



Irish Trust Talk

Spring 2013

Issue No 88

“With Mary and Bernadette we deepen our faith”

FEATURES:

- Walk, Sarria to Santiago de Compostella
- What our Guests say
- Lough Derg, St. Patrick's Purgatory
- Nursing Placements



Trust TalkDigital

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Safeguarding Officers



Liam Ahern



Mary Dunnion

Designated Trustees with responsibility for the safety, welfare and protection of our guests



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“RISE & SHINE”

**A NEW MUSICAL CD
OF ALL OUR FAVOURITE
LOURDES SONGS
HAS JUST BEEN LAUNCHED
AND IS AVAILABLE FROM
HQ IN KILCUAN**

THE IRISH PILGRIMAGE TRUST

THE IRISH PILGRIMAGE TRUST

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Nurses Required

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is always on the look out for nurses who would like to travel as a volunteer with a group on our pilgrimage at Easter. Are you or do you know of a nurse who might like to volunteer with Trust?

For further information please email:
info@irishpilgrimagetrust.com
or telephone 091 796622

Charity No.: 5992

A word from the Chairperson

James White



Dear Friends,

How quick the year moves on. It seems only yesterday when we were sitting down to do the selections for Easter 2013. By now we have completed a lot of our visits and the reality of a trip to Lourdes for ourselves and our guests is fast approaching.

The task of bringing 1,100 of us to Lourdes is all in place with flights booked from Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Shannon and hotels awaiting our arrival. Regretfully we will have some groups travelling early in the morning and late at night but this cannot be avoided due to cost. I hope you will all understand and try and make it as comfortable as possible for our guests.

My thoughts are with the Group leaders and HQ who are battling with forms, passports, scheduling visits and the dreaded fund raising. I am sure some are wondering why they took it on. But we know come Easter Sunday and the days that follow that every moment is worth it.

For each and everyone of us will experience the inexplicable joy that this week brings to our lives whether we be guest, carer, trustee or officer. Thank God for the privilege.

This year we also bring for the first time Bishop Brendan Kelly, Bishop of Achonry Diocese, to Lourdes with us. Let us give him a huge Irish Pilgrimage Trust welcome wherever we meet him in Lourdes.

We also have a very good reason to be proud and happy this year in that our friends from Croatia are celebrating their 10th Anniversary. They deserve every congratulation, as this year they have three groups travelling. This includes them bringing a small group from Bosnia Herzegovina for the first time. We are truly expanding! We might manage a few more votes in the Eurovision song contest!! It is very exciting to know that the Trust is expanding; we must support and acknowledge their courage in taking on this challenge.

Our Trust is facing challenges all the time and we need to work together as a family, whether we are travelling to Lourdes at Easter or with Hosanna House groups in June, or bringing a Friendship group to Kilcuan or Cois Cuan, to overcome these challenges.

We need to ensure that we protect each other and our guests to give us a safe and caring environment, this area needs to always be to the forefront of our minds in every thing we do.

**“With Mary and Bernadette
we deepen our faith**

We all are acutely aware of the difficult times facing the Irish people, this impacts on us at many levels, particularly seen in our applications which reflect the stresses and pressures families are experiencing and also in the difficulties we face with fund raising. We must also recognise that respite services are coming under increasing pressures. As a caring organization we have a lot to offer and with everyone's support we will help to fill the need.

We are very lucky with the people we have. Never underestimate the efforts put in by the Group Leaders in particular, the volunteers, the Regional Officers, Trustees and last but not least our staff at HQ, including those that ensure Kilcuan and Cois Cuain keep going. To each and every one of you a massive thank-you.

At this time of year we tend to concentrate on Easter, but at the same time our Hosanna house groups are getting ready for their June pilgrimage. We will bring 90 people to Lourdes for what is a very unique experience. If you are interested in travelling either as a guest or carer in June, please let us know.

Also a very special part of the Trust's work is our friendship weeks. We have two super facilities in Kilcuan, Co Galway and Cois Cuain, Co Wexford, each offering different opportunities and experiences. If you know of anyone that would like to be part of this please let us know.

