

# The French Society of Friends of Santiago de Compostela

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Founded in 1950 by a group of researchers and academics, including pilgrims, the Société Française des Amis de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle aims to study the historical, artistic and cultural manifestations of the Jacobean phenomenon and to provide assistance and advices to today pilgrims.

Very quickly, close and sustained links were established with the religious and civil authorities of the city of Santiago and Galicia, who consider the French Society as their own appointed interlocutor in their relations with France and French pilgrims.



**IN THE MID-1960S**, the Société Française introduced a specific passport, the "Crédencial", for becoming pilgrims. It contributed to the rediscovery and marking of the paths, making available to pilgrims, but also to the curious and researchers the information they needed and the means to deepen their approach if they so wished.

The Centre d'Études Compostellanes (Compostela Studies Centre) continued the founder's objectives through the periodic publication of the journal "Compostelle" and the organisation of symposia, conferences and exhibitions. It aimed at raising awareness of pilgrimages history and of its cultural heritage in France and Europe.

Thanks to it, the Way of St James was recognised as the first European cultural route in 1987 and registered as a World Heritage Site in 1998. Some hiking trails marked by the French Federation of Pedestrian Hiking are also marked as "Chemins de Saint-Jacques".

Faithful to the objectives set at its foundation, it is both a learned society and an association based on a common interest in the past, present and future of the pilgrimage to Santiago, its knowledge, practice and development.

Jeanne Vielliard, Jean Babelon, René de La Coste-Messelière, Jeannine Warcollier, Adeline Rucquoi were emblematic personalities.

## Biography of Jeannine WARCOLLIER

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The name of Jeannine WARCOLLIER is closely linked to the pilgrimage to Compostela. She died in 2016 at the age of 92.

All through her life, she remained active, in particular as Secretary General of the French Society of Friends of Santiago.

**BORN IN REIMS** (North-East of France), she is a devoted, single woman who dedicated her whole life to the fame of the Compostela pilgrimage and to the French Society. A paradox that amused her a lot: she had never walked the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle Santiago and her life was entirely dedicated to the rebirth and promotion of the ways to Santiago and their pilgrims. The pilgrims who frequented the "rue des Canettes" office (Paris 6th.), then the "rue Jean Bart" (also Paris 6th.), knew the tireless secretary general well. She was known and recognised well beyond the French capital for her action and conferences. She arrived on the St Jame's way thanks to the example of her brother, who in 1958, left with a group of nine Parisian students from Parthenay (middle-west of France) to Compostela.

Poliomyelitis prevented the young Michel Warcollier from walking, so he made the pilgrimage in a cart pulled by a mare: Rosalie. Parthenay was chosen as the starting point because the family of one of the young organisers was from this Poitou town and he had heard of Aimery Picaud of Parthenay-le-Vieux, known at that time as the compiler of the "pilgrim's guide" in the 12th century. At a time when there was nothing on the way: no accommodation, no markers, no walker, no map and no "Credencial"...

At the request of pilgrims who had been arrested for vagrancy, the "Credencial", heir to the credentials provided by religious authorities to medieval pilgrims, was created in France by the Société Française des Amis de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle. In 1960, Jeannine Warcollier joined the Company, which was founded in 1950 under the leadership of Louis Bourdon, Jeanne Viellard and René de La Coste-Messelière. From then on, she undertook to serve the path and her pilgrims, to enlighten them with her valuable advices. Responsible for the publication of the Society's newsletter (the Echo of the Paths of St James), she answered letters and wrote numerous articles. She also worked on the correction and proofreading of articles for the journal of the society's Compostela Studies, a scholarly journal called "Compostelle".

The walking pilgrimage to Compostela underwent a major revival in the Jubilee Year of 1965. In those times, Spain made great efforts to arrange paths and to develop accommodation structures. Jeannine Warcollier contributes to the organisation of a large number of exhibitions. Starting with the exhibition in 1967, at the psychiatric hospital of Cadillac-sur-Garonne (South-West of France), founded in the 17th century by the Duke of Epernon under the condition that six beds be reserved to accommodate pilgrims to Compostela free of charge and whose director at the time was passionate about Santiago. Jeannine Warcollier kept in mind the whole recent history of the pilgrimage; recalls the Society of Friends of Santiago in a tribute paid by the President. She served the Apostle and his pilgrims all the time through. In this life of volunteering, she was very discreet but she was everywhere, recalls a relative.

