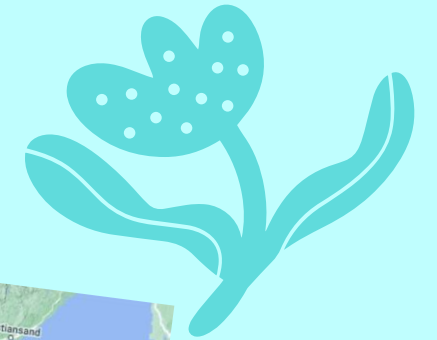


FROM THE RHINS TO THE RHINE

Cycling connections on the Kirkpatrick C2C to EuroVelo Route 15...



THE 'WHERE'- PLACE BASED RESEARCH



The Rhins of Galloway to the River Rhine

- The Rhins of Galloway are a peninsula in Dumfries and Galloway, at the very southwest of Scotland.
- It is the western start (or finish) point of the recently developed [Kirkpatrick C2C](#) (or Coast to Coast) long distance cycle route.
- Here sits the town of Stranraer, which is connected by road and train to Glasgow, and has key ferry links to Ireland.
- The eastern end of the Kirkpatrick C2C is at the small town of Eyemouth in the Borders. It is connected to Edinburgh and the east coast of England by road and train.
- The city of Newcastle in the North of England, not far from Eyemouth, offers access via a passenger ferry connection to near Amsterdam in the Netherlands.
- This is in proximity, via regional cycle routes and train connections, to the [Rhine Route, or EuroVelo 15](#) – one of the most popular and accessible routes in the EuroVelo network of long-distance cycle routes that criss-cross Europe.

Explore the EuroVelo network of long-distance cycle routes <https://en.eurovelo.com>



'OUR WHYS'

Why are we interested in the Rhins of Galloway, and the South of Scotland?

Following up on the UCI 2023 World Cycling Championships legacy:

- Activities during the World Championships happened in South of Scotland and Glasgow.
- The UCI 'Bike City/Region' label was awarded to Glasgow in 2019, and the South of Scotland in 2023.
- Links Strathclyde researchers and the UCI Cycling for All Commission have been developing since 2022.
- The Kirkpatrick C2C was launched with the 2023 Championships but we wondered what has happened since?
- Is there a difference in legacy of the UCI event in the Borders compared to Dumfries and Galloway? Why might this be?

Research interests: We are a multi-discipline group connected across different departments at the University of Strathclyde, linked by our passion and interest in place, wellbeing, communities and sustainability. South of Scotland, and long-distance cycling, seems to a place and subject where these can come together!

Personal reasons: One of the researchers, Dr. James Bonner, has been visiting the region since he was 'knee-high to a grasshopper' (or the height of the railings at the village of Portpatrick). With personal connections to the area, this is a project he was passionate about developing.



And why link to the Rhine route?

Reaching out to Europe for research, and practical reasons, to connect to the Rhine route:

- As academics who have lost European funding and collaborations long-distance Brexit, we want to look outward to Europe and re-establish those links.
- We want to communicate in person that Scotland (UK) is eligible for Horizon Europe funding again!
- The Rhine route is an example of how a long-distance cycle route can be integrated and embedded in a place.
- There are transport connections, particularly by ferry, between the Kirkpatrick C2C and the Rhine route that link them up.

A thought... Can this project be a stimulus for proposing new, or reinstating old, passenger ferry links from Scotland to Scandinavia and continental Europe? While also connecting these to long distance cycle routes...



WORKSHOP APPROACH

Setting a plan- 3 workshops, home and away...

Imaging personal visions of what cycling as regeneration means to you

We'll open our workshop by sharing, from our very different perspectives, images of our personal visions of what cycling as regeneration means to each of us, for people, planet, place and more.