During the last six months we have experienced the problems of property ownership. Firstly the Oratory in Kilcuan became a no go area as the roof was in danger of collapsing. Then we got the bad news that Cois Cuain was flooded during the heavy rains in December. If that wasn't enough in early February we got hit by lightning in Kilcuan, which caused more damage. Any way they say things come in threes, so we should be ok now! Luckily the last two were covered by insurance but regretfully, the Oratory was not.

In December we had our bi-annual gathering of Past Trustees. It is when you see them all that you realise that our responsibility is to mind the Trust, strengthen it and hand on with a strong future ahead.

The theme for this years pilgrimage is **“With Mary and Bernadette we deepen our faith”**

Wishing each and everyone of the very best.
Our Lady of Lourdes Pray for us.
Saint Bernadette Pray for us.

A couple of dates for your diary:

Camino Walk is starting on 29th June. Join up soon for what is wonderful experience. Please contact office or Teresa Lee if you are interested.

Cycle 2014, bookings now being accepted.

Lough Derg day is on again on the 21st September. Please keep checking the Website for news and updates.

JOTTINGS

Bandon Rotary Club raises valuable funds each year in support of worthy local charities.



Thankfully, the Irish Pilgrimage Trust benefits from these funds, which are presented each year at a most pleasant function in The Munster Arms Hotel.

Pictured above are:

Mary Scully, Group 90, and Michael Galvin, Group 126, receiving donation cheque from Ms. Myra Dineen, President, Bandon Rotary at The Munster Arms Hotel, Tuesday 27.11.2012.

Michael Galvin in his brief address thanked Bandon Rotary for yet again, showing their appreciation of our work in this practical way, and we look forward to our continued communication with the special schools in the Bandon area in ensuring that deserving young people can avail of our most special annual Easter Pilgrimage to Lourdes.



Waterford Youth Council help with fundraising



Group 203 have applied annually to Waterford Youth Council for funding support under their "respite scheme". Once again they are very grateful for their continual support in this and acknowledge with thanks, a donation of €2,500.00 towards the 2013 pilgrimage.

Catherine Breen (above photo), who is among other recipients under the Special Needs Category, accepted the donation on behalf of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

GROUP 125 MAKES THE HEADLINES!

Congratulations to
Maureen Cannon who was
nominated



"Local Hero"

by Woman's Way for her contribution
to The Irish Pilgrimage Trust
over many years..

WELL DONE MAUREEN

Student Nurses on Placement

It first began on Easter Sunday 2011, with five nursing students from the Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) in Co. Donegal travelling to Lourdes on a one week placement with The Irish Pilgrimage Trust. This was a pilot project for the college and it was decided to offer this opportunity to current students with BSc (Hons) in Nursing in the 2nd year of their programme and to consider all three disciplines (general, intellectual disability and mental health nursing students). The week-long trip was incorporated as part of the plan for the students assessed



placement. Under EU directives, assessed clinical placements for nursing students can be undertaken outside of Ireland but must be within EU countries.

Around forty groups from all over Ireland, both north and south, travel with the Irish Pilgrimage Trust. Each group consists of approximately eleven young people with a similar number of adult companions including a Group Leader, Nurse, Chaplain and Doctor. The guests travelling with these groups and their families will meet the Group Leader and the group members several times before going to Lourdes so that a strong and trusting relationship is built prior to travel. This is particularly important for the parents of the young people selected as this may be the first time that the young person has been away from their family.

The nursing students from LYIT who volunteered to travel to Lourdes were also involved with these home visits where possible so that they could see the holistic care that is required and the importance of

communication and documentation. These students were allocated to five different groups from across the country and were supported in each group by the group leader, nurse, doctor and group members.

In preparation for the trip to Lourdes, each group meets several times from September to Easter to plan the week in Lourdes and the group members are involved in fundraising and in completing necessary documentation including applications forms, reference checks, Garda clearance forms and all helpers also complete a child protection training course.



