

The

# Pack Rat

Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association

July / August 2010



## WHAT'S

### INSIDE?



- 2 The Future of the PackRat
- 4 K Country – Trail User Group Meeting
- 5 New Members
- 6 South West Coast Path - Dorothy-Ann Reimer
- 9 Bicycling in Germany again - Sharon Wingenschach
- 11 The Isle of Man - Karen Sharp
- 13 Comfortable Hiking Holidays



## RMRA EXECUTIVE

**President**  
Peter Fischer

**Vice President**  
Carl Von Mirbach

**Treasurer**  
Laszlo Jamniczky

**Secretary**  
Denise Taylor

**Trips Director**  
Ron Hunter

**Program Director**  
Ron Mason

**Social Director**  
Barb Mitchell

**Membership Director**  
Dorothy-Ann Reimer

**Packrat Editor**  
Sharon Wingenbach

**Past President**  
Tom Flanagan

and special thanks to **WebGuy**  
John Duerden

The Packrat is published six times a year by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association. We welcome articles, comments and ideas from our members, and if content is deemed suitable and space permits, we will use it.

E-mail contributions to the editor at [packrat@ramblers.ab.ca](mailto:packrat@ramblers.ab.ca)

or forward to RMRA  
c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council  
1111 Memorial Drive NW,  
Calgary AB T2N 3E4.

Copyright 2010 by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association.

Something to think about and to talk about...

# The Future of the PackRat

by Laszlo Jamniczky

To all RMRA members:

In April and May 2010, the Executive ran a survey regarding the readership of the PackRat and whether people minded if we stopped publishing the PackRat.

The purpose of this article is to let you know what the survey uncovered and to outline the thoughts of your Executive. We will likely bring forth a final proposal to the membership during the **2010 AGM** so that all those interested can come and debate the issue and vote on the future of the PackRat.



## Survey results

Out of about 300 members, 68 responded to our survey. Thanks to those who took the time to respond and a special thanks to those who took even more time and volunteered a comment.

The results of the survey, based on the 68 persons who replied, are as follows:

### Question 1: Do you read the PackRat?

44 out of 68 said "YES" and 22 said "NO". This amounts to 67.6 % answering "YES" and 32.4% answering "NO".

### Question 2: Do you mind if we stop the PackRat?

14 out 68 said "YES" and 54 said "NO". This amounts to 20.6 % answering "YES" and 79.4% answering "NO".

However, if we assume that the other 200 or so members who didn't reply don't care one way or the other, then the results become overwhelmingly in favour of stopping the PackRat, since most people don't read it.

In addition, reviewing the comments that people made, it appears that many would not mind if interested members did continue to write stories about their experiences with "exotic" travel. Most people appear to be content if the PackRat were to only appear in an electronic format within a modernized website.

## Activities

Hiking  
Backpacking  
Cross-Country Skiing  
Downhill Skiing  
Snowshoeing  
Cycling  
Climbing  
Scrambling  
Mountaineering  
Camping  
Education and Awareness Programs  
Socials

---

## Meetings

Every Wednesday evening at 7:30  
Rosemont Community Hall  
10 St NW at Confederation Park

---

## Contact Us

Rocky Mountain Ramblers  
Association  
c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council  
(CAOC)  
1111 Memorial Dr NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 3E4

---

## Packrat Newsletter

If we have your e-mail address,  
we will automatically notify you when  
an electronic copy of the Packrat  
is on the website.

---

## Website

[www.ramblers.ab.ca](http://www.ramblers.ab.ca).

Visit our website for information about  
trips, meetings and special events.

## Thoughts going forward

Given that in the last while the PackRat editor has had difficulty generating a publication filled with interesting material, we are leaning towards stopping the PackRat as a publication and instead providing a specific forum on the RMRA website where members can write and publish their interesting travel adventures.

## Re-designing the website

We are also thinking about re-designing the website to modernize the look and improve the functionality by making use of newer technology. Along these lines, an effective manner would be created for members to publish their own travel stories.

We could create an automated link that would advise members when new material has been posted. Members could unsubscribe from receiving the notification, and then log on to view new articles if they wished at their own leisure.