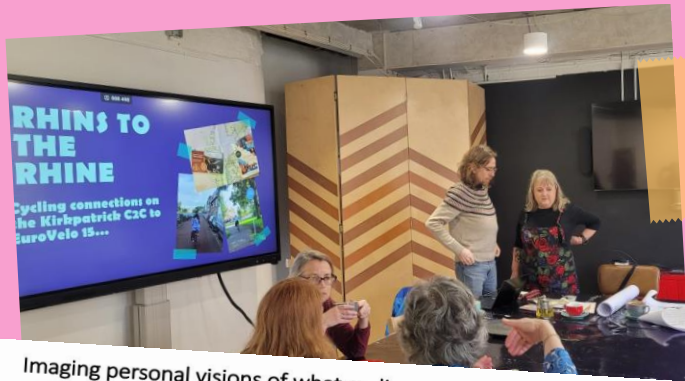
We invite you to create, locate, or curate 3 images that encapsulate how you think, feel and experience cycling as regeneration

You might like to relate this to the Kirkpatrick C2C route, but a wider perspective is fine too. Personal and professional insights carry equal importance here, and there are no wrong answers, just interesting insights to share

Drawings, photos, paintings...any form of image is very welcome. It's really hard to avoid using any text, but we've found imaging to be a really helpful and open way to start sharing visions and understandings

We'll also invite you to spend 5 minutes explaining your images to a small group, so you might want to make yourself some notes to bring along too

Can you please bring your images along with you, in printed form? Any size is fine. Feel free to use the template on the next page to frame your images, but freeform is fine too.



From Spring 2024 we planned to undertake 3 workshops:

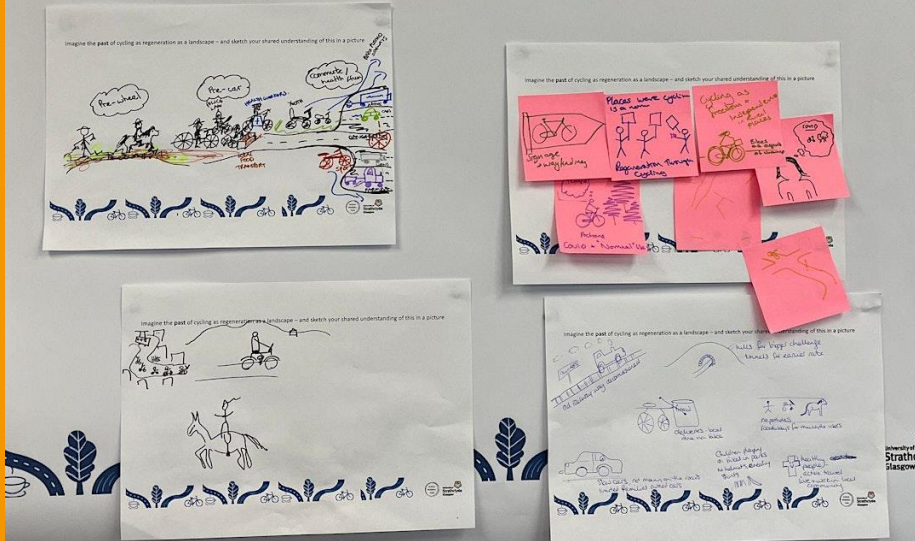
- Workshop 1: An initial participative workshop in the South of Scotland, bringing together a variety of interested local organisations. This would use of a variety of tools, frameworks and collective workings for creative agenda setting.
- Workshop 2: A 'mobile workshop' in which some of the team would travel, by bike, ferry and train, to the Netherlands to meet with a variety of individuals, groups and attend events to learn about cycling in the region. We would cycle part of the Rhine Route, and locations nearby, gathering notes, multimedia and other information about our experiences and learning from being in the place.
- Workshop3: A follow up participative workshop in the South of Scotland to reflect on the discussions from workshop 1, share our experiences and learning from workshop 2, and collaboratively shape some ideas and possibilities for projects in partnership in the South of Scotland region.



