

Making Travel Easy with

I'm told I'm a lucky person being paid to tell people where to go! I'm looking forward to helping you.

October 2013

I am now back at my desk after a few weeks away leading a couple of groups walking along Scotland's West Highland Way. On the way back to OZ I did some walking and cycling in the Czech Republic while staying in a wee village called Mikulov, only an hour or so by train from Vienna.

And just to add some more time onto the trip I spent a couple of nights in Hong Kong where I did some walks on the more remote islands of Cheung Chau and Lamma.

And for those with a fear of airports, or love of a good story, read my knife story at Heathrow.



Ullapool harbour in Scotland

Early bird airfares

Now is the time to book your fares to the northern hemisphere for 2014. Many airlines are charging less than \$2000 return including tax even in high season! Ends 15 November. Get your skates on!

Royal Enfields in Bhutan

I have a 15 day tour of this tiny mountainous Himalayan Kingdom on Royal Enfield 500cc motorbikes. You will travel over 1500kms and part of the tour travels through the mountainous Indian state of Sikkim. You stay in local hotels and guesthouses. Are you up for it?

Child-free zones

Singapore Airlines' budget offshoot Scoot has become the second Asian airline to introduce a child-free zone. The airline has announced a separate "Scoot in silence" cabin behind business class with more leg room than standard economy where children under 12 are banned.



A refreshing cup of tea

Scoot's announcement follows that of rival, Asian budget carrier AirAsia X, which introduced a similar "quiet zone" on its aircraft in February where children under 12 are banned.

Glasgow Commonwealth Games

Yes they are in Scotland next year from 23 July to 3 August and you are all welcome. Why not include a walk along the West Highland Way or a cycle along the Great Glen?

Edinburgh and Stirling Castles are only about an hour away by train. Braveheart is remembered at The Wallace Monument in Stirling.

Sir William Wallace - a hero of Scotland and a true patriot, had a burning desire for peace and freedom which united the country's clans, gained the loyalty of its people, struck fear into his enemies and defied the cruel hand of an evil, warring and invading King - Edward I of England.

Antarctic Ash

A friend's daughter has been selected as 1 of only 30 people worldwide to participate in the 2041 Antarctic Youth Ambassador Programme which requires a trip to ANTARCTICA next year.

[2041](#) is a foundation that wants to inform, engage and inspire the world to protect the last wilderness, Antarctica. Each year a group of Antarctic Defenders voyage to the frozen continent to gain knowledge about the fragile ecosystem, to learn about the effects of climate change on Antarctica and to understand what we can do to protect it! She needs some help to afford the trip and is looking for likeminded individuals and business to help her protect Antarctica please go to the [website](#) to donate.



Stac Pollaidh, Scotland

Please like me on my [Facebook page](#).

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A castle in France.

This castle in Carcassonne was started in 1540 and was besieged in 1577 as part of the war between the Catholics and the Protestants. It is now a hotel and restaurant and for more details [Click here](#).



Climbing the Devil's Staircase

Christmas Markets in Europe

A Christmas market, is a street market associated with the celebration of Christmas during the four weeks of Advent. These markets originated in Germany, Austria, South Tyrol and Alsace but are now being held in many other countries. The history of Christmas markets goes back to the Late Middle Ages in the German-speaking part of Europe.

Dresden's Strietzelmarkt was first held in 1434. The Christmas markets of Bautzen (first held in 1384), Frankfurt (first mentioned in 1393) and Munich (1310) were even older. The Vienna "December market" was a kind of forerunner of the Christmas market and dates back to 1294.



Above Inveroran

Remember

You can book hotels and cars on my website at competitive rates. You can also take out insurance cover. Please go to my [website](#).

A380 landing at San Francisco

How good is this? Watch, from inside the cockpit, a Lufthansa Airbus A380 land at San Francisco airport. Only nobs to turn re speed, altitude etc!! Once you have [clicked here](#) then click on full screen icon bottom right.

Walk along Hadrian's Wall

The Hadrian's Wall Path is a long distance footpath in the north of England, which became the 15th National Trail in 2003. It runs for 135 km (84 mi), from Wallsend on the east coast of England to Bowness-on-Solway on the west coast.^[1] For most of its length it is close to the remains of Hadrian's Wall, the defensive wall built by the Romans on the northern border of their empire. This is now recognised as a World Heritage Site.



Tired but happy

Though muddy in places, the walking is relatively easy, as the highest point on the path is only 345 m (1130 ft) high and for much of its length the path is more or less flat. Most of the Wall runs through remote countryside but there are sections that pass through the cities and suburbs of Newcastle and Carlisle.

The path is well signposted. Though there are villages and farms near to the path, there are not many places to buy food and drink, especially in the middle sections.

The section between Chollerford and Walton is the highest and wildest part of the path; it is also where the Wall is most visible, and includes several important Roman forts.