The above represent just a few of the thoughts that have been thrown around by the Executive and we are looking into finding a person who would be interested in working with us to redesign the website and incorporate some of the functionality described above.

If you are interested and able to help re-design and re-build the RMRA website, please contact me, Laszlo, at [laszlo\\_jamniczky@yahoo.com](mailto:laszlo_jamniczky@yahoo.com) or 403-252-7332.

If you have any comments or suggestions about what to include in the RMRA website redesign, please feel free to contact me. ###

---



Jean Amatt saw this barrel of local ale in Wales at a *Rail and Ale* festival. Anyone thirsty?



---

Major budget cuts

## K Country – Trail User Group Meeting

by Dorothy-Ann Reimer

May 26 was the latest meeting held between K Country and representatives from trail user groups. Ron Hunter attended for Ramblers.

### Important meeting

This was an important meeting because it was used to review and re-focus the role these meetings may have in the future. It was chaired by Michael Roycroft, Site Manager at Canmore Nordic Centre who seems to have made a name for himself by sorting out and improving the operation at the CNC.

### Major changes to K Country operations

Thanks to the retirement of several key people and to major budget cuts, the operation has been re-structured. K Country is split into 3 regions

**Area 1:** Fish Creek and Glenmore Ranch Provincial Parks, Elbow, Sheep and Highwood are under Jim Stomp who is based at Fish Creek.

**Area 2:** Canmore Nordic Centre, Bow Valley and Kananaskis Valley south to Galatea are under Michael Roycroft

**Area 3:** Peter Lougheed Provincial Park and the Spray districts, plus responsibility for the Conservation Officers are temporarily under Dave Hanna

A new committee, **Kananaskis Trails Committee (KTC)**, was formed a few months ago within K Country staff to coordinate and advise on all aspects of trails (e.g. planning, usage, maintenance). KTC is currently being chaired by Michael Roycroft.

### What this means to Ramblers

#### Money

☑ the **budget was cut** and will likely be cut again next year. It's not down to mid-90s level but still too low, considering the growth in use of the region.

☑ no staff were fired but replacements won't be hired - reduction by attrition will prevail. **Facilities hours will be cut** and more volunteers will be used. Contract seasonal staff will work fewer months and there'll be fewer of them (e.g. Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) went from 6 to 2 guardians for the entire K Country).

☑ Tourism, Parks & Recreation (TPR) will look for ways to generate more cash flow.

### Future meetings with K Country

☑ Our K Country Trail User Group meetings were initiated as **lobbying efforts** which seemed needed in the face of inadequate funding of K Country, mainly with respect to winter skiing recreation. However it has evolved into a venue to **provide input to K Country on trail issues** and to bring back information to our clubs.

☑ Michael Roycroft wishes to formally clarify the purpose of our meetings. He plans to create **Terms of Reference** which will be discussed at a later meeting.

☑ **The KTC will now be the decision making body for K Country.**

☑ There are other groups that meet periodically with K Country (West Bragg, Canmore, Ghost) but these generally have a focus on one specific area. Our group has been more involved with the entire region.

☑ It was pointed out that many of our issues could be handled outside meetings if we had a contact within K Country whom we knew would be able to act on them.

### The nitty gritty issues

#### Trail Work

☑ Anne Makin will set up opportunities for volunteer trail work.

☑ Rummel Lake access work is planned to improve winter access [which I think is about time].

☑ The CNC will be staffed on weekends to aid supervision of volunteers. Volunteers can do work on SRD lands without SRD supervision (as long as knowledgeable people are present).

☑ Request to clear trail to Upper Kananaskis River/ Lake Viewpoint is still being evaluated, mainly for wildlife concerns.

☑ Spray Lake Sawmills is re-generating the Lusk Creek cut block and part of the Lusk Creek trail has been re-routed. Also, a new forest interpretive trail has been made from the Lusk Creek day use parking lot.



---

### Other

- ☑ Alf Skrastins commented on how much the winter program at Ribbon Creek was appreciated. He asked about the status of Fortress but there has been no progress on its disposition.
- ☑ Ron Hunter asked how trail use is monitored. Infra-red devices are used which can be downloaded to a computer. He also reminded the Group that trail information is available on Ramblers' website's trail reports.