WORKSHOP 1: DUMFRIES



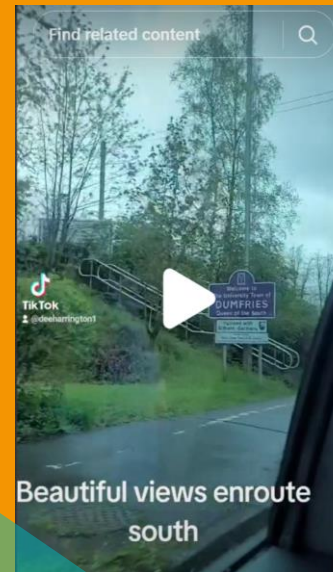
Imagine the past of cycling as regeneration as a landscape – and sketch your shared understanding of this in a picture



**Lots of ideas
and
possibilities**

In spring 2024 we facilitated a packed agenda with 10+ attendees representing Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS, third sector and social enterprise. Attendees arrived with their own images that represent cycle regeneration to them, and left with thoughts, and new possibilities.

Our approach allowed participants to share their lived experiences, so it was less about what they 'deliver' in their professional roles. This allowed for collective and meaningful engagement and agenda setting. They left us with drawings, ideas and fire in our belly for the next steps.



See a short social media summary of the day on Instagram:

www.instagram.com/reel/C6jpDBoMHgVhFN1yZb059hw8mvi63frQy6J0lc0

WORKSHOP 2: TO THE RHINE...

Slow travel and
making connections
in the Lowlands



A JOURNEY EAST...

Glasgow to Newcastle

Ahead is a trip of bikes, trains, ferries, and feet — both in terms of what we are studying, but also how we are moving. And, of course, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step (or pedal)...

The success of a slow travel journey often depends on the preparation and packing... Our first stage is to get from Glasgow to Newcastle by train, where we will board our ferry to the continent.

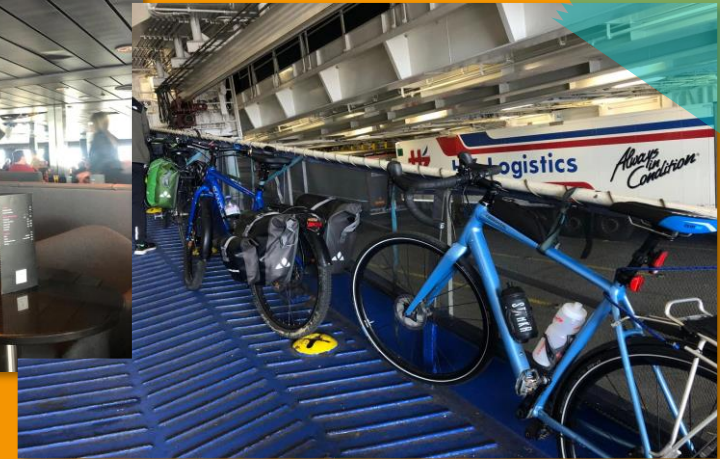
It's a tight squeeze on the train with bikes, and this isn't easy. Then a bike journey from Newcastle city centre to the ferry. But that few kilometers pedaling along the River Tyne feels like we are finally on our way...

What is 'slow travel'? We write about using different ways of moving for our work at the University of Strathclyde:

www.strath.ac.uk/whystrathclyde/sustainablestrathclyde/sustainablestrathclydeblog/guestblogslowtravelinpractice



ACROSS THE NORTH SEA

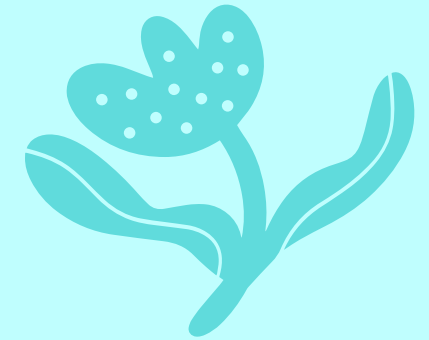


Newcastle to the Netherlands

Once you board the ferry you have an evening to relax and enjoy being on the boat, and unlike a plane you can move about, chat to different people and go for a sleep in your cabin. The benefits of slow travel!

Arriving in the port of IJmuiden the skies are blue, and straight of the ferry to begin some cycling...

