

The food was absolutely excellent. The chefs at the Great House, Lavenham, The Crown Inn, Bildeston and The Talbooth, Dedham excelled themselves. Chris Lee at The Crown made a pea and ham soup, which was as much a revelation to me as, was Heston Blumenthal's black olive and icing sugar paste, which he adds to a strawberry trifle. Chris had piled a small decorative tower of peas, ham, thyme and pastry in the middle of the bowl and finished it with a whirl of cream. This made us laugh, as we were sure we had ordered pea soup but we could not see where the soup was and wondered if the cream was the soup part. But in the giggles, jugs of beautiful *velouté* soup arrived which were then carefully poured into the bowls and ... hey presto! It was a wonderful moment of a chef's delight showing us just what he is up to. Do not hesitate to go to the Crown Inn at Bildeston if ever in Suffolk and of course for that matter do not forget the Great House at Lavenham either.

The service in Suffolk was first rate too. I think it is probably the best service out of all the countries we work in. They were all efficient, charming and helpful. It was pure professionalism at its best. Of course for me, having a chance to drink a classic English beer every lunch after a three-hour walk in beautiful scenery with willows aslant the brook and aspens dear rustling in the breeze was a sheer delight also. Do not forget that the walking is beautifully flat and therefore our gentlest walking by far.

We will be proposing two walks next year the first at the end of April for the bluebells and the second in the first week of July. We would be absolutely delighted to have another chance of to entertain in England so please do think of this! One tricky part about England is they are prickly about block bookings so we would appreciate you contact Outdoor Travel for early bookings for this to ensure room availability. Dates: 25th April – 2nd May and 26th June – 4th July.

And what else ... yes the very popular Quercy Perigord week is now on the 2009 agenda as Francis and Helen Passebon are back in action having sold the charming Moulin de Labique. This week is now called the Dordogne Quercy week as we move up to the Dordogne to fit in their beautiful Chateau Baudry, which boasts a fire in every bedroom! For all those who remember Helene's fabulous cooking this is a chance to sample her exquisite mixes of sugar and spice and everything nice again. It is also nice to be in the Dordogne for a few days and we can arrange any special visits to gardens or caves. A lot more wine to be consumed next year as we are in the heart of the wine country here.



We have space for two more couples on our tours in Umbria (6th - 13th September 2008) and the French Cooking week (4th - 11th October 2008) in the Lot Valley. The Walking Party's gentle rambles in Italy are moderate but far from strenuous. Pack animals carry the food, with lavish picnics and plenty of refreshments. Overnight stays are in small, charming hotel/restaurants, all with swimming pools and an emphasis on the very finest regional cuisine. Particular care is taken with choosing walking trails: routes are neither too steep nor too arduous, threading through regions of spectacular beauty not yet flooded with tourists

Outdoor Travel Walking Party dates for 2009 – these are unique small group tours - early bookings are essential:

FRANCE - TRUFFLE HOP: 7th - 11th 14th - 18th and 21st - 25th February 2009

SPAIN - CATALUNYA HOP: 27th Feb - 2nd March 2009

FRANCE - BASQUE PYRENEES WEEK: 15th - 22nd April and 29th September - 6th October 2009

ENGLAND - SUFFOLK WEEK: 25th April - 2nd May and 27th June - 4th July 2009

FRANCE - DORDOGNE/QUERCY: 3rd - 10th 24th - 31st May and 12th - 19th 2009

FRANCE - HAUT QUERCY: 10th - 17th May and 17th - 24th May and 5th - 12th and 19th - 26th September 2009

ITALY - UMBRIA WEEK: 7th - 14th and 14th - 21st June 2009

FRANCE - COOKING WEEK: 31st October - 7th November 2009

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

SHERPA WALKING ON THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA

Bob, bob, bobbing along in Madeira by David Holmes

Robert, Robert and Robert were just 3 of the adventurous group of 8 who recently joined me on the walking trip to the spectacular mountains and tranquil levadas of Madeira. To complete this Sherpa itinerary sure footedness, a head for heights and a reasonable level of fitness is definitely the order of the day.