### Contacts

Post meeting, I asked for names of K Country people we could contact for information or trail concerns:

**Backcountry campground or trail questions & comments:**  
Michael Roycroft [michael.roycroft@gov.ab.ca](mailto:michael.roycroft@gov.ab.ca)

**Maintenance issues:** Michael Roycroft, and he will forward them to the correct person

**Information Centre questions/comments:** Duane Fizor  
(403)673-3985 or [duane.fizor@gov.ab.ca](mailto:duane.fizor@gov.ab.ca)

**Enforcement or public safety:** Dave Hanna  
(403)678-5500 ext 282 or [dave.hanna@gov.ab.ca](mailto:dave.hanna@gov.ab.ca)

###

### PACK RAT ADVERTISING RATES

The Club offers advertising space in Pack Rat and the following rates apply:

Quarter Page	\$10
Half Page	\$20
Full Page	\$40

Payment **MUST** be received prior to publication

---

## **A big warm welcome to our new members**

Elizabeth Snowball-Beggs  
Theresa Thurgar  
Hannah White  
Margaret Saul  
Greg Reed  
Fiona Lucchini  
Simon Lucchini  
Ron Bell  
Mary-Jane Gray  
Molly McNeill  
Kate Baillies  
David Richardson  
Iain Clark  
Lisa Cranstone  
Maria Crooks  
Linda Greenwood

**Happy trails to you!**

Some of the most breathtaking views you'll find...

## A Slice of the South West Coast Path

by Dorothy-Ann Reimer

England's famous South West Coast Path stretches 1014 km along the coast from **Minehead** in west Somerset, past Tintagel, past Land's End, past Penzance and Plymouth and all the way to Poole Harbour in Dorset. On the path, you find other walkers, sometimes with their dogs, lots of sheep, a few cows and some of the most breathtaking views you'll find anywhere in that land. Along the way, you can also sample some of the fascinating history of the people who've survived here for over 2000 years.

I've walked parts of this path in the past, maybe 100 km or so, traveling to and from trailheads by public

transit and loving every minute of it. On my last holiday in June 2010, I added another 30 km in South Devon.

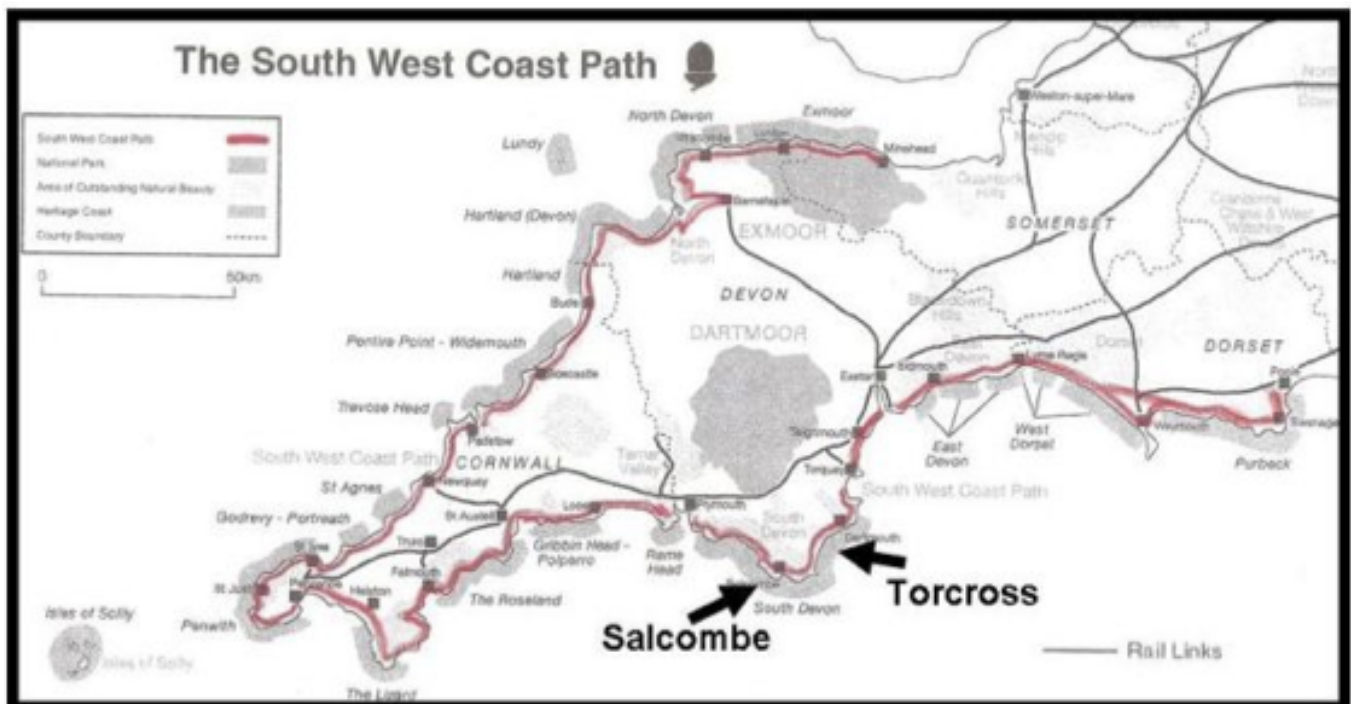
While visiting a former Rambler, Josephine Denton, I decided to tackle the **Salcombe to Torcross** section, 20.8 km and elevation ups totaling 642 m. My first day in the area had rain so we took the bus to Dartmouth and I discovered that construction had closed the road to Torcross but on checking I learned that it was open after 3:30 pm. This meant that I had to start from Salcombe, not Torcross and, since there are no bus stops between the two points, I had to do the whole stretch before the last bus.