DUTCH CYCLE DREAMS

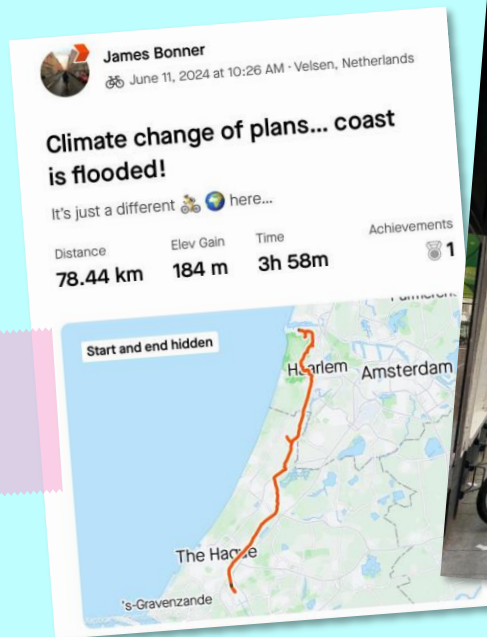


Ijmuiden to Delft, Netherlands

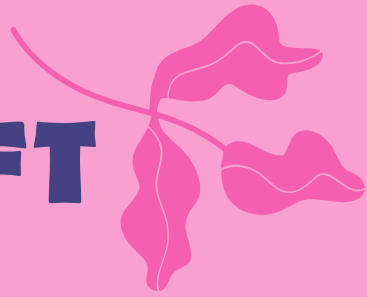
Leaving the port, and good quality cycling infrastructure greets you immediately. For the next few weeks, we will be guided by the red tarmac of Dutch cycle lanes that mark your space to move. It was my (James) intention to cycle down the coast, but local people I meet on the initial kilometers of the route tell me not to, as recent heavy rains have made much of the paths impassible. Luckily there are many cycle routes to take alternative routes in the Netherlands.

A full day cycling takes us by windmills and cafes, and fueled by coffees and apple pies...

The 'Fietsroute network', or cycle route network, in the Netherlands is fantastic. Junctions are given signposted numbers, or 'knooppunten', which allow for simple navigation!: <https://fietsroutenetwerk.nl>



ON THE MOVE: DELFT

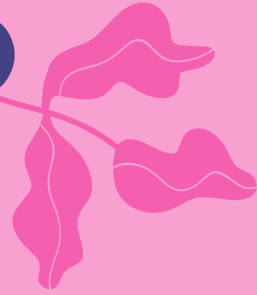


Delft

Delft, between Rotterdam and Den Hagg (The Hague), is a beautiful town (and the home of blue and white Delft pottery). From here we move and meet several people, learning about mobility practices, while observing what it is like to spend time in place like this. There seems to be space for humans and non-humans alike to live and move (James spends time running the canals spotting some wildlife). It is notable how cycling is spatially and socially embedded in the town, and for many ages.



MEETING AND OBSERVING



The city, and Delft Technological University

The first of our key meetings as part of our 'mobile workshop' was with Chris Bruntlett, CEO of the [Dutch Cycling Embassy](#), an influential body on informing and sharing knowledge and practice on cycling as a form of sustainable mobility.

We also visited Delft Technological University, and we found good links between Strathclyders through the Active Mobility Hub. James had a meeting with Deepti Adlakha, Associate Professor in the Department of Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, to chat about health inequalities related to the built environment, and Deirdre explored the campus (including the phenomenal library).

Like many large institutions such as universities and transport hubs such as train stations around the Netherlands, the presence of huge areas of bike parking is so notable!



ON THE MOVE MEETS: AMSTERDAM

University of Amsterdam by train

We take the train to Amsterdam to meet with Professor Marco te Brömmelstroet and Dr. Jonne Silonsaari from the Urban Cycling Institute at the University of Amsterdam, on 'Buitenspeeldag', the national day of outdoor play in the Netherlands. And in a great meeting of shared interests, we talk all things linking cycling, place, play and change.