To test my walking companions we headed for the rugged and near vertical northern coast just a few kilometers from our first base of Machicco. Experimenting with a cross-country route out of the town proved interesting and a little steep but was rewarded by good views and a pleasant stroll down a quiet road to join our first levada. The levadas are a network of irrigation channels, with paths running alongside, that move water from the wetter north to the southern side of the island. Easy walking along the levada was followed by a moderate ascent to an airy coastal path that contours some 300m above the breaking Atlantic rollers. The coastline is indeed spectacular and the path has just one or two tricky sections before reaching the pretty coastal village of Port Da Cruz where one can stop for a long late lunch.

Day 3 dawned a little cloudy but we were whisked away to the town of Monte, perched above the capital Funchal. Admittedly the relaxed timetable for the day allowed us to rub shoulders with the non-walkers on the island, visit a tropical garden and even ride the famous wicker sleds down the hill before we returned to the serious business of walking on our levada trail to Camacha. It wasn't all level sailing as we cut across a steep sided valley and ascended to a higher levada. The day ended in sleepy Santo da Serra where you can pass the time in a local café watching the world go by, make use of the hotel pool and gardens or wander to the 27 hole championship golf course for a drink in the club house.

Day 4 is one perhaps best forgotten as the tried and tested levada walk that has served our clients for many years is being spoilt by ongoing engineering work. It was 'interesting' to see how large pipes are buried along the route of an old levada but the mud and disruption was not conducive to an enjoyable end to the day. I had to find time later in the week to investigate an alternative, and even if I say so myself, I have found a much better route for future clients.

From Santo da Serra we set out on day 5 for an altogether different levada experience. The Levada da Serra flows from high in the mountains, clinging to the steep sides of the valleys with some narrow paths and long vertiginous drops. We had proceeded carefully but all stood in utter disbelief as a very large group (40+) of ill-equipped and not so fit looking 'tourists' were lead in the opposite direction. (I was pleased to hear mumbles from the group that they were glad that they were on a Sherpa holiday.) Jurassic cloud forests, a few tunnels, more big drops and views to the coast far below before we arrived at Ribeiro Frio (Cold River) at an altitude of 950m. There is time whist waiting for our taxi pick up for a well-deserved drink after this exhilarating walk.

Day 6 is a cracking route and for many will prove the highlight of the week. It does however demand reasonable weather. Despite a far from ideal forecast I was relieved to wake to a clear sky over the mountains and low cloud hugging the coast, it was going to be a good day. The taxi to start the day took us high into the mountains leaving just an hour of ascent to reach the very top of the island at the summit of Pico Riuvo (1860m). It was windy but that is not surprising since we were standing at over 6000ft some 500 miles into the Atlantic! Being out of season meant that we had the 'decking' of the summit viewpoints to ourselves. This summit and the sweeping views are just the start of a fantastic route along the sharp mountain ridge in the centre of the island. This is the wild and most dramatic scenery of the tour and a route not to be missed. Recent path maintenance has made the walk easier to follow, quicker and safer with much of the route paved. Good steps and protection on the steepest slopes have also been constructed to remove any potentially dangerous places. Some weary legs and beaming faces made it to the café at the end of a long steep descent before walking down the road to our remote mountain hotel at Encumeada.

Sadly on Day 7 our last walk but it was by no means an anticlimax. Another day amongst the plunging mountain slopes with airy paths and birds eye views down into the valleys. With more than a little ascent and descent under our belts and the hotel becoming just a speck in the distance we started to descend (rather testing on the knees) to the village of Corticeiras from where somewhat reluctantly we took a bus ride to the busy streets of Funchal. The city seemed rather an alien world when compared to the remote mountains, quiet villages and peaceful Levadas of the preceding week. I pitied the thousands that stay in Funchal and only glimpse a mere fraction of the magnificent variety of landscapes that Madeira has to offer.

I have not mentioned the wonderful exotic flora, the comfortable hotels and friendly people, all of which contribute to the enjoyment of the holiday. The whole experience really did exceed my expectations and I

believe those of the group. Mick a veteran of 18 previous Sherpa trips rated day 6 amongst the best day walks he had ever done and Rosemary who was on her first walking holiday was planning the next after just one day. This trip is indeed a fine collection of routes at a moderate grade with a good mix of mountain, coastal and levada walking that can be enjoyed by anyone as long as vertigo is not a problem and navigation skills are reasonable for the days in the high mountains.

EXTRA DEPARTURE: Madeira is a popular winter sun destination especially from October to April. It is not in the current brochure but self-guided walks are available through Outdoor Travel all year round. Dave travelled to Madeira during March.