To reach the trailhead, I caught the 7:55 am bus to Salcombe and hurried to the Ferry Hotel where you can catch the 8:30 am Salcombe Ferry to cross the large estuary and reach the actual trail. No boat. Then another passenger came down to the little waiting shelter and said

"You have to go stand out on the cement slipway so he can see you and come to get you." This we did and, sure enough, the little boat put-putted up for a 9:00 'sailing'. To call it a ferry is perhaps a bit much – it was an open boat about the size of a large rowboat with an outboard motor and seats for about 7 or 8 people.

The crossing takes all of five minutes and soon I'm on my way in the morning sunshine with one other hiker who quickly disappears from view.

Heading SE, I have great views across the estuary to the short stretch I did the previous day – a loop above and below **Overbecks** House and Youth Hostel. That section crawls above the sea on a narrow path through rocky crags with a guard rail. Today's walk would have no such excitement.







**Look back from Prawle Point**

Past Prawle Point and its Coastguard Lookout, I head NE then E where I can see the **Sleader Rocks** but not Start Point beyond. This turns out to be 3 hours distant. I cross a huge open field, part of it seeded with grain and obviously part of a large farm. Three people have set up a spotting scope but

it isn't me they are watching; rather it's a tiny bird, a rare sighting, so they say.

At **Woodombe**, I have the option of going down to a beach or passing behind. I opt for the latter but miss the turn and find myself climbing a little used track until finally I pull out the map. I go back down the hill and yes, there's the sign, lurking by some bushes.

On a high point past **Lannacombe**, I find trails in all directions. Three men carrying clipboards come up the hill and put me on the right track. They are also with Nature England but they're counting invertebrates – would that be things like snails? Spiders?

Start Point at last.... It's nearly 2:00 so I stop for my second snack. The lighthouse here dates back to 1836, though it has, of course, been modernized. A paved path leads up to the car park where a lonely attendant collects a parking fee - walkers exempt. A sign tells me that it's 462 M (miles) to Minehead and 168 M to Poole.

From here I can see the rest of my route stretching as far as Dartmouth, should I want to go that far. But Torcross isn't too far now. Mist is climbing up over the shore ahead - it looks as if a

storm is brewing. Fortunately, this soon fades away.

Next stop - **Hallsands Beach**, the fishing village that 'fell' into the sea January 26, 1917. Originally home to more than 150 people, it was protected from the sea by a pebble beach and a sea wall they built in 1903/4. In the 1890s, the Naval yard near Plymouth was expanding and needed huge amounts of the material in the shingle along the shore between Hallsands and Beesands to the north. This would be mixed to make concrete. Despite protests from the villagers that this would destroy their protective beach, work went ahead and, sure enough, a storm blew in, eroded the beach, broke the seawall and wrecked all but one home. I stop to read the history and wonder how humans are unable or unwilling to realize the consequences of their actions till it's too late.

