

The roads less travelled



Fotos: Fáilte Ireland; John Heaghey

The west of Ireland is a cyclist's dream: the lovely lakes and mountains of the Connemara region in Galway



Es grünt so grün, wo Irlands Blumen blühen. So könnte man die grüne Insel beschreiben. **JULIAN EARWAKER** (rechts) hat sich aufs Rad geschwungen, um den Blumen, den Schafen, den Hunden, und nicht zu vergessen den Menschen so nahe wie möglich zu sein. Hier seine Eindrücke von der irischen Westküste.



The dogs of Inishmaan have a game they like to play. I've already seen the black-and-white sheepdog lying outside the house near the church, although it's pretending not to see me. I stand up on my bike and push hard on the pedals. The dog jumps to its feet and runs after me, barking, as I race along the road.

I stop at the top of the hill, breathing hard. The sun shimmers across Galway Bay and the Irish mainland. Stone walls draw lines across the island. More farm dogs bark in the distance, preparing themselves, no doubt, for

the next round of “chase the cyclist”. If one of them caught up with me, it'd probably expect a pat on the head.

Cycling is the perfect way to explore the landscapes of the west of Ireland. The Aran Islands (see *Spotlight* 8/07) are located close to the mainland city of Galway. Inishmaan, the “middle island”, just four kilometres long and two and a half kilometres wide, is an ancient place. You sense it before you step off the ferry, before you see the 4,000-year-old stone fort high on the hill. It's something that echoes from the rocks themselves.

ancient ['eɪnʃənt]	uralt
bark [bɑ:k]	bellen
chase [tʃeɪs]	verfolgen
ferry ['feri]	Fähre
fort [fɔ:t]	Festung
Galway ['gɔ:lweɪ]	
mainland ['meɪnlənd]	Festland
sheepdog ['ʃi:pɒdɒg]	Hütehund; hier: Border Collie