We talk of our overlapping projects- Playing Out and Just Streets- where we've common interests. What are our streets for? And for whom? How can we work together on these? Maybe we can tell some stories?



Our blog output with the Urban Cycling Institute:
www.urbancyclinginstitute.org/taking-to-the-streets-shouldnt-everyday-be-play-day

James has written for a Local Authority audience on the value of 'play in the everyday': www.lgiu.org/play-in-everyday-life-how-can-we-reimagine-the-places-we-live-to-be-more-playful



PUBLIC HEALTH REFLECTIONS

Childhood obesity, sports, physical activity and smoking

Deirdre, whose research experience includes childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes prevention, reflected on the status of public health in the countries visited compared to the United Kingdom. She spent a cold and rainy day in Amsterdam with her childhood obesity collaborator Dr. Teatske Altenberg .

Cycling is for all ages in the Netherlands and Belgium, and not just undertaken outdoors. We saw technical artistic bike skills in a velodrome, showing how this indoor cycling for competition and artistic entertainment is a further uniting aspect of cycling. We see all ages cycling outside, being mobile, experiencing places, playing and socialising on bikes, with no competition. Both are aspects that the UK has a lot of work to do on.

However, cigarette smoking, especially by young people, is something we observed everywhere. This public health issue is escalating there.



Deirdre's childhood obesity project with the Netherlands and other global sites [Development of a core outcome set for school-based intervention studies on preventing childhood overweight and obesity: study protocol | BMJ Open](#)

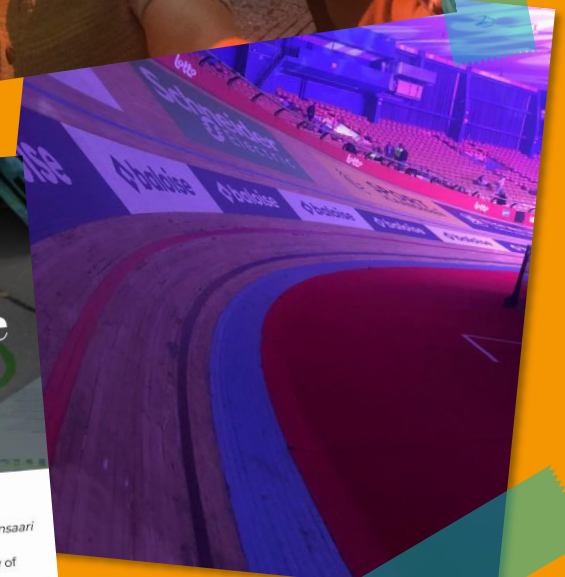


**Taking to the streets—
shouldn't everyday be
play day?**

Published: 17 September 2024

By James Bonner, Deirdre Harrington, Marco te Brömmelstroet & Jonne Silonsaari

Every year the Netherlands celebrates the 'Buitenspeeldag', the national day of outdoor play, following the example of the UN International Day of Play. In this post,



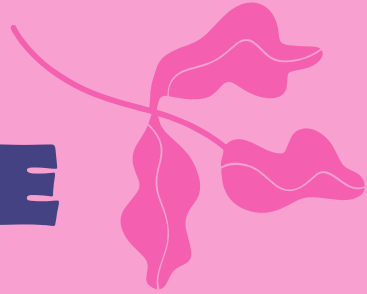


DOUBLE DUCTH

To Rotterdam and the Rhine route

To Rotterdam, and where the water of the Rhine has merged into Dutch rivers as it makes its way towards the North Sea. It's a modern city, quite different from some of other places in the Netherlands, with some notable modern architecture. Here we take the chance to take separate paths. One of us cycling south into southern Netherlands, the other exploring Rotterdam and east into the Nationaal Park de Biesbosch...

A WATERY LANDSCAPE



East on the Rhine to the National Park

James takes the chance to do a long day combining cycling, bridges and ferries following the Euro Velo route east. Here you can feel what makes the Netherlands different- it is a place where water and land intertwine.

