



the aussie camino

for pilgrims everywhere

Edition 7 - Summer 2018

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Belated Greetings - Wishing you a Prosperous 2018

After what seems like an eternal sabbatical I have finally been able to get around to writing the next Aussie Camino newsletter.

Yes it's been a while so many apologies. I have been occupied in what many describe as 'life takes over'. In short, a new house and new job has kept me more than busy so even though the AC has continued throughout 2016 -2017, I have kept a lower profile.

So what's been happening?

In 2016 - 2017 eight groups went out over the 2 years in the spring and autumn months.

I have received some invaluable support over this time from some terrific leaders; John Wakely, Martes Micallef and Amelia Daraio. Harry Prout has assisted on many occasions with vehicular support, and cups of tea and coffee both of which has been a god-send for many weary pilgrims. My sincerest thanks to all those who have helped over this time.

Another significant group that completed the camino was the HIVsters (pictured). In late 2016 they walked the Aussie Camino raising awareness for living with HIV. Along the way they received some terrific media attention with local newspapers, radio and even with the ABC on 'Lateline'. I was lucky enough to meet co-ordinator Ruan Uys on his return and present him with a compostela. Well Done guys!!



The Aussie Camino is still in its infancy but a huge amount of progress has been made by the efforts of many. Everyone who goes on the AC has benefitted from those that have gone before, and in turn each person who goes out builds it for those that come afterwards. It is my passionate belief that Australia needs a camino.

People walk for any number of reasons, but on a camino we share in the diverse lives of others. I'm elated that the AC has been helpful for whatever cause, be it personal or community benefit

¡Buen camino!

Luke

2016 Groups

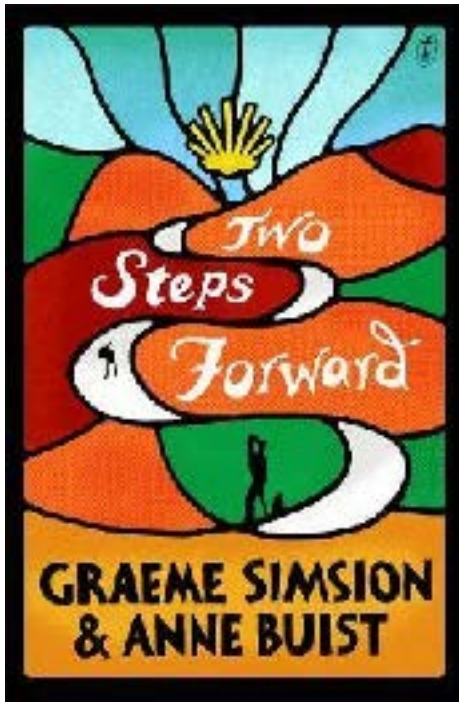


2017 Groups



Book Review

Two Steps Forward Graeme Simson & Anne Buist



Zoe, a sometime artist, is from California. Martin, an engineer, is from Yorkshire. Both have ended up in picturesque Cluny, in central France. Both are struggling to come to terms with their recent past - for Zoe, the death of her husband; for Martin, a messy divorce. Co-written by husband and wife team Simson and Buist with already a stable of successful books behind them, *Two Steps Forward* was always going to be a popular read.

The authors walked the same route as described in the novel from central France and then along the Camino Nortes to Santiago in 2011. On the way they discussed the people they met, the countryside they traveled and of course the hardships and joys along the way. This proved to be too much of an opportunity to miss, and as result *Two Steps Forward* was born.

The chapters alternate between Zoe's and Martins point of view as they meet and part company continually over the journey. Martin is trialling a prototype, handheld hiking trailer which he hopes to patent and sell, and Zoe scrawls and sketches to pay her way along the camino. The tension is palpable as neither knows whether they are ready to dip their toes back in to romantic waters

For lovers of caminos it is a great whimsical journey of life, love and loss. As all pilgrims know, the camino proves to be a metaphor of life that challenges but ultimately rewards the unsuspecting pilgrims in ways they could not imagine.

I was lucky enough to hear the authors, at The Age literary lunch. They are great fun both on and off the page.

Most recommended!!

In the media - The Age

The Good Weekend - Two of Us by Rosamund Burton
APRIL 1 2017

How a teenager's Italian pilgrimage with his mum has brought better health

Ned Travers, 16, has suffered from severe epilepsy since he was 12. In 2014, he moved with his mother



Carolyn Travers, 55, from Sydney to Tuscany. The same year they walked an old pilgrim route, which was his path to better health.

CAROLYN: Just before his 12th birthday, Ned was on a school excursion. The principal rang to say he'd had an epileptic seizure. I met him in the ambulance. He spoke like he'd had a stroke. Four days later, I was outside the school gate. I saw everyone running and knew Ned had had another one. I found him on the ground.

He has a rare condition called congenital bilateral perisylvian syndrome. The medical team put him on six drugs, twice a day. He was having 10 seizures a day, so couldn't go to school. I decided life needed to change, so in 2014 we bought this 300-year-old barn near Lucca in Tuscany. Ned and I live here full-time with my daughter, who's at university in Florence. My husband and oldest son come and go from Australia.

