



Fun and games with your dog!

Okay, then: enough of (in)justice, problems and trouble, and on to pleasant pastimes that you can do with your dog.

ON TOUR

5:30am. It's the start of a warm, summer's day. I roll out of my sleeping bag into the dew-soaked grass: the first rays of sunlight are glinting on the mountain lake. My German Shepherd companion looks at me expectantly, waiting impatiently for me to prepare

my breakfast so that he can pinch the sliced sausage off my bread whilst I am looking for the jam in my rucksack. I use the seat of my wheelchair as a worktop for my morning wash routine. The tea is bubbling in the kettle on the camping stove. A harmonious start to a perfect day ...

Many dog owners – whether or not disabled – restrict themselves to short walks or days out. But when I was considering a dog of my own, I was particularly interested in the idea



Another beautiful morning on tour.



Your canine companion should not steal food. Although Ferro's tummy is rumbling, he does not help himself, but reminds me, by pointing his nose at the cheese sandwich, that I should please not forget about him ...

Hand cycle with touring luggage: all that's necessary for seven days of freedom in the great outdoors.



of having a constant companion for my tours through the countryside: equipped with a bivouac sack and a small amount of carefully chosen,

high-quality kit, you can experience absolute freedom for a few days. This type of holiday is just as enjoyable for a dog as it is for a human nature-



On tour without a tent. This is a wheelchair compatible camping spot, and the camouflage allows us to merge well with the surroundings (and above, right).



On tour in the pouring rain; hot beverages are crucial for keeping out the cold.



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Important points to remember when you are on a trip: lots of breaks; lots of sleep ...

... and, as your dog will feel exactly the same, there will always be competition for who gets to lie in the most comfortable spot!





A perfect spot for an evening swim!

lover, as your dog sleeps, eats and swims in the great outdoors, just as you do.

Breakfast with a cup of tea is later followed by a simple lunch cooked on the camping stove. The early afternoon can be snoozed away lying next to your dog. In late afternoon, you can move on a bit, then spend the evening playing on the shores of a lake; maybe take a swim. A light supper next, and, because it's so lovely there, you decide to stay the night. Holidaying in this carefree way always brings home to me just how much is possible, in spite of poor health, a spinal cord injury, legislation that is hostile to animals, and restrictions wherever you look.

Get close to nature and take the time to look at things outdoors in detail, all the better to appreciate its amazing simplicity.

WHEELCHAIRS, DOGS AND COMPETITIONS

Restricted mobility stands in the way of becoming involved in strictly regimented dog activities such as agility, obedience, and scenting trials, which is why you'd be better off finding other things to do rather than try and force the organisers of these events to take account of your needs in order that you may participate.

The wheelchair/scooter user is completely excluded from most organized canine activities. At a dog show, you may be able to get your dog into the right position, but you will never be able to show him competitively. Any testing of training of protection or tracking dogs assumes a high level of owner mobility, which the wheelchair user is just never going to achieve. You may be offered a special role in