During the week the students assisted in many activities including organising care for the young people in their group, undertaking risk assessments, ensuring that the needs of the young person were met but also being aware of the welfare of the other volunteers in the group. Learning opportunities vary depending on the conditions of the guests in each group and their identified needs, but can range from dealing with severe life threatening conditions, physical disabilities, and different levels



of intellectual disability to social or emotional needs. Needs of the young person whilst in Lourdes would often include assistance with fundamental needs such as hygiene, toileting, mobility, eating and drinking but

Student Nurses on Placement

also importantly maintaining a safe environment in the hotel and on the streets but also during activities.

The feedback from the students was very positive. An evaluation form was completed and students were also asked to mark the placement out of ten, to state what could be improved in relation to this placement but also what they learned from having been on this placement in Lourdes. All five students rated the placement with a top mark of ten on their evaluation sheet.

One student commented *“This was an extremely valuable and rewarding experience. It was full of opportunities to build on skills and communication... it was completely different to any other placement I have been on and I could not recommend it enough.”* Another student said: *“The best experience yet....the whole week was so rewarding and everyone in the Trust, from helpers to the young people, was so kind and helpful. I would highly recommend this trip for future placements.”* A third student said that it was an unforgettable week of work, fun, prayer and laughter and that the experience will help her grow as a student and future nurse.

Another student that travelled had been allocated to the family group where parents also travelled with children under the age of nine with a serious medical condition. She commented that it was great to get an insight of illness from the parents and child’s perspective and not just as a health care worker, stating she learned a lot

from the parents as they talked about their experiences and included her in the care of their child as much as possible.

A final student said: *“It was definitely one of the best weeks of my life. It was an amazing experience. It’s very hard to explain. Seeing all the young people smiling and enjoying themselves with all the problems they have was just brilliant. I gained experience in so many nursing skills as every child is different.*

My communication skills were greatly improved and it was also great working as a team member and gaining leadership qualities.”

All five students reported that they were made to feel part of the team and were encouraged to avail of all learning opportunities.

“It was definitely one of the best weeks of my life. It was an amazing experience”

Feedback from the groups involved was also very positive with some groups reporting that having a student nurse in the group was a great asset and it was invaluable having someone with an experience of caring and understanding of the needs of young people with special needs.

With the project being such a success a further 5 students travelled again in 2012 and 10 more have already been selected and are currently preparing for this years pilgrimage.



Lourdes a Big Experience

By Chloe Carroll
Aged 15 years

On April 8th I headed to Lourdes with Group 125 (Galway-Roscommon) for 6 days. This was part of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust. Altogether there were around 40 groups travelling from Ireland with the Trust and in our group there were 25 travelling; the Group Leader, 10 carers, 10 students, one priest, a nurse and a doctor.



The week started with lovely weather, but towards the end there were a couple of showers. Our group did the baths on Monday, which was a BIG experience for us all. It was a lovely thing to do to respect God and Our Lady. Also we did lots of activities in Lourdes during the week. On Tuesday morning all the groups had a lovely Mass together. We all did singing, dancing, praying and reading. During the Mass there was a lovely little girl doing Irish dancing on her own and she was blind. She was amazing at it. In the evening all the Irish Pilgrimage Trust took part in a candlelight procession which ended with singing and prayers.

“Our group did the baths on Monday



On Wednesday our group went to St. Jean deLuz. We went to the beach and had a picnic.



On Thursday morning there was an international Mass. It was wonderful. We learned a joyful song called “Rise and Shine”! But now I can’t get that song out of my head because we sang it 24/7.



After dinner that evening we had a fancy dress party. The night was great, loads of people got dressed up.

We were like a family together, every minute was joyous and we loved every second. On our final day in Lourdes we made our final visit to the Grotto.

I want to say a big **THANK YOU** to our group leader Maureen, who was very good to us and well looked after us; and along with that to all the carers as well; Aidan, Clare, Cathal, Siobhan, Michael, Mags, Eoin, Catherine, Mary and Margaret. Also Fr. Ciaran, Dr. Jackie and Nurse Hetty. Those who took part were: Chloe, Saoirse, Martin, Shona, Sheridan, Maria, Patrick, James, Gemma, Chelsea and Wesley. We would like to say a big thanks for a wonderful experience.



THE IRISH PILGRIMAGE TRUST ROCKS!