I'm an outdoor person, so I thought walking the 400-kilometre Via Francigena pilgrim route from Lucca to Rome would be great, because Ned could do that and we could go slowly. We started in November 2014 and it took us 30 days.

On the first day we ended up in an ambulance, because he had a seizure and fell. He was having 10 seizures a day when we set off, but by the end he was only having them when he ate and drank. He became fit very quickly and walked so fast, which inspired me, because he was sporty before he got sick. He also became interested in life again. I felt I had lost the Ned I knew – and now I was getting him back.

After we finished the walk, I found an Italian doctor. He said, "It's better to live a great life with a few seizures than to have no life due to drugs." Now Ned is on half the medication he was on previously. He's made an amazing transition. He goes to the local school and he's slowly learning Italian.

Ned's a very gentle soul. He wants to be friends with everyone. When he was younger, he was always so happy, and he's retained that. I admire his resilience. When he wakes up after being unconscious, surrounded by people, he doesn't feel embarrassed or sorry for himself.

With the epilepsy and the brain syndrome come learning difficulties. It takes him a long time to get ready, and he doesn't understand personal space, which upsets some people. Also, if he's having a great time, he'll clap. He comes home from school and says, "I embarrassed myself today, Mum. I started clapping." I would like him to be sportier, but he loves music and comedy. He lip-syncs to all the latest songs on the radio and adores comedian Dave Hughes.

If I play tennis I leave him for an hour, otherwise we're always together. Last August we did a 178-kilometre walk through the hills around Florence, and because I've started a walking business, we did many day walks to perfect the itineraries. Since then, Ned's moved up a class and started Scouts, and now catches the school bus, which he wasn't able to do earlier this year.

He struggles with friends because they often don't get him, but he's got a family who absolutely adore him and he's got a life now.

NED: Walking with my mum was strange at first, but I got used to it. We didn't fight at all, which was good, considering we were stuck with each other for a month. Me and Mum have always been close. I'm the youngest.

I got to experience new things, a new language, and waking up to Franciscan friars.

We stayed in monasteries and saw some beautiful places. Every night when we checked in to our monastery, I'd change into

my pyjamas and lie on my bed. It would be completely silent, then Mum would say, "I can't wait until tomorrow."

The walking was tiring for the first four days. The first day was a shocker. We were walking 19 kilometres and were about half way when I came up with a really bad idea. I said, "Why don't we run one kilometre and walk five?" So I started running. Mum thought it was a joke, but I kept running, so she started running. I had my kilometre done when my epilepsy started to kick in. I fell over and had a seizure at the side of the road.



Mum was sitting in the ambulance trying not to laugh. We both know because we've been in this situation a lot: a seizure happens and then five minutes later I, like, reboot.

Mum was screaming, "Ned, Ned, Ned." She ran over and sat next to me. All the cars stopped. Mum didn't have enough Italian to explain what was going on and no one spoke English. But they all had a friend who spoke a little bit of English, so each person rang their friend to try to translate, and the friends called their friends who spoke better English. Then the ambulance came, and I was put in it. I was feeling fine by this time and Mum was sitting in the ambulance trying not to laugh. We both know because we've been in this situation a lot: a seizure happens and then five minutes later I, like, reboot. The more I walked, the less I had seizures. I didn't train. I literally got off the couch; I was watching movies non-stop. I really was fit by the end. I hope I've kept that fitness. Before this illness I was extremely energetic and sporty. I was playing rugby and tennis. My face was getting red from running, not passing out. It was great.

Moving to Italy was big for me, but I didn't want to complain too much. I wanted to stay in Sydney, because of my friends there, but I knew I couldn't. Now I really like Italy.

I would describe my Mum as caring, energetic, enthusiastic and funny. She is one of those people who always tries to put you into groups that you don't want to be part of. She's always trying to involve me in sports activities that I don't really like. Before the epilepsy I once said I didn't like karate and Mum put me in karate classes. She's just waiting for that one activity that I say, "I love this." Mum's great. Mum being Mum makes me laugh.

Aussie Camino 2018

Taking registrations now

There are 4 scheduled camino groups for 2018. If you are interested in attending then please contact me at aussiecamino@hotmail.com or at www.aussiecamino.org

The dates are:

Group 1 - April 3 - 12

Group 2 - April 16 - 25

Group 3 - Sept 24 - Oct 3

Group 4 - Sept 28 - Oct 7

All groups will follow the same programme.

Day 1	Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre Registration and pilgrims' farewell mass Depart to Portland by train and bus
Day 2	Portland - Cape Bridgewater
Day 3	Cape Bridgewater to Bridgewater Lakes
Day 4	Lake Mombeong to Nelson
Day 5	Nelson - Port MacDonnell
Day 6	Port MacDonnell - Mt Gambier
Day 7	Mt Gambier - Bush Haven Cottages
Day 8	Bush Haven Cottages - Kalangadoo
Day 9	Kalangadoo - Penola
Day 10	Penola return to Melbourne