I keep walking and find **Beesands Beach** and a sign that tells me that



**Path below Overbecks**

I'm heading for **Prawle Point** which looks impossibly far but takes only two hours. En route, it's up and down and I'm trying to avoid all the sheep droppings which are pretty extensive. The shore becomes rocky but here and there, there are tiny sandy beaches, often with no obvious way to reach them. Two young men stand beside the path holding clipboards. They're with Nature England and are inventorying plants from here to **Start Point**.



**Remains of Hallsands village**

---

Torcross is just over that headland in front of me. And here I go astray, again following the beach. When I suddenly face a sheer cliff, I realize my mistake and go back to find the path.

There ahead of me is Torcross at the south end of **Slapton Sands Beach** and site of another famous



**Start Point sign post**

time in history, this one much more recent.

In April, 1944, the Americans planned a practice landing here in preparation for D-Day in Normandy. Residents were evacuated and top-secret security prevailed. Shortly after midnight, eight LSTs heading for the beach were spotted by a fleet of nine German torpedo boats. Of the two ships assigned to protect the LSTs, only one had turned up. The Americans were attacked and more than 600 soldiers and sailors died.

The next fiasco took place on the beach itself. Eisenhower had decreed that it was necessary to simulate

real battle conditions so a 'do not cross' line was set to allow a British ship to shell above the heads of the troops. Under the heavy barrage, the men didn't stop at the line and another 308 men died under friendly fire.

Today all is peaceful and the sand offers a lovely beach walk and great birding.

My walk is ended and it's still 30 minutes before the bus comes. My time was 6¾ hours, exactly what the guide book suggests. I decide a treat is due so I step into the Post Office/Convenience store for a rum-and-raisin ice-cream cone. Yesss!! Delicious! ###

<http://www.southwestcoastpath.com/>

---

## What's your story?

**Have you travelled somewhere amazing?  
Feeling pumped?**

Consider writing about your adventure, and then sharing it with your fellow Ramblers.

Contact the editor for details. I can help.

The next Packrat deadline is **August 30**.





See it on YouTube....

## Bicycling in Germany - again

by Sharon Wingenschach

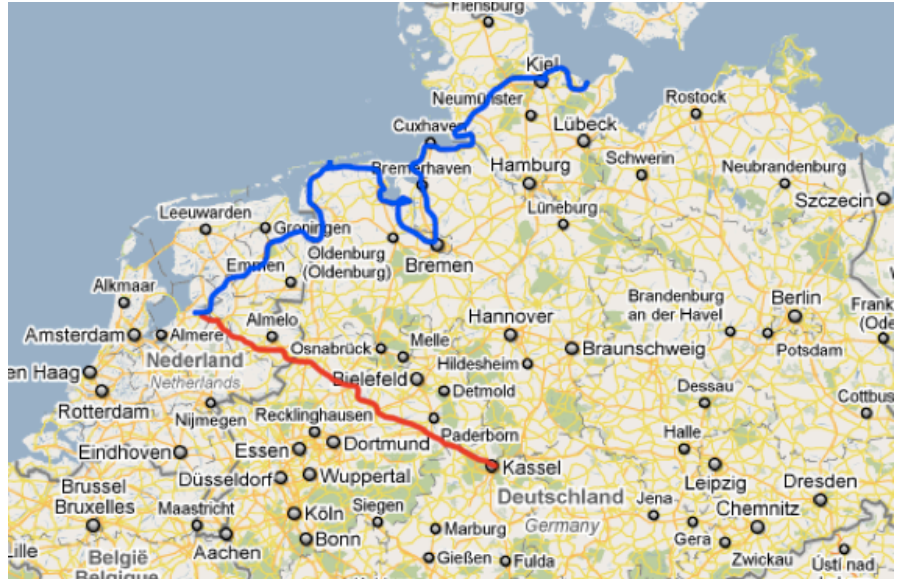
My first bicycle trip in Europe in '08 was a really big deal to me: I cycled along the rivers Rhine, Saar and Mosel. On my second trip, I cycled across the Netherlands and Belgium and was amazed how difficult it is when you don't follow a river.

