



# A personal and eternal journey

Nothing could have prepared me for the Camino experience. It was certainly a very personal journey and a trip I will not forget

As part of our fundraising campaign, Age Action ran its own Santiago de Compostela trip in September with the support of **Camino Ways**. We opted for the French route, which is the most popular, and we walked from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela. The trip took eight days and seven nights, involving six

walking days to cover the 115km route.

The purpose of the trip was to raise funds for our Care & Repair programme to enable us to continue providing our free service to older people living in their own homes. However, I had a personal reason for wanting to participate on the Camino, to do it in memory of my eldest daughter Michelle who died

suddenly seven years ago. She had travelled to many places around the world in her short 19 years, so she was my inspiration.

Along with some volunteers, I raised approximately €8,000 for our C&R programme. I should like to thank everyone who helped us, and especially Tadhg and Saibhe O'Sullivan from Ballincollig in Cork who accompanied me on the trip.

One of the most amazing things about the Camino is the people I met. Some of them were experienced walkers, having come very long distances, and were on the home straight on the final 115km. However, the majority were inexperienced walkers of all ages, and from all over the world.

The oldest walkers I met were a couple in their late 70s who now had the time and resources to fulfil a life-long dream. They were amazing and an inspiration to anyone thinking of doing the walk.

Along the journey I talked and I listened. Conversations on the Camino can last for days. You meet a group of people one day and then meet them again several days later.

For me the walking, and the nothing-to-do-but-walk thing, made for a gentle, rambling, stream-of-consciousness type conversation that's precious and unique. I will never forget some of these talks.

Everyone I met had their own reason for doing the walk, some for religious

reasons and others for the challenge. I met two lads from Northern Ireland who got drunk one night watching the movie *The Way* and decided there and then that they would book the trip the following day.

I met a father and three of his grown sons who were doing the trip because it was something their father wanted to do. He did not have much time as he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Apart from talking to fellow walkers I had a lot of time to myself, which was an experience I had not had in many years. I was intensely involved with the workings and changes in my own body and this was a topic of conversation with a wide variety of people along the way. Essentially I was undergoing a crash course in what it meant to be human.

Nothing can prepare you for the Camino experience. It's a very personal 'journey' that will leave its stamp on you for many years to come.

Age Action is accepting expressions of interest in participating on the Camino in September 2014. If you are interested, contact me on (01) 475-6989 or email [lorraine.dorgan@ageaction.ie](mailto:lorraine.dorgan@ageaction.ie). The money raised is for a very good cause.

The Camino never ends even upon your return; it's always there.

Buen Camino.

— Lorraine Dorgan



■ Everyone had a reason for doing the Camino. A father and his three sons were doing the trip because it was something their father wanted to do; he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer.



■ Departure lounge: Tadhg and Saibhe O'Sullivan and Lorraine Dorgan (right) at Dublin Airport at the start of their fundraising trek for Age Action.

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■ **Final destination: Age Action fundraisers (from left) Tadhg and Saibhe O'Sullivan and Lorraine Dorgan outside the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.**