

Hi, my name is Ryan. Father Alexander has asked me to provide an update on my walk across Spain from Cadiz to Compostella.

Perhaps the first question on this update is who am I and why would anyone be mad enough to walk 1,200km across the frying pan of Spain?

I am an Australian (perhaps that explains it), who has lived and worked in London for over 30 years and retired a few years ago.

My connections to Worth are multiple. My wife's mother, Sol Burrige, taught Spanish at Worth School for many years, my wife's brother, Eddie Burrige, was educated at Worth School and my wife, Teresa and I, were married in Worth Abbey.

Why do it? The answer is simple, to honour the memory of my in-laws, Nicholas and Sol Burrige, help to do some good through supporting Outreach Peru projects, - and to see if I actually can!

Sol died 20 years ago. In her memory and also to do good, Nicolas, in his seventies, completed 5 caminos including that from Sevilla (called La Plata) in aid of Outreach Peru. A hard act to follow!

I have started a little further south in Cadiz. I walked from the south coast to the north having already walked from France to Compostela and then on to Finisterre or the 'end of the world' as it was viewed when caminos began in the 9th century.

The walk from Cadiz to Seville forms its own camino known as the Via Augusta as it follows an old Roman road of this name. It starts at a church just next to the Cathedral of Cadiz called Iglasia de Santiago Apostol.

I began my walk from there on Sunday 2nd June at 6am, as I have done every day, avoiding as far as possible, the heat of walking in the midday when the temperature climbs to around 35C.

The first leg of the camino goes to Puerto Real at the end of the land spit connecting Cadiz to the mainland.

Whilst it has rail and road on one side of the path the other side has wonderful beaches and then marshes as the camino follows the land around the gulf area of Cadiz for nearly 30km.

The road goes on to Puerto Santa Maria before you climb up a ridge and say goodbye to the coast and salt air.

From then on to Jerez de la Frontera the land undulates and is covered with different coloured crops.

Jerez is interesting as one of the old towns involved in the sherry trade from Gonzalez Byass to Bristol, famous for its cream sherry. From the camino you can see a number of

very distinctive Black Bull advertising boards which are found all over Spain for Osborne sherry.

In El Cuervo, a small town like many, people were very kind, providing directions and an early 'menu del dia' (menu of the day) - entree, main course, dessert and a glass of red wine 'gasolina' for 15 euros!

Between El Cuervo and Utrera the landscape did not change much, being mostly flat. The path was stony and covered in a patchwork of sunflower and wheat fields interlaced here and there with olive fields.

However, for long stretches, the camino ran beside roads and railway lines. In the midday heat this made the route seem a little endless. It also made seeing a church spire and then reaching a town a wonderful moment, drinking litres of water to overcome slight dehydration.

Unlike caminos in the north of Spain, the Via Augusta is a little harder to follow as the way markers are insufficient, there is no GPS camino map, and the distances between towns are longer. A little more challenging, but also a bit more rewarding! Once I reached Utrera, Sevilla was only a few shorter day walks away. Here, the funniest moment during this part of the way was doing my laundry in a laundromat set up in a supermarket car park. A novel twist I had not expected on a camino!

Sevilla, what a city, but that is for the next instalment!