This year, I was a lot more confident about how to pack (very very light), how to read a map (go with very big maps and pay attention to the signs along the way) and how to meet people along the way (let them tell you about themselves). These three things make all the difference.

So - Europe #3, in two parts.

### Zwolle to Kasal

Mieke (a Dutch friend I met through my brother) and I planned to go from **Zwolle** where she lives to Dresden in East Germany. But we didn't take the straightest, flattest route to Dresden - we just worked our way East, through the hills in



central Germany. And after five days, we got as far as **Kasal**.

Cycling with a European was a treat. She could negotiate, ask questions and get directions. She taught me that cheap Italian food was the best evening meal after cycling all day. She explained things along the way that I didn't know I didn't know. But when we needed something (like our water bottles filled), I played the role of the poor Canadian who didn't speak German. What a team.

Again, I found it's incredibly easy to get lost. Roads are never North/South or East/West. Even Mieke had to admit now and then that she had no idea where we were.

You have to keep your map close at all times, and check it regularly. It should be big – at least 1:100,000:

- white roads are cycle paths
- yellow roads are wide enough for two cars to pass if they both slow down
- red roads are for cars, but there's usually a cycle path along one side

And you can't forget to watch for bicycle signs along the way. In some

cases, they're hidden behind branches, or missing, or (worst of all) turned slightly. Grrrrr.

Mieke and I brought a tent, sleeping bags, thermarests, a stove and a pot, and we camped. I loved that. When you stay in B and Bs, you have to start looking for a place to stay at least by 6:00 or 7:00. But when you camp, you can stop in a lovely town for a nice evening meal and a beer, and then cycle the final 20 km or so to your campsite. It doesn't matter what time you get to the campsite because you can always get in. That's called freedom.

On our last evening together, we camped about 12 km from Kasal. Camping in Europe is not like any camping I've ever done (you're on a lawn, close to your neighbours) but that evening was wonderful – no crowds, a gorgeous view of rolling hills, red roofs of German towns in the valley pockets...and schnitzel and beer. I'll never forget it.

Mieke made this **video** of our five day cycle trip. Click on the link below and turn up the volume.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQd12TBH2Rc>



## Kiel to Zwolle

Sunday, we said goodbye, and Mieke took a train to Zwolle while I took a train to Kiel on the Baltic Sea.

After a day exploring the Baltic coastline, I cycled along the **Nord-Ostsee Kanal** (98 km) to the North Sea. That night, I stayed in a B and B where the elderly couple didn't know a word of English. We tried so hard to communicate. For me, this was a real glimpse into German life. She reminded me of my grandma.

The next day brought me to the coastline of the Elbe River and to **Cuxhaven**. I rode along the dike, opening and closing gates as I passed through fields of sheep or cows. I call it my **sheep day**.

At one of the sheep gates, I saw a warning: *Actung...teire*. I had no idea what a *teire* was, so I didn't relax until I found someone to ask. (It means *animal*. Whew.)



Bicycle holidays don't include large cities – it's so hard to get in and out – but I did go to **Bremenhaven** and **Bremen**. Bremen was once a large port but it wasn't deep enough for the ocean liners of the 20th century, so a new city, **Bremenhaven**, was designed and built 85 km North.

Bicycle holidays don't include museums either, but I did visit the **Bremenhaven Emigration Museum**. Millions of people left Europe for the new land from that port. I searched for one of my grandfathers, not expecting anything – and his name came up in their database! This was a huge surprise.



I learned that the North wind sometimes comes from the South.... Bicycling South to Bremen against a very strong wind, I met a couple who invited me to ride with them and eventually, to spend the night in their house. 'But, she said, 'we have one more stop to make' – a pub, for a beer. C'est la vie.

Going into **Varal** in North Germany (**Friesland**), I didn't see any *zimmers* (B and Bs). In the zentrum, I entered a hotel just as the attendant was telling a woman cyclist there was no room at the inn. We looked at each other – and ended up sharing a hotel room, at another inn. So that evening, I shared dinner and great conversation

with a woman from Bavaria. She doesn't have an easy life - lots of people depend on her - but once a year, she takes three weeks off and goes on a long-distance bicycle ride. In the morning, she went in the direction I'd come from, and I went in the direction she'd come from.

