order' if I have not had a walk, even on cruise ships - if you like, it's my daily fix!"*

Rebekah recently took her walking to new heights by completing the Camino, raising over 900 euros for both Breast Cancer and Diabetes research charities. Here are the edited highlights of her journey.

To read the complete version of Rebekah's account on the website www.acip24.com/services and select the relevant icon.



*"Santiago de Compostela?
Lidl to the Brasserie is enough for me."*

MY CAMINO

"My journey, the Camino, started on September 1st in St Jean Pied de Port in France, walking 800 km in 34 days non-stop and arriving in Santiago de Compostela, Spain in early October. Inspiration originally came from Wilna Wilkinson who walked the same route four years ago, writing a book and dedicating it to her friend who had breast cancer. Her advice to me before I left was 'after the first couple of days it will be easy' and to 'walk alone'".

So how was it? Day one was all uphill - eight hours and 27kms of walking, carrying a rucksack that was 10% of my body weight. On day four, I texted my daughter, "What am I doing here?". On day fourteen, I texted her again and was ready to call it a day. Up at 5.45am and leaving, at times with no breakfast, bag hurriedly packed and then out into the darkness, often stumbling on uneven stony ground until daylight. It felt like I was on an Army route march. A shift occurred when Renata, a 74 year young German lady, said "Rebekah, you need to walk your own journey and not that of someone else". So, halfway through the trip, I left my walking companions and ventured off on my own - a scary step to take but I was answerable to no one! Soon my lone journey became calmer, less of a panic - not easier but definitely more enjoyable. Wilna had been right- 'walk alone!'.



Rebekah (right) with walking companion on their arrival in Santiago de Compostela

My routine became: walking between 20-30 kms daily, finding a Refugio (hostel) for under 10 euros a night, producing my pilgrim's passport to be stamped and dated, nabbing the best available bed, showering, washing clothes, shopping for food before shops closed then having lunch - sometimes at 3pm. Some Refugios provided a communal supper or kitchens, but otherwise, there were restaurants serving a special pilgrim menu - 3 or 4 courses with wine and bread for 9-12 euros. With three meals a day, I still managed to lose 5 kilos! Most pilgrims were in bed with lights out by 9pm. Sleeping was difficult with so many people coming and going, lights off and on, whispering, rustling; you were lucky to get 4-5 hours decent sleep; sometimes none at all.

Sun rises were incredible with huge orange balls appearing within minutes of peeping up from the horizon. Mornings could be cool but by 10am the temperature would be rising fast, and from lunchtime it could be unbearably hot. I looked down on stunning countryside, vast and wide. I walked for days alongside tall gentle windbines, along almost-dry canals, along busy new motorways with enormous lorries. I trudged through cities where, with backpack, sticks, tanned legs and dirty boots, I felt very much like a homeless 'bag lady' amongst the well-dressed, hurrying to work or to the glitzy shops. I trudged through forests of eucalyptus, oaks with trunks too big to get your arms around, open fields of maize or newly cut corn, and vineyards that went on for miles. Often, I would come across monuments dedicated to those who had died along the way! I encountered only two days of rain when I was soaked through to my undies. In some shuttered villages I never saw a soul, whilst other places were lively, with beautiful coloured houses and pensioners sitting outside, watching the many pilgrims pass through. Along the route, I met some wonderful folk of all ages and nationalities. A few spoke no English yet we managed, using hand signals and facial expressions. Familiar faces came and went. And everyone en route called out, "Buen Camino" - Good journey!"

Focus on a member



St James
by Carlo Crivelli c1480

Coquille St Jacques

'The scallop shell is the traditional emblem of the apostle James. Medieval Christians making the pilgrimage to his shrine at Santiago de Compostela often wore a scallop shell symbol on their hat or clothes. The pilgrim also carried a scallop shell and would present himself at churches, castles and abbeys... where he ... (would) ... be given as much sustenance as he could pick up with one scoop'.

Wikipedia.

The Vezelay pilgrimage route through France to Compostela passes through the Périgord via Périgueux and Bergerac where it meets a second branch of this route coming from Aurillac, Siourac and Cadouin. Trémolat, with its Abbey, was on one of the many side paths guiding pilgrims through the Périgord.

Members of the ACIP Walking Group may well be following in the footsteps of these early pilgrims every Thursday!

Mass for the pilgrims was held daily in some churches where one was quite often personally blessed. I coped best with small town or village churches as they felt more intimate, homely, more welcoming. I would light a candle for us all and just sit alone in silence. One hundred and fifty kms from Santiago someone said "We've only six days to go!" What an impact that short sentence had. Suddenly there was excitement in the air, relief no doubt for the walking wounded, much talk of what we'd like to eat or do when we reached our destination.

On Day 34, I finally arrived in Santiago! This amazing city was heaving, the air heavy with excitement, mainly from pilgrims meeting up with families and other pilgrims. My walking pal Subagh and I caught the Pilgrims' mass and the 'Botafumeiro', the incense burning ritual. Official Pilgrim's Camino certificate in hand, I left this somewhat circus town and headed to Finisterre. Known as 'the end of the world', Finisterre was the real icing on the Camino cake! What a joy to visit this fishing town with its sea of crashing waves, small boats, inexpensive fish restaurants and above all - peace.