The West Highland Way

The 154Km (96miles) route starts at Milngavie and passes through Mugdock Country Park, following the shores of Loch Lomond, passing below Ben Lomond and on through Glen Falloch and Strathfillan. You then cross the Rannoch Moor and walk below Buachaille Etive Mor to the head of Glencoe. You then climb the Devil's Staircase, descending to sea level to cross the River Leven at the head of Loch Leven before entering Lairigmor and Glen Nevis before finishing at Gordon Square in Fort William.



Happy walkers

The Rockies by rail

Rocky Mountaineer offers over 65 Canadian vacation packages and four unique rail routes - three train journeys through British Columbia and Alberta to Banff, Lake Louise, Jasper and Calgary, and one train excursion from Vancouver to Whistler. This world-renowned, luxurious train travels by daylight through the wild beauty of Canada's West and is the best way to experience the majestic Canadian Rockies. In 2013, Rocky Mountaineer introduced Coastal Passage, a new route connecting Seattle to the Canadian Rockies that can be added on to any two-day or more rail journey.

And in the end...

Thanks again for all your support. If you do not wish to receive my newsletters please write the words "Please take me off your newsletter list" in the subject line of an email.

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The Knife

I am not a knife person and I never carry knives anywhere. I travel frequently and never carry liquids or wear metal belts or have anything on me which might cause problems with security at airports. But I was recently caught with a knife in my hand luggage at one of the busiest and most security conscious airports in the world, Heathrow in London.

Two hours earlier we had gone through security at Edinburgh airport with not a problem so I wasn't worried at all when my bag was taken to one side and I was asked to follow it. At the same time my girlfriend was also taken to one side. It didn't look too good though. Her mistake was a tube of toothpaste and an asthma inhaler.



Beinn Dorain on the West Highland Way

My rucksack was thoroughly searched and the first thing brought out from the top pocket was a knife!! There was nothing else. Aaargh!! I think my heart missed a beat or two. My brother in Scotland had given it to me to take to my other brother, Graeme, in Vienna. As I am not a knife man, I had thrown it into my luggage a few days before flying and had forgotten all about it.

But so what!? I assumed they would just take it from me as they do all 'sharps' caught by security at most airports. I didn't think it would be an issue. But how naïve of me! My passport and boarding pass were taken and I was told either a member of Customs would come to me or the Police. Why the police I wondered? I am not a criminal!! Just

keep the knife and I can go on my way.

Graeme, my brother in Vienna, had played his bagpipes at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in August and this knife was part of his gear. It was not a *Sgian Dubh* however, which is the dress knife we Scots wear in our socks when dressed in our kilts. In fact I wasn't really sure what it was used for but my story seemed to hold with the head of security. It was explained to me that if it was a stabbing knife or a knife with a lock I would have been in court the next morning. Suddenly I felt I could be in a wee bit of bother.



One of my brothers

I texted Graeme and he texted back to say it was a sentimental knife. I texted back that facing court was more of a problem than sentimentality. He came back to me saying that it could be posted as can happen at a few other airports. Let's wait and see I said.

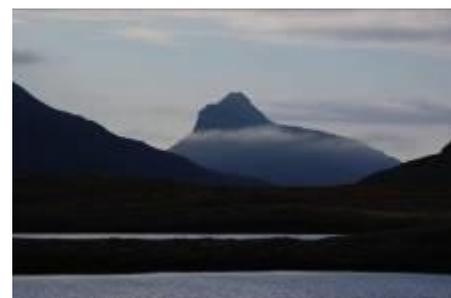


Suilven in north west Scotland

And so I waited and waited. My onward flight to Vienna was fortunately delayed so I wasn't too stressed with the possibility of missing my flight. Meanwhile Melinda checked in for her flight back to Melbourne. I wasn't really worried about any consequences. I might

miss my flight, I may have to pay another fare or I might go to court all of which I could deal with. But I was annoyed and angry with myself for forgetting about the knife and for losing something that was important to someone else.

And then 3 coppers turned up. I couldn't believe it needed three of them to deal with this situation. I still wasn't that worried as I explained to them why I had the knife. I was in luck!! The copper in charge was Scottish and I gave him my Tattoo story and he was impressed. Like me he was surprised that they were called out when Security could have dealt with it themselves. Could he post it to Vienna for me? Or could a friend pick it up in a couple of days and collect it? Or could Melinda's London living sister pick it up? He thought about it but it wasn't worth his job so he was keeping it and I was on my way.



Stac Pollaidh in the evening

So make sure you double check what is in your cabin luggage before going through security at any airport. As I travel a lot, I am more than happy to spend longer clearing security for a safer flight as we are only as safe as the security personal at every airport. But I did feel that someone up north in Edinburgh was going to be in terrible trouble for letting me board a flight with this dangerous payload! Most of us are honest citizens but Security doesn't know who is and who isn't. It is worth a quick scan of your hand luggage before going to the airport.

Happy flying!!