Testimonials from Group 173 - 2012

In the very early hours of an April morning in 2012 I found myself waiting with my son in an empty car park on the edge of Donegal Town. Soon, a car pulled up alongside mine. The driver jumped out and walked towards my car with a multi-coloured flashing toy in her hand. "Hey Cian. It's Caroline. Look what I got you?" My fourteen year old son grabbed the toy as the lights of a coach rolled into the car park lighting up the darkness. A number of volunteers in the same uniform that Caroline was wearing descended the steps of the coach. Cian started to walk towards them, then turned, put his arms around me and said "I love you."



Thing is, my son rarely uses language to communicate and it is a rare time—in fact never—when my son gets an invite to go anywhere, never mind a trip to Lourdes! As I watched his excited body

board the bus and take his seat beside Alfie, his carer for the duration of the trip, it was almost like he had said "Thanks Mum." He looked so excited to be shot of me for six whole days but it was The Irish Pilgrimage Trust that really needed to be thanked.

Cian needs twenty four hour care. I am his Mum and full time carer. He has got two siblings, one that is also a teen, who spends most of his time taking part in a host of different activities with his friends. Unfortunately Cian is stuck with a pretty exhausted Mum 24/7 and his younger sibling is stuck with Cian and his challenging behaviours. As much as we love Cian, The Irish Pilgrimage Trust gave us the opportunity to know what a break from autism feels like.

To think I nearly didn't let him go. I had major concerns for Cian's safety. Cian has no sense of danger. He runs away, darts off and you can't take your eyes off him for a second! For this reason I had advised Conal, the organizer that I didn't think Cian could go to Lourdes. A couple of weeks later I was surprised to get a call reassuring me that extra safety measures were being put in place for Cian and that it would be a pity if Cian missed the opportunity. Now I can only agree. The photos, a DVD of the whole trip and a text message on the second day said it all....'Cian is staying with us but we are keeping a close eye on him... he really is no bother...take care and don't be worrying about Cian...he is fine.'

So I didn't. I didn't need to. He was in amazing hands, thanks to the care, dedication and commitment of all the carers and organizers of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust. Furthermore, without the work of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust Cian would not have had this experience and his siblings and I would not have had six days of much needed respite. A big thank you to all involved.

Cian's Mum.



My daughter Roisin travelled to Lourdes twice with the Irish Pilgrimage Trust, first at age 13 and again this year at almost 18 years old.

Naturally we were nervous at the thought of Roisin going away without her family for a week but once we met the group leader, nurse and all the carers travelling with the group, our fears soon vanished and Roisin seemed to develop the confidence to be able to go without us for the first time. She had a brilliant time on both trips and was so well cared for. She met so many new friends and really enjoyed her time. She had so much fun but most importantly Roisins confidence grew, she was so happy and felt a sense of achievement in that she coped without us! None of this would be possible without the hard work, care and dedication of all the carers in the Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

Anne



I travelled to Lourdes in April this year with the Irish Pilgrimage Trust. Every day we travelled to different places. The staff took great care of everyone and they were great fun to be with. Food was great, made new friends, came home feeling happier about myself.

Siobhan. Age 17.

Picture Gallery



Picture Gallery



Camino de Santiago

The Way of St. James

Sarria to Santiago de Compostela

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is organising a fundraising walk along the Camino Frances from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela, from 29th June 2013 – 6th July 2013. The proceeds of the walk will be for the work of the Trust and specifically for Cois Cuain our new holiday home in Kilrane, Co. Wexford.

The cost of the walk is €500 and this will include:

- Bus Transfers
- Dinner, Bed & Breakfast for 7 days
- Pilgrim Passport
- Luggage transfers along the route

Price will not include:

- Flights
- Personal and Travel Insurance
- Lunches

29th June
to
6th July
2013

Saturday 29th June 2013 Arrive in Santiago Airport and transfer by bus to Sarria (1.5hrs). Aer Lingus have a flight at 09.40am from Dublin airport and a return flight to Dublin from Santiago Airport on Saturday 6th July. www.aerlingus.com