I later learned that I hadn't seen any *zimmers* because in Friesland, they speak a version of German – and the word for *zimmer* is a word that has a few letters that looked to me like *hound* - which I thought must mean *dog*. So I'd concluded that there were no places for people to stay, but there sure were a lot of places where people could bring their dogs when they go away.

I took a ferry to **Spiekerroog Island**, one of seven German islands in the North Sea, for a day. I don't do beaches often but I stood in the Atlantic Ocean up to my knees for a couple of hours, watching moms and dads run in the waves and build sand castles with their kids.

Once, several people were talking on the path. As I rode up to them, one woman screamed something at me. I stopped and said, 'I only know English.' She laughed and explained that she'd said, 'Five euros to pass.' Later, she and her husband invited me to follow them to their home in the next town for kaffee and kuchen. That's just the kind of story you want to be able to write in your journal.

17 days, and 1483 km, and every day was so different. ###





Volcano in Iceland?  
No problem

## The Isle of Man

by *Karen Sharp*

Dave and I planned our big overseas travel for 2010 to walk in the Britain Isles. Two years ago, we'd walked in southeast and northwest Wales to explore his heritage. So this year we targeted my heritage – the Isle of Man, a small country sitting in the middle of the Irish Sea – and an additional week in Ireland to walk some of the "**Wicklow Way**".

Extensive internet search in 2008 caused us to rely on a handy trip service that provides "independent self-guided walking holidays with luggage transfer". That was a good experience so we decided to rely on them again for the first week in the Isle of Man (IOM).

Having over-extended ourselves with a little too much walking in Portugal and Spain in 2009, we targeted 15 km a day at the most, with moderate elevation gain. So this was definitely a



walking, not a hiking, trip as we wanted to take in as much of history as we could. The trip organizing service planned a coastal itinerary of about 75 km for that first week. Going around the entire island coast is a 150 km walk. We then found a farmhouse located in County Wicklow, south of Dublin, and planned another 75 km for the second week. More on that later.

Before we went, the Isle of Man was described to us as a miniature England, a small independent country (like Wales and Scotland) and just 77,000 people. Small in size, it's full of history. It was valued as a staging point by Celts, Vikings, Angles and Saxons over the years, probably Romans as well, on their way back and forth between Ireland and England. Perhaps because the land hasn't been in high demand over the last century, lots of history is still visible.

We flew from Calgary to Manchester and then to **Ronaldsway** at the south end of the island. Our first host collected us at the airport; he was not hard to find as the airport was small, with one luggage chute.

The first day we toured one ancient abbey (**Rushen Abbey**), one castle (**Castle Rushen**) and a nautical museum, and we walked 15 km along the coast.

Another day's walk took us through a stone circle (called **Meayll Hill** or The Mull) on a small hill at the southern end of the Isle of Man. It's a Megalithic burial site, thought to date from the mid-Neolithic Period to the late Bronze Age, about 3500 to 1000 B.C. And we visited

**Craigneash**, a Manx village under restoration as a IOM cultural centre. Here we saw the famous 4-horned Laughtan (Manx) sheep.



We particularly enjoyed a number of churches that were built before 1200, usually on the site of earlier churches, complete with Celtic/Nordic Stone crosses. These are used as grave markers and memorials, and some date back to the 6th century.



Karen's favorite was **Peel Castle** with its layers and layers of history – the castle has been a stronghold for at least 2,000 years, and probably much longer. Dave's favourite was **Mannanan**, an incredible museum in Peel, complete with a Viking long ship that a bunch of Norwegians in full historical garb sailed into **Peel Harbour!** The museum was opened by the king and queen of Norway to celebrate Viking history on IOM. It included "Tynwald", a thousand-year old parliament whose opening is still celebrated every July 5th as an open air ceremony.

At Peel, Karen even found out some history of her grandmother who was born on the IOM, and came to Canada as a 12-year old orphan with a 15-year old sister.