If you want to join an **escorted walking holiday to Madeira** a NEW departure has been scheduled for 8th November 2008. This is a good tour for single travellers as the single supplement is reasonable. There are low cost flights to Funchal on Madeira with Easyjet from the UK.

Early bookings for 2009 are welcome & encouraged.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

HOTEL BARGE CRUISE 2 FOR 1 OFFER – SAVE UP TO \$2990 PER CABIN

October is a wonderful time to visit Europe with its autumn colours, harvest festivals & Oktoberfest – particularly in Alsace in France or along the Rhine & Moselle Rivers in Germany. A cruise in Europe is high on the list of ‘must do’ relaxing holiday ideas – reclining in comfort as spectacular scenery passes by, sipping local wine or coffee in the villages squares, discovering arts and crafts, cultural centres and places of great history, chatting idly to your travel companions with the prospect of a gourmet dinner to round off the evening.

Outdoor Travel are offering two for the price of one on share-twin cabins for their fully inclusive 7-day cruises with guided sightseeing by coach, on-board chef & gourmet meals with wine from as little as \$2735 in the low season* for two people (save \$2735) on the following cruises in 2008:

04th October – **Libellule** in Burgundy (4-cabins available)

11th October – **Anacoluthe** in Paris & Picardy (18-cabins available)

18th October – **Lorraine** in Alsace (8-cabins available) or **Charlemagne** on the Rhine & Moselle in Germany (6-cabins available)

25th October – **Anacoluthe** (8), **Libellule** (1-cabin available), **Litote** (10), **Lorraine** (4), **Charlemagne** (14)

* Low season is from 25th October 2008. High season rates start at \$2955 for Libellule, \$2980 for Lorraine & \$2990 for Anacoluthe.

BIKE & BARGE & ISLAND HOPPING CRUISES

FRANCE, BELGIUM, HOLLAND, GERMANY, GREECE, CROATIA, TURKEY

Cruises combines two popular ways to explore Europe (cycling & river cruising), allowing partners of different abilities & interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR enthusiasts), unpack once & come ‘home’ each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Demand is very high with these barges but **we do also have some very special discounted offers for 2008**. Cruises are 8-days / 7-nights unless specified otherwise:

FRANCE/BELGIUM Paris – Bruges 17 Oct 2-week tour at \$2750 (**LAST CABIN AVAILABLE**)

FRANCE/LUXEMBOURG/GERMANY - 6 Sep River Moselle & Saar at \$1250 (**DISCOUNT RATE**)

HOLLAND 31 Aug Northern Holland at \$1660
30 Aug & 13 Sep Highlights of Holland from Amsterdam at \$1380

HOLLAND/BELGIUM 14 Sep, 11 Oct Bruges to Amsterdam at \$1650

GERMANY 23 Aug Ludwigburg to Frankfurt (limited space) at \$1650
13 Sep River Saar & Moselle (very limited spaces) at \$1250
18 Oct River Moselle – Saarbrücken to Koblenz at \$1280 (**DISCOUNT RATE**)

HOLLAND/GERMANY 18 Oct Rhine River repositioning cruise Koblenz to Amsterdam at \$1460

GREECE Cyclades, Ionian Islands and Aegean Islands to Oct from \$1930 for 8-days / 7-nights
20 Sep Greek Aegean North,
27 Sep Cyclades
18 Oct Greek Aegean South
5, Oct Ionian Islands
11 Oct Aegean Middle & Greek Aegean with ending in Bodrum

CROATIA Dalmatian Coast from \$1595 per person for 8-days / 7-nights
14, 28 Sep & 5, 12, 18, 25 Oct Kvarner Bay
14 Sep Dubrovnik
21 Sep Montenegro
4, 18 Oct Southern Dalmatia
28 Sep Istria
11 Oct National Park Dalmatia
11 Oct From Trogir to Dubrovnik

TURKEY Selected weekly departures Lycian Coast to October \$1930
4 Oct Turkey South Coast

2009 FRANCE/BELGIUM – 2-week tour - extra departures on a second boat at \$3350 – bookings now open:
Bruges – Paris 30 Aug – 13 Sep 2009
Paris – Bruges 13 Sep – 27 Sep 2009

2009 ITALY Venice & Po – weekly from March to October from \$1650 – expressions of interest

CROWN BLUE LINE / LE BOAT

2008 discounts & 2009 early booking offers

With our extensive fleet of over 600 self-drive boats in over 40 bases we are able to offer a host of special holiday ideas in destinations in France, Holland, Italy, Germany, Ireland, Scotland & England. Regular discounts of up to 25% off the hire price are offered each month for selected boats in the *Le Boat* fleet - call today for your last-minute reservations for 2008 & details of our August offers:

20% discount off all destinations on all departures on the following boats - Cirrus (2+2-berth), Corvette (4-berth), Rialto 1140FB (4-berth), Continentale (6-berth), Classique (8-berth).