Sunday

Sarria – Portomarin 22km

Monday

Portomarin – Palas de Rei 25km

Tuesday

Palas de Rei – Melide 15km

Wednesday

Melide – Arzua 14km

Thursday

Arzua – Lavacolla 29km

Friday

Lavacolla – Santiago 12km

TOTAL 117km



Camino 2013

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust
Participation Form

Name _____

Address _____

Contact Number(s)

Home _____

Mobile _____

Email (If Applicable) _____

Existing Medical Conditions

Yes ___ No ___
(Please Tick one Box)

If Yes (Please explain)

Next of Kin

(Details will only be used in the event of an emergency while abroad)

Name _____

Address _____

Contact Number

00.353. (0) _____

I certify I am able for this walk and know of no medical condition that will impede my participation.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please post completed Application Form to Bernadette Connolly, National Coordinator, Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Co Galway along with a non-refundable Deposit of €100.

The Way of St. James is the pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain, where legend has it that the remains of the apostle, Saint James the Great, are buried.

The Way of St James was one of the most important Christian pilgrimages during medieval times. Legend has it that St. James' remains were carried by boat from Jerusalem to northern Spain where they were buried on the site of what is now the city of Santiago de Compostela. There are many pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela. However, The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is planning a walk along the ancient pilgrim path, also known as Camino Frances from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela. The route was proclaimed the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in October 1987 and was also named one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in 1993.

If you would like to join us for our 2013 Walk to Santiago de Compostela please contact the office in Kilcuan at 091 796622 or info@irishpilgrimage.com for an application form..

We will be asking all participants to raise €1000.

CYCLE TO LOURDES



The Irish Pilgrimage Trust **CYCLE 2014**



In 2014 we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the first Cycle to Lourdes in 1984—in that year six cyclists undertook the challenge. Since then, every second year, the numbers have increased and in 2012 we had 150 intrepid cyclists make the 700km journey from Dinard to Lourdes.

NO DRUGS ON THIS TOUR DE FRANCE!

On byroads and bohereens all over the country, cyclists of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust cycle club La Brise—are in training. Many have done the cycle to Lourdes in previous years and know that training done now will ensure a pleasant Tour de France during Holy Week in 2014. Why not join them? We are looking forward to welcoming new members in the next few months..

It's still not too late to make a New Year Resolution !!

- **Get fit and trim**
- **Make new friends**
- **Explore France**
- **Take a fun holiday**



Participants need to have a bike and be prepared to start regular training spins this summer. We will be happy to offer advice and support. If you are interested, or know someone who might consider taking part, drop us a line and we will be supply all the information.

For information

✉ pjordan@irishpilgrimagestrust.com

📍 Cycle 2014, Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Co Galway

Lough Derg

St Patrick's Purgatory

Lough Derg is a unique pilgrimage site in a small lake in Co Donegal near the village of Pettigo. The tradition of pilgrimage dates back to early days of Christianity.



On Saturday 22nd September, 2012 the **North West Region** of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust (Geraldine Cassidy and Mary Clancy) organised a guided day of reflection and renewal which was led by the Prior, Fr. Richard Mohan and our chaplain Fr. Michael McGrath. It included Prayers of Intercession, Healing of Memories, Confession and Eucharist as well as the Rosary and Way of the Cross. The afternoon offered an opportunity for quiet time and personal prayer.



The group comprised of past and present carers and guests, benefactors and friends of the Trust. Many people travelled by car and coach. Rita McWeeney organised a coach from Carrick on Shannon, Mary Clancy a coach from Sligo and Helen Kirwan organised a group from Wexford to travel to South Donegal for the weekend which included the pilgrimage to Lough Derg on Saturday. The day was enjoyed by all and many expressed an interest in joining us again.

LOUGH DERG 2013

We invite you to join us again this year for our second pilgrimage; on Saturday 21st September.

- *The price is €40 pp – includes boat, tea and coffee, Services and lunch. The times: 9.15am – 4.00pm.*

For more information or booking details please contact the office at 091 796622 or email to info@irishpilgrimagestrust.com

South East go North West!

Forty people from the South East travelled to Lough Derg for the Irish Pilgrimage Trust Day in September.



