

Date: 25/11/2010 Place: Budva

Kms walked: 1900

OK. Here's a little exercise for the mathematicians among you. If different people decide to walk to Jerusalem, from different start points and different start times but with converging routes, and the slowest starts first,

a) how long will it be before the faster catch up with the slower and

b) what are the odds that they stay in the same accommodation if the catch up place is a large city?

So there I was in Dubrovnik, having been delayed by 3 days. Unfortunately I ate a pizza with which my tummy had a very strong argument, the result being 2 days in bed and a day to recover! Then there was 'paperwork' type stuff to do. Despite being there for a week I still didn't fully explore the Old Town which is walled and pedestrianised and being built partly on a hill has steep narrow streets leading down to the centre.



The walls of Dubrovnik Old Town



Steep streets leading to the centre

I was staying in the Youth Hostel (which by the way I highly recommend, it is reasonably close to the Old Town and the staff are very very welcoming). A woman came in to the breakfast room and we got to chatting. I asked if she was on holiday. Imagine my astonishment when she said "No. I am walking to Jerusalem"!

It turned out she was Swiss and herself and husband had set off from their home in Basel in mid August. They had detoured via Venice and done the same thing I had which was taken the boat bus to Punta Sabbioni, intending to stay at the camp-sites along the coast. But by the time they were doing that stretch it was the end of the season and camp-sites were closed so they had a lot more problems with accommodation than I had. We swapped stories and compared routes – they were following the same one as me.

Oh and by the way I have another route change. Having been warned by several people that the centre of Turkey will be very cold as it is high, and also there are some very remote areas, I have decided to take a coastal route. I will head east towards Istanbul but there is a ferry a few 100kms before the city that drops down onto the western coast. So I plan to take that. Ironically Annemarie and Hanspeter, the Swiss couple were planning the same.

Going back to the subject of this amazing meeting, they were not sure how long they would stay in Dubrovnik. I was determined to leave the next day but as it turned out I was delayed yet again, this time by strong winds. We ended up walking a day together, from Dubrovnik to Cavtat. They were good company. However at Cavtat they decided to start very early to try to reach Herceg Novi in Montenegro, 30kms away. I wanted to go to Mass before leaving as it was Sunday. So we said

fond farewells. They did reach Herceg Novi that day but I just went as far as Gruda, about 15kms further and then Montenegro the following day.



Three bound for Jerusalem



Dramatic coastline between Dubrovnik & Cavtat



Goodbye Croatia



.... and Hello Montenegro

So I have now crossed into another country and winter has definitely arrived. Someone did ask me in an email what was I going to do about winter. At that time, only a few days ago, the skies were still blue, the sun warm and I slept outside at another closed beach bar. But last Monday I was stuck in a garage café for 2.5hrs sitting out a rainstorm that sent the bin careering across the forecourt and chairs flying through the air! Several times I thought “Right, it’s finished” and then it would restart as heavy as before.



Sitting out the storm



Pause for prayer in Montenegro

It rained intermittently on Tuesday, sometimes heavily but no squally winds. Yesterday (Wednesday) also dawned with the promise of rain. In addition to the rain there was thunder, lightning and hail. The temperature had nosedived. Thankfully the hostel I had booked into had heating in the rooms though I had dried out by the time I arrived.



Winter cometh



.... but a cup of coffee can be so cheering!

This morning I set off later than I had wanted though with a short day ahead of me. It was raining as I left the hostel but within five minutes the rain became a deluge and in the end, with great reluctance I turned back and retraced my steps to the hostel which is where I am now. Rain is predicted until Saturday when there is a day of sun but then apparently the rain will return on Sunday. I'm hoping I can make an earlier start tomorrow as the pattern seems to be dry 1st thing, then rain from about 10:00 for an hour or so then intermittently through the day. We'll see.

But regarding longer term plans, back in October I had been already considering the problem of what to do if/when the weather turned really nasty. It had been on my mind for some time as I knew the one thing that could make me give up was having to walk day after day, after day in the wet and cold. So I started thinking about taking a break and finding somewhere warm to stop for a month. I did not want to be 'on the road' over Christmas and I also felt that my body might need rest as by then I will have been going for nearly 6 months.

Initially I considered somewhere in south Turkey but getting there looked a bit awkward and also it had to be somewhere I could go to Church. Then I considered Athens and indeed very nearly booked myself into a cheap hostel there. Then for some reason the island of Naxos suggested itself to me. There were places there within my budget, and I chanced on a 'googled' page that told me Naxos had a sizeable Catholic population and a Catholic Cathedral. It got better and better. The idea of an island rather appealed – if I got 'itchy feet' I could just take my tent and walk round it! So I have found somewhere that is close to the Cathedral (and that is yet another story of things that should not have happened, and Guardian Angels being at work) and will stay there from mid December to mid January. Mind you December and January are the 2 wettest months on Naxos but I'm hoping the rain will be warm.

So if I can keep going for just another few weeks, crossing Montenegro by foot, Albania by bus then Macedonia and into Greece by foot and finally take the bus or train to Athens and the ferry to the island.

Keep the prayers going – and maybe a prayer for warmer weather!

Take care and God Bless

Ann

PS: 2 people wrote and told me the flower at the end of Postcard 09 is called (apty) a Bottle-brush flower.