For early bookings for 2009 we are now offering the 2008 rates less 10% for all new reservations confirmed before 31st August 2008:

HORSE RIDING IN CHIANTI

Rendolo riding school in Italy – places still available in 2008

Explore the Tuscan countryside and heart of the Chianti at the rustic Rendolo Riding Centre, founded in 1970 by a delightful English lady, Jenny Bawtree, her son Nicholas & her Italian companion Pietro. The farmhouse and stables are on the eastern slopes of the Chianti Mountains. Before it lies the broad valley of the Arno and beyond, the long ridge of the Pratomagno, with its highest point of 1,591 meters. On the other side lies the Casentino Valley, rich in castles and Romanesque churches. Behind Rendola stretches the range of Chianti Mountains with their highest point of 890 meters.

This combination of riding and driving takes you into the hills of Chianti, the unspoiled area between Florence and Siena. The region is not only famous for its red wine but also for the beauty of its wooded hills, medieval castles, churches and abbeys, Renaissance villas and fortified villages. Riders with an appreciation for history will marvel at the landscape around them, knowing it was once enjoyed in centuries past by Dante and Boccaccio, Machiavelli and Leonardo da Vinci. During the ride, there are frequent opportunities to meet the friendly and hospitable Tuscan people, as well as sample the varied wonders of Tuscan cooking complimented with Chianti wine. The schedule also allows for a day of sightseeing in the historic town of Siena.

Places still available 13 – 20 September or 11 – 18 and 18 – 25 October at \$2350 per person with accommodation most meals and guided horse riding.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

YES, WE CAN DO YOUR AIRTICKETS TOO

Outdoor Travel can help with all your travel needs



"Being a travel agent is a great journey in itself, with client wishes in mind working out the best possible way making their experience a very exciting and memorable one." "I love to look after all your travel arrangements, particularly flight reservations and airline tickets. If you're not certain how to get there or what the best options are for you, don't worry, I will go on the planning journey with you and find a way that suits you best."

If you are looking for the best airfares to your chosen destinations then with access to the latest information and up to the minute fare deals through our Smartfares Computer Reservations System, click-on to [Outdoor Travel fares](http://www.outdoortravel.com.au) for an up to date quote on your travel plans - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or see our website <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>

Many of our clients are already planning for 2009 and demand for flights to Europe is already high - contact Yvette about your plans or earlybird bookings call (03) 57501 441 or email fares@outdoortravel.com.au

WALKS IN AUSTRALIA

Places still available on these small group guided walks:

- Australia's Coast to Coast - 27th November - 3 days
- Kangaroo Island Walking - 11th Oct, 8th Nov, 6th December - 5 days
- Yurrebilla Trail - 3rd October, 17th October, 7th November - 3 days
- Great South West Walk & Glenelg River - 11th November - 8 days
- Great Ocean Road Walk - 4th Oct, 23rd Nov, 7th Dec - 5 days
- Best of the Grampians - 18th Oct, 24th Oct, 29th Nov, 13th Dec - 6 days

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT OUR HOLIDAYS

Sherpa walking in Meiringen, Switzerland – *"We are back and had a wonderful time, thanks for organising us"*
Sue

Bike & Barge in Belgium & Holland – *"I have been meaning to do this for some time now, but have only just now got around to it. I wanted to say what a fantastic trip we had on the Bike Barge Tour earlier this year. It turned out to be a fantastic trip & well worth the money. The facilities were outstanding and way better than anything I had imagined. The professionalism of the Captain, Crew & Tour Guides was first class. Every evening meal was a culinary delight & always of a high standard that you would find only in the better restaurants around many cities of the world."*

Thanks once again for firstly advertising the trip & secondly for the effort in organising the trip for us. I would readily recommend it to anyone (despite the snow on the first day of our ride). We have continued riding periodically since our return & this has been of great benefit to our general fitness level. Cheers Andy.