On our fourth morning on the island, our host greeted us with news that a volcano in Iceland was spewing ash, and that all flights within British Isles were grounded. We went on our walking way, assuming it would sort itself out by the next day. But two or three days later, we realized that our plans needed adjusting. For the first five days of the ash-grounding, we checked the airport plans and then went off hiking as usual, scheming various contingency plans as we walked. The morning of day six, we cancelled some flights, as well as the accommodation in Ireland, and accepted our enforced grounding. No Wicklow Hills this year!

But by this time, we knew the Isle of Man well enough to pick new destinations. And we knew the bus system well enough to pick destinations and arrange to or from travel around our walks. We could always get directions from the bus driver ("now do you want Higher Foxdale or Lower Foxdale?"). We'd then hike and explore until we'd walked back to our guest house, or until we'd walked enough to be able to catch a bus. The bus drivers were flexible and fast – Formula One drivers in training. They'd stop wherever you wanted to get off – and then get



back on schedule by flooring it in between. We often rode upstairs, in the front row, to terrify ourselves with the rally-driving trips, speeding down narrow lanes between stone fences.

We also rode working steam and electric trains that are still part of the local transportation system. To our delight, we recognized some names from the Thomas train sets of our grandsons, and realized that the Isle of Man was the inspiration for Thomas' inventor.

Despite this talk of bus and train, we



did tally 140 km spread over 11 days of walking, despite missing the Wicklow Hills. Our hikes were usually less challenging than what we'd do around Calgary, but they were interspersed with interesting history and the opportunity for a pub lunch. The sea influences all its history, with cliff top watch towers from times gone by. The chasms of cliffs eroded by the sea are rugged with many spectacular views. The weather was perfect for us - sunny, with a brisk breeze, temperatures with highs of 10 or 11, lows of 4 to 6 at night. And nary a



drop of rain!! Has to be something of a record for this part of the world.

The food was fun holiday food, with really good fish and chips, steak and kidney pies, lamb and mint pie, kippers and Manx queenies, a small and plentiful local scallop.

Accommodation was completely suitable: comfortable, fairly modest, with our own bathroom, sometimes with relaxing tubs as well as showers. We had lots more hot water than we'd had in Wales. Our longest stay was in a spacious 5th floor walk up. Despite initial trepidations with our changed trip plans, we managed that for 8 days.

All in all, we had a relaxing holiday, steeped in history, fresh air, good food, good exercise and friendly people. Ireland will have to wait for another year but our 2010 trip was most definitely a success. ###



# COMFORTABLE HIKING HOLIDAYS

*Hike an adventure. Rest in comfort.*

(866) 449-1908 • [info@letshike.com](mailto:info@letshike.com) • [www.letshike.com](http://www.letshike.com)

## CONNECT WITH US!

**Sign up for our e-newsletter "Let's Hike"** – this monthly newsletter keeps you up-to-date so that you learn about new trips immediately. Plus we include interesting articles, invite you to hiking clinics and travel nights, and let you in on our plans for the future.

**Become a "fan" on Facebook** – be a part of our community as we share travel commentaries, post photos of recent trips and chat with other hikers.

## NEW FOR 2011

**2011 will be our 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY,**  
and we have some exciting celebration plans, from new trips to new faces.

We will be adding the beautiful **AMALFI COAST** to our roster of holidays. Breathe in the scent of fresh lemons as you hike along one of the most famous stretches of Italian coastline, ending the day with a gelato in Positano. Ah, a little slice of heaven.

Of course, we will be bringing back some of our favourite holidays like Thailand, Corfu, Ireland, Iceland and Cuba just to name a few.

We have lots of surprises planned so as it says at the top of this column – **CONNECT WITH US** to learn all about the great things coming next year!

### LA DOLCE VITA

**(September 18 to October 2, 2010)**

Mouth-watering gelatos, world-famous wines, gastronomic feasts, passionate locals and some of the most picturesque hiking in the world await you on this 2-week adventure in glorious **TUSCANY**. Join us as we hike the region famous for its vineyards, olive groves and renaissance architecture.



Thailand Adventure

**We have already begun taking reservations for 2011, including:**

**Thailand: February 6-20**  
**Corfu, Greece: May 15-28**  
**Austria: July 10-22**  
**Cuba: November 13-25**