A Catholic, Lady of the Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem, Jeannine Warcollier also contributed to the re-foundation, in Chartres in 1994, of a Jacobite brotherhood founded in 1506 in Paris. It brings together experienced pilgrims who wish to maintain their devotion to the apostle and support future pilgrims in their spiritual preparation.

## Les membres du Jury

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### **Patrice BERNARD**

Président de la Société Française des Amis de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle

### **Isalas CALVO DE LA UZ**

Directeur de l'administration et des relations avec les organisations des Amis de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle  
Consilleria de Cultura e Turismo Xunta de GALICE

### **Monseigneur DON SECUNDO**

Doyen du Chapitre de la Cathédrale de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle

### **Pascal DUCHENE**

Président de l'Association Belge des Amis de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle

### **Alain GARROT**

Maire-adjoint de la ville de Lourdes  
Fondateur de La croisée chemins et initiateur des Rencontres Internationales des Pèlerins de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle

### **Luis GUTIÉRREZ PERRINO**

Président de la Federación Española de Asociaciones de Amigos del Camino de Santiago

### **Sébastien PENARI**

Chargé à l'Agence de Coopération Interrégionale et Réseau :  
Chemins de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle (ACIR) du développement scientifique et culturel – Relation aux adhérents

### **Adeline RUCQUOI** (*à confirmer*)

Présidente de la Société Française des Amis de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle de 2006 à 2016  
Médiéviste, Directeur de recherche émérite du CNRS  
Membre français du Comité International des Experts du Chemin de Saint-Jacques auprès du gouvernement de GALICE

# Jeannine WARCOLLIER Award

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The French Society of the Friends of Santiago de Compostela is setting up a Jeannine WARCOLLIER's Award to recognise a particularly outstanding action by a Jacobean Association in support of pilgrims and pilgrimage routes.

Jeannine WARCOLLIER (1924-2016) dedicated her life upholding the values of St Jame's Ways in France and Europe. She was at the initiative of the setting up of many Jacobean associations in France, but and also in Belgium, in Germany and even in Spain. Since 1958, she served as Secretary General of the Société des Amis de Saint-Jacques in Paris until her death in April 2016. In Santiago de Compostela, a room at the Pilgrim's Office bears her name.

## Rules of Procedure for the Award

**Article 1:** The Award aims at perpetuating and honouring the memory of Jeannine Warcollier who, through her personal commitment, never ceased to promote the paths of Santiago known, contributing to the rebirth of the pilgrimage to Compostela.

**Article 2:** The purpose of the Jeannine Warcollier Prize aims at distinguishing a Jacobean Association whose action would have, during the year and in an innovative manner, helped pilgrims by providing them with practical solutions (marking, reception, reviews, specific support...), or contributed to making the paths known and accessible to as many people as possible or even increased the historical knowledge of the pilgrimage to Compostela.

**Article 3:** The application file will include a presentation of the association and will introduce the proposed action for the award in a maximum of 3 typed pages. Three languages have been selected: French, English, Spanish. Annexes (photos, documents, press articles,...) may be attached. Applications must be sent by mail to 8 bis rue Jean Bart, 75006 Paris, or by internet : [secretariat@compostelle.asso.fr](mailto:secretariat@compostelle.asso.fr) before 31 May 2020. Applications are free of charge.

**Article 4:** Associations commit themselves to communicate in their application files only accurate and sincere information and undertake not to omit information that could impair the jury's judgment. The jury gives itself the opportunity to verify the information provided.

**Article 5:** These regulations Rules of Procedure, adopted by the Board of Directors of the Société Française des Amis de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, may be amended by it on its own initiative or on the proposal from the jury by an absolute majority of their respective members.

**Article 6:** The Jeannine Warcollier Award winner is honoured with an award from a jury under the aegis of the President of the Société Française des Amis de Saint-Jacques. The organising committee will select the winning association by June 30, 2020 at the latest. The award ceremony will take place in Paris.

**Article 7:** The organisers preserve their own rights to modify the Rules of Procedure or to cancel the Jeannine Warcollier Award if circumstances so require. In this case, the applying associations will be informed at the earliest convenience.