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St Jakobsweg - the 3rd week

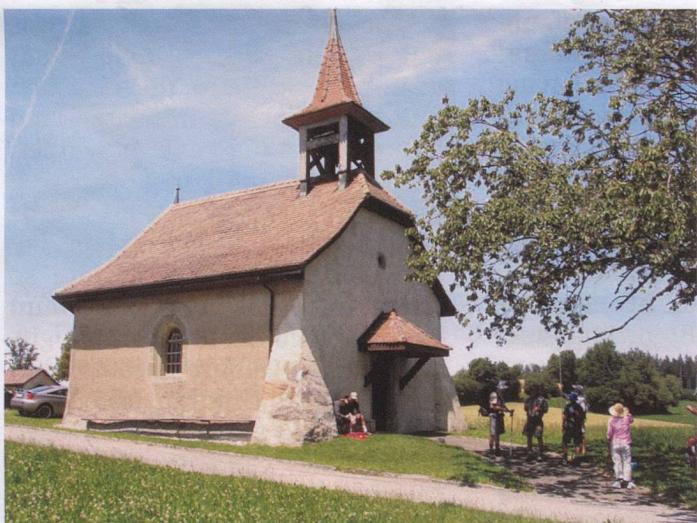


by Rae & Vitus Achermann

DAY 14: Fribourg - Pasat - Romont: We are now into our last week and the weather continues to be very hot, which makes walking on the roads towards the end of the day very tiring. The patches of forest always provided a welcome respite from the heat. The agricultural countryside we walked through was mainly cropping with immaculate fields, impressive farm buildings and houses.

In the far distance, the mediaeval market town of Romont. Its 13th century church and Roman castle perched on the hill, simmering in the heat haze. It was a relief to know we didn't have to climb the hill as our accommodation was a large sports complex on the outskirts of the town at the bottom of the hill. Later it was interesting to explore the old town where there were distant views of Mount Blanc.

DAY 15: Romont - Corcelles le Jorat: Our walk continued towards Moudon with the Jura Mountains to the west and it was a pleasant walk along the River Boye to the busy town. We carried on up through the High Town on narrow cobbled streets. The afternoon temperature reached 34 deg. and we were now walking mainly in open farming country. Our accommodation was somewhat off the official route and the way became confusing and to walk all the way there on a busy main road would be too arduous and time-consuming. So Beni ferried everyone by car the rest of the way to our restaurant accommodation at Corcelles le Jorat. On several occasions, when the afternoon temperatures became just too hot to walk further, Rae would get a ride with Beni.



Pausing under a cherry tree at Vucherens Chapel.

DAY 16: Corcelles le Jorat - Lausanne: We felt now we were heading towards the end of our journey as we walked towards Lausanne, the cool and peace of the forest contrasting with the busy roads. At the Chapel St. Laurent, we had our first view of Lac Léman, with our ultimate goal, Geneva, still 3 days' walk away at the far western end. We reached the Sauvabelin Lake, artificially created in 1888, then some of the more energetic of the group climbed the wooden 35 metre Sauvabelin Tower with 360 deg. panoramic views over Lausanne. We headed down into the city to the Cathedral, enjoyed lunch at a restaurant several hundred years old. We walked through the old town on the way to the youth hostel and through large beautiful parks with the High Court of Switzerland building overlooking the lake. Our youth hostel accommodation was located in the Vidy area on the outskirts of Lausanne.

DAY 17: Lausanne - St Prex: We enjoyed walking beside Lake Geneva, through parks with villas and lavish hotels overlooking the many boat marinas. At the old town of Morges, a street musician played and Heidi and Richard entertained us and the locals with an impromptu dance - but they were not exactly light footed in tramping boots! Leaving Morges and the lake behind, we headed inland and now fields of crops gave way to large areas of vineyards.

We arrived at St. Prex in the early afternoon and enjoyed a stroll through its interesting and quaint old streets and came to the town gate which dates from 1234. After settling into our B & B, we went back to the town to find the whole population gathered into the small square, celebrating the opening of a new community restaurant. So, feeling somewhat like gatecrashers, Maele, Heidi, Rae & Beni happily joined in the festivities, mingling with the locals until the rest of the group arrived for an excellent dinner at the crowded restaurant next door to the square.

DAY 18: St Prex - Rolle - Nyon: After a sumptuous breakfast, we were on our way again by 7.30am, heading west. We walked through more vineyards and forests, including a kiwifruit orchard towards Nyon, passing through Rolle, another interesting town with a huge ancient castle by the lakeside. After a very long day, we arrived at our farmstay B & B which was located on the outskirts of Nyon. Our hosts, retired farmers, had a mixed farm of 60ha and now run B & B accommodation for passing pilgrims. The farmers in our group had interesting discussions with our hosts over a glass of their excellent home grown wine.



The final stamp is collected at the Geneva Cathedral

DAY 19: Nyon – Geneva: It was hard to believe that this was our last day of walking. We set off in the morning with the mountain and farmland scenery beautiful in the early light. We reached the suburbs of Geneva and it was still 10kms to walk into the city centre. We had our last group photo taken beside Lake Geneva then continued on through the Old Town and up to the Cathedral. It was with immense relief and not without some pride that we stumbled up the steps of the Geneva Cathedral to get the last stamp in our *Pilgerpasses*. It was an emotional moment with congratulations and hugs all round and with the realization that we had actually completed our mission.



The completed "pilgerpass"

The group walked approximately 450kms with Rae doing about 340 (and very pleased with that effort!) and we walked an average of 23 kms a day. Markus has been an excellent organizer and tour guide and without his expertise, everything would not have run so smoothly. Our group was a very compatible one and despite the rigours of the walk, we enjoyed each day with lots of fun and laughter.

The pilgrim way was clearly marked with signs denoting the scallop shell symbol and the number 4 which pointed us in the right direction and often

scallop shells were attached to signs and buildings. We will leave it to the reader to google "St Jacobsweg scallop shell" and come to their own conclusion. The weather was superb with only one wet day, but often we would experience thunder and heavy rain in the evenings.



Signs point the way

And so our meritorious journey has ended, appropriately, we think, with a text from John's wife Helen from New Zealand – "Congratulations to the Superannuitant Pilgrims – now go and get a train!"

And so we did just that.

Swiss **M**arket

Saturday, 5 May 2012
8.00 am to 3.00pm
6 Rockridge Ave, Penrose

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Maybe a Klappmutter or a Swiss army knife?

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