How did I feel? Very emotional, near to tears, and realising just how lucky I was to have completed an event that some would only dream about. I was indeed blessed during the 34 days with no knee, feet, or blister problems and with the bed bug bites thankfully now fully gone.

So how was it?

The Camino for me was a journey like life itself - with many ups and downs, both stony and smooth roads, dark and light days, emotions of highs and lows. I came also to realise just how little a pilgrim needs in his or her life. How little we really do need. To have good friends, compassion towards others and to be happy with what we have must be a good start towards being rich in life. Less is indeed more'."

Rebekah Calland-Brereton

Rebekah raised 1,200€ for Diabetes Research & Breast Cancer Research

Botanical walks

Périgord is a great place for walking. Choose a starting point near your home and you'll find a walking track, and often more than one. In many places there are paint marks to guide you - the yellow ones always bring you back to your starting point within a few hours, so it is difficult to get lost, and it is never monotonous. In a typical walk you'll discover a small stream, a viewpoint from a hilltop, the big trees of a chestnut or hornbeam forest and a beautiful old house, all within an hour, and probably a fox or doe will cross your path, and it is easy too, a difficult climb is an exception. Good, comfortable walking shoes and some protection against the weather are all you need. In every supermarket and presse you can find the blue IGN maps (scale 1:25,000); they are great for walkers.

Corine Oosterlee

ACIP member, Corine Oosterlee, is a Dutch botanist and photographer and regularly organises botanical walks.
www.baladebotanique.com

Why walk?

In addition to the joys and benefits, walking can also play a part in maintaining health and well-being. Walking is a low impact exercise that can decrease the risk of heart attack and type 2 diabetes. It helps prevent high blood pressure, stroke, arthritis, osteoporosis and depression.

Vigorous walking for half an hour a day burns 200 calories and your body continues to burn calories faster for the rest of the day. Walking at an even pace appears to protect the ageing brain from erosion of thinking ability and from Alzheimers.

Doctors at the Harvard School of Public Health found older people who were physically active, including those who walked for up to 3 hours a week at a leisurely pace performed much better on memory and thinking ability tests than those who were inactive. And the moral — let's get walking fit!

ACIP FORTHCOMING

EVENTS

2012

December 7 Christmas Lunch - Auberge de la Nauze
 December 21 Christmas Festive Social - this will have an international flavour with Christmas traditions from the UK, the Netherlands and France. This will be a good opportunity to discover more about our different customs and get into the festive spirit.

2013

January 11 New Year Social
 January 13 Social (+ meal)
 February 21 Valentine Social
 March 15 Spring Social (+ meal)
 April 4 Easter Social
 April 26 St George's Social (+meal)
 May 16 Social
 June 6 Social (+ meal)
 June 9 Vide Grenier - Camping
 June 30 BBQ - Camping riverside

BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU SOCIAL - Just 'saucy' enough!

Our most recent ACIP social coincided with the arrival of the 'Beaujolais Nouveau', and some 42 members gathered around a 'saucy' glass of Pisse-Dru ('saucy' being an old expression used by wine-growers of the Beaujolais region). The friendly atmosphere was just like this light and dynamic wine and people seemed really pleased with this new themed event. A warm 'thank you' to those who helped prepare the nibbles and tidy up afterwards.



LADIES LUNCHEON GROUP

A small group of ACIP members made an impromptu visit to Filature de Bêlves, Fontgauffier recently.

ACIP members may have driven past the Filature without realising that behind the slightly unprepossessing frontage is a huge woollen mill, complete with all its machinery, which only ceased to be operational in the 1990s. Beside each machine there are clear explanations describing the various processes required for the transformation from fleece to wool.

After visiting the mill itself, a happy time was spent in the adjoining boutique which sells a good selection of wools, many of which are locally produced, and a variety of hand-knitted or woven clothes. There are also lots of other gifts and souvenirs, making it an ideal place for last-minute Christmas shopping.

The shop and the mill are open every afternoon, except Saturdays. Full details can be found at:

www.filaturedebelves.com

VIDE GRENIER

The Vide Grenier at Les Eyzies was a major success this year, with dry weather, 45 stalls, delicious home-made soup and cakes and a Christmassy feel, it raised over 600€ for ACIP funds.



Our President complete with Santa hat!

FORTHCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

2012

December 15 & 16 Marché de Noel, Le Coux
 December 16 Marché des Truffes, Paunat
 December 16 Concert, Le Bugue church
 December 16 Marché de Noel, Les Eyzies
 December 18 Christmas Carol Concert, Limeuil
 December 23 -more details www.acip24.com/services
 School holiday starts

2013

January 6 School holiday finishes
 May 4 Phoenix Book Sale, Campsegret
 10.00 - 15.00hrs

CUISINES - KITCHENS - KEUKENS WWW.IXINA.FR

IXINA PERIGUEUX
 203, Avenue Michel Grandou
 24750 Trélissac
 Tél. : 05.53.04.83.20 - Fax : 05.53.04.79.20
 Du lundi au vendredi de 9h30 à 12h00 et de 14h00 à 19h00.
 Le samedi de 9h30 à 19h00.
A.J.C+ EURL au capital de 100.000 €. Commerçant indépendant, franchise IXINA. R.C.S. Périgueux 478 721 889

BANQUETS, SOIRÉES OU FETES

All plates possible
 « On demande »
 Also at your home
 Also at your home



SUR VOS MARCHÉS

(Annick Ducher—le traiteur d'ACIP)

06 83 00 96 17/
 05 53 07 14 39

What some members think about ACIP

Members were invited to state any likes and dislikes about ACIP prior to the 2012 AGM. We received 20 responses which represents around 8.5% of our membership. Below are some of the views which were expressed.

Likes about ACIP: 90% of respondents, said, in one way or another, that they liked the way joining ACIP assisted them in integrating and making good, supportive friends of different nationalities through the wide variety of free group activities and events on offer.

Dislikes about ACIP: Respondents held very different views on what they disliked. 10% had "no dislikes whatsoever". On the other hand some held very critical views. A couple felt ACIP had "lost direction", that it was becoming "ever bigger" ... "to fill the coffers" and was now inappropriately linked to a commercial venture. 10% felt it had "become undemocratic", "lacked transparency" or was "quasi dictatorial". A further 10% commented that members' concerns were not really listened to, and, that they themselves were "shouted down". 33% held the view that the old Committee was doing its best on behalf of members during a transition year and expressed concern about the 'ill feeling' being generated by the negative stance of a few members.

Several respondents had helpful ideas on how to develop ACIP, including helpful suggestions about the Newsletter and about possible new groups and activities.

Thank you to everyone who responded

This is only a survey, nevertheless, the new Committee will take account of these varying views, as best it can. We describe some of our initial steps in this Committee Update.

As always, we need your comments, your ideas and your help if we are to succeed.

Accounts as at end November

Bank statement 26/11/12	3075,23€
Cheques outstanding	364,21€
	2711,02€
Cash in hand	500,00€
Current account total	3211,02€
Deposit account	1329,95€
Total Funds	4540,97€

What we are doing for 2012/13

We have created a new role of Membership and Internal Communications Co-ordinator, which is held by Jenny Law: jennifer.law@wanadoo.fr. Jenny through both her personal and email contact with members will help us to **make our communication timely, open and more efficient**. Queries and ideas from members will be fed to the right person and those who make comments or complaints to the committee will receive an individual response.

Over the past year, the Committee, with the support of a small group of members, worked to clarify ACIP's aims and to refresh our image and our website. As part of this, we restated **ACIP's purpose**, referring back to our statutes. ACIP is and always has been about 'l'Amitié en Périgord' ie. 'building friendships', 'offering support' and 'enhancing joie de vivre'. In the new year, we will give more detailed thought to ACIP's future direction. From our beginnings in 2003, membership is increasing with several nationalities represented. We can enjoy many and regular free group activities led by members, with four more in the pipeline. Again, if we wish, we can join in a variety of social events at the Brasserie and several more elsewhere. With additional members we could support more groups and offer different activities and events, as many of you would like.

We want to provide **strong support to Group Leaders** who, with their groups, are the backbone of ACIP. Gwyneth Green, the new Groups Co-ordinator, will provide clear, information and support to Group Leaders. She will seek their views and their ideas in regular meetings and in personal contact and will help to deal with any problems or any concerns. Gwyneth will also offer support to those who wish to set up new groups or lead one-off group events. If you have any ideas and are willing to lead or support a group, please contact Gwyneth: gwynethverte@aol.com

The **Newsletter** is one of a number of ways in which we can all communicate. In each quarterly issue, we will now feature both groups and individual members as well as a theme of interest to us all. Your future contributions and ideas for the Newsletter would be much appreciated so please contact Jill: jill.little24@orange.fr. For those of you who do not want to write their own piece, Jill and her team are happy to interview you and write up your story - with a final sign off from you, of course.

Our aim as a Committee is to be **open in the way we share the decisions and actions we take** and to be straightforward in our language. We meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Our minutes provide us with an 'aide memoire' of what we have agreed, show the decisions we take, what we are doing and why, as well as who is responsible for the actions we agree. They are now available to all members - on the website and in the Brasserie on the 'Your Committee' board. If you have queries or comments on the content of the minutes you can send them to Gwyneth Green: gwynethverte@aol.com and can expect an individual response from the Committee.

The Committee now has 10 members and their names, photos and roles are on the website: www.acip24.com. We hope that this increase in numbers will help us to meet your needs for better communication and more activities. It will help us give increased support to groups and their leaders, organise social events at our new venue and elsewhere, and manage the not insignificant workload. We hope it will also give us a wider perspective with a range of ideas, skills and views. We have agreed all our individual committee roles and these too are on the website and in the Brasserie should you wish to look at them. We mention two new roles above. Apart from these we now have two event co-ordinators - Christine Dumaux and Robert Bacon - and the different aspects of the secretarial role are now shared between Jenny West and John Pretty.