

steep ground where I was hopeful that I could circle round any guarded flock. Eventually I reached terrain which was manifestly sheep free and really rather nice. So I sat down and enjoyed the view – an immense void of the Arc valley in brilliant autumn sunshine, and pretended that all was well with the world. But it wasn't and I was still experiencing the fear of being held captive between fierce dogs and impossibly steep hillside....so much for the Parc National de la Vanoise!

The leaflet explaining the role of the white guard dogs was published by the Ministry of Agriculture. The extensive literature made available to visiting walkers makes no mention of them. In a region where walking, both long and local distances is actively encouraged, it is clearly unreasonable for these guard dogs to be allowed to behave in the way they do. On my return I should have written to an MEP about the matter, but I never got round to it, partly because I believe the French farming lobby is immensely powerful. Perhaps I am wrong to assume that other walkers have been inconvenienced by the practice and perhaps no one has seriously suffered on the hillsides. I am, however, quite clear about my own solution to the problem they present. I cannot imagine ever returning to walk in the region where these dogs prevail, which is a pity as the Haute Maurienne is magnificent.

In Praise of Windfarms

Editor