“Thanking you very much for arranging the Milford Trek for Mark and Des in April. They had a wonderful time and couldn’t believe how well organised the trek was. The weather was very kind to them and they left with wonderful memories.” Dallas

Picture taken in the Somme area in France this summer – Peronne will feature in our new 2009 Bruges to Paris Bike & Barge cruises:



Remember Outdoor Travel offers regular guided ANZAC tours in France. Reservations are now being accepted for ANZAC tours in France including the ANZAC Day celebrations at Villers-Bretonneux in April 2009 – call 1800 331 582 or email info@outdoortravel.com.au for details.

WHERE ON EARTH IS.....?

Internet map & route finders

Looking for a map to get you from A to B then you now have 4 great Internet choices:

- 1) Click-on to our website & the Michelin Guide link on our Active Europe page <http://www.AlltheWeb.com>
- 2) Go to the <http://www.mappy.com/> website for a host of easy to read options
- 3) Go to <http://www.googleearth.com/> for a graphic view of the world we visit walking or cycling
- 4) Want help in finding you way around Australia – <http://www.travelmate.com.au/> for help from Travel Mate Mapmaker to generate a map of your proposed trip along with driving directions.

SMART TRAVELLER – Government travel advisories - all countries see: <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au>

Call our travel experts & talk to us about our personal recollections and experience – we regularly visit the areas we offer – call Martyn, Lucie, Yvette or Sue:

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ORDER YOUR NEW TRAVEL BROCHURES FOR 2008

Please tick below & email, fax or post your brochure request & we will send the new brochures to you:

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- () SHERPA CYCLING HOLIDAYS - Self-guided France, Italy, Spain, the UK, Ireland & most places in Europe
- () FRANCE WALKING HOLIDAYS - Small Group Guided Walking with a donkey to carry your lunch in the Lot Valley & in Tuscany, cooking, truffles & wine tours also available
- () CAMINO DE SANTIAGO – Walking or cycling the Way of St James (France or Spain)
- () WALKING SAFARI COMPANY - Small group themed walking holidays in France or Spain – with a donkey
- () ONE-HOTEL GUIDED WALKING HOLIDAYS – in (please specify destination)
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- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au/>
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CARBON & THE HOLIDAY & WORK ENVIRONMENT

What we can do to make a difference?

With the release of reports into the global impact to the environment by carbon emissions & the use of cars, planes & of power generation there have been some creative new information sites that can give you some ideas about how you can look at a personal contribution to the issue of global warming.



Offsets made simple - '[Carbon Offsetting Explained](http://www.climatecare.org)' (website homepage – <http://www.climatecare.org>)

PC Power Consumption, Does it Really Matter?

More than **30 billion kilowatt-hours of energy** are wasted because many of us simply forget to shut down our computers when we're not using them. If we could just improve the efficiency of how we use our PCs, the savings in energy costs would be over \$3 billion dollars! The CO2 emissions from just 15 computers are equivalent in energy terms to the gas consumption used by one car.

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Our goal is to introduce 100,000,000 PC users into the Local Cooling community. If just 100 million of us optimise the efficiency of our computers' energy consumption, we could prevent over 300 billion kg of CO2 gas emissions, equivalent to over 1.8 billion gallons of oil, in just the first year alone. [Take Part in Our Project to Spread the Word about LocalCooling](#)



See: <http://www.localcooling.com/facts/> & please spread the word



A Victorian based solution - <http://www.treesmart.com.au>

Each year, the average Australian vehicle emits about 4.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide - the major Greenhouse Gas. While various attempts are being made in the transport sector to reduce vehicle use and emissions, through programs such as [TravelSmart](#), an alternative way of reducing Greenhouse Gases in the atmosphere is to remove them after they have been emitted via carbon sequestration in trees.

The **TreeSmart** program aims to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by planting, maintaining and harvesting plantation eucalypt trees. The **TreeSmart** program is different to some other carbon sequestration programs that plant trees and leave them un-maintained as a perpetual forest.

The **TreeSmart** program will operate by selling subscriptions to Australian travellers ([motorists](#), [road freight operators](#), [public transport travellers](#), [air travellers](#), [conference attendees](#)) to enable the CO2 emissions from their travel to be absorbed (sequestered) in eucalypt trees grown for eventual harvesting and replanting.

OUTDOOR TRAVEL Pty Ltd do not specifically endorse any of these options & do not vouch for their effectiveness or credibility but we believe this information will help make an informed decision