As Lough Derg is a very long way from the south east corner, we decided to make a weekend of it. A bus left Wexford on Friday morning and travelled through the midlands to Ballyshannon. The group stayed for 2 nights in Dorrian's Imperial Hotel, Ballyshannon and included many present and past members of the Trust

“ we decided to make a weekend of it!

and some friends of the Trust who were looking for an opportunity to visit Lough Derg.

Some people had visited Lough Derg before but had done the traditional three day pilgrimage and a few people had never been there. On Saturday morning we had breakfast in the hotel and the bus brought the group then to Lough Derg. The sun



shone on everyone that day and the whole experience was enjoyed by all. There was rest, relaxation and prayer in the weekend.

On Sunday morning we had breakfast and began our journey home. Our bus driver Joe brought us on a scenic tour around Mullaghmore in Sligo before heading to Carrick an Shannon for mass. Trust Chaplain Fr Michael welcomed the group to his parish and everyone was delighted with the experience. Thanks Fr Michael!

Both the day on Lough Derg and the weekend experience was enjoyed by all and we have already put the 3rd weekend in Sept in our diaries for a trip to the north west!

Friends of the Trust

AN INVITATION TO YOU

Dear Friend of the Trust,

I am taking this opportunity once again to write to you on behalf of the Trust.

The Trust thankfully is strong and vibrant and continuing to grow and prosper. We have more people than ever wishing to travel to Lourdes with us at Easter time and to Hosanna House in June, both carer's and guests. Our houses at Kilcuan in Galway and Cois Cuain in Wexford are providing a great holiday spot for our guests and respite for their families and carer's. Last year we provided a break for 1,100 people, which does not include their families.

Please see our website; www.irishpilgrimagetrust.com for any more information on what we are doing.

This year we are again offering you the opportunity to become a "Friend of the Trust".

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust relies on the commitment, passion and enthusiasm of our most loyal supporters and in an effort to recognise this we are starting "the Friends of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust". By becoming a Friend, the support provided by you will help to secure the future of the Trust and enable our continuing work. We propose to recognise our Friends in Lourdes each year.

As a friend we are asking you to give whatever support you can to your local group or region. The group leaders in particular require as much help and support as you can provide to assist them in bringing groups to Lourdes at Easter, with Hosanna house or to Kilcuan and Cois Cuain. Volunteering as a carer or introducing a carer, helping with fund raising, introducing potential guests, helping with friendship weeks etc, can achieve this.

We are also asking you to contribute €20 per annum to be recognised as a friend. Please find standing order form below.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours Sincerely

Bernadette Connolly
National Co-ordinator

**Please fill in all the details below to help keep our records accurate and return the form to:
The National Co-ordinator, The Irish Pilgrimage Trust, Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway.**

Please use BLOCK CAPITALS

Name _____
Group Number _____
Address _____
Telephone _____

Please include me/us on the mailing list to receive a copy of the Trust Newsletter. Yes / No

I/we would like to make the following contribution to the Irish Pilgrimage Trust fund raising.
By pledging to pay € monthly / annually. Please circle as appropriate.

I/we have enclosed an annual cheque : €
I/we have completed the attached Bankers Order.

Eligibility for tax refund to the Trust:

See www.revenue.ie/en/business/charities.html for any annual donation in excess of €250

BANKERS ORDER

To: The Manager

Bank: Branch:

I/we authorise you to debit my/our account numbered:

With the sum of €

For the credit of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust:

AIB Bank, Lynch's Castle, Galway.

Sort Code: 937096

Account Number: 41444561

Please charge these payments to my/our account monthly/annually commencing with a payment on the first day of 201..

Please do not charge my/our account with any fees as the Trust is a revenue approved "Eligible Charity" number CHY5992.

Account Name:

Authorised signature(s): Date:

Please cancel all previous standing orders in favour of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

• Please complete the top of this form and return to Kilcuan.

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO



**Walk from
Sarria to Santiago de Compostela
for
The Irish Pilgrimage Trust**



Saturday 29th June 2013 – Saturday 6th July 2013

For further information contact:

Tel: 091 796622 Email : info@irishpilgrimagetrust.com