Seeing older people with laden panniers, using electric bikes, to travel was a memorable experience. From roll on, roll off ferries, to e-bike changing points on board, infrastructure facilitated this.



The Biesbosch National Park is the largest freshwater tidal zone in Europe, and forms the estuary of two significant European rivers, the Meuse and the Rhine <https://np-debiesbosch.nl>



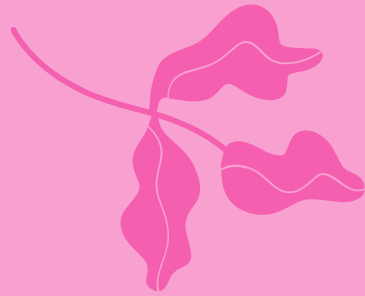
SOUTH NETHERLANDS

Dreich days in Dordrecht

Deirdre travels south into Nord-Braabant and on towards Belgium. A 'just keep pedaling' saga with rain showers, sheltering, varying quality of cycle lanes. More of a utility cycle from A (Rotterdam) to B (Dordrecht) to C (Belgian border) and into the famous Vlaanderen as fast as possible with a reward of two beautiful hotels, some comfort to work and time to think.



BELGIAN WAFFLES



Antwerp to Gent

An unexpected surprise as we both encounter [Fietssnelwegen 'F routes'](#) in Belgium. These are newly formed excellently signposted long distance cycle routes, almost like signed super-highways that run alongside motorways or trainlines linking hamlets, towns and cities. Belgium does not have the cycling infrastructure of the Netherlands, but its attempts to follow its lead are a guide for Scotland.

We noted the routes lacked toilets (or bushes to jump into), bins or places to rest. Potentially highlighting how these F routes are designed for utility rather than leisure. Deirdre raised this with the Fietssnelwegen representatives at Velo-City conference (see in a few slides). They said the lack of toilets is very common in Belgium, and not unique to these cycle routes. Speaking to the head of the Danish Cycling Federation he said that in Denmark the churches are a refuge for cyclists as they have water fountains and usually a toilet for the groundman. Facilities are crucial when absent.



The Dutch Cycling Embassy tell the story of the red asphalt of Dutch cycle paths: www.dutchcycling.nl/knowledge/cycling-news/the-story-behind-red-asphalt-why-the-dutch-have-red-cycling-infrastructure

EVERY SURFACE COUNTS

The quality of cycling surfaces and types of cycling infrastructure

One of the most notable aspects of cycling in the Lowlands is not just the amount of cycling infrastructure, but its quality. The surface of cycle lanes are often of high quality, with few potholes caused by heavy vehicular traffic- and is almost exclusively in a very visible red colour. This makes it visible to both cyclists and other road users. It also serves a symbolic function, and clearly states that cyclists *belong* and have a right to that space. Seeing that red tarmac, around you and ahead of you, gives you confidence to cycle on and more often.



ARRIVING BY BIKE TO VELO-CITY CONFERENCE

Gent, Belgium

Gent is a beautiful city and has been going through a transformation in terms of its mobility. In just a few years it has significantly shifted towards cycling and feels more like a Dutch city than some other Belgian ones.

We are here for [Velo-city](#), a 4-day cycling practice, advocacy and research conference. We attend talks, have networking opportunities, coffee breaks and join the bike parade taking over the city, (James in his kilt and the distinctive UCI 'rainbow jersey', a memento from when the UCI Cycling World Championships came to Scotland (and Dumfries) in 2023).

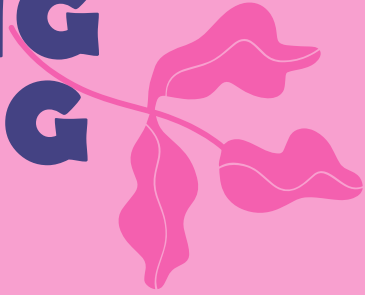


The Colors Of Victory: The Rainbow Jersey's Timeless Journey:

www.santinicycling.com/en/news/the-colors-of-victory-the-rainbow-jerseys-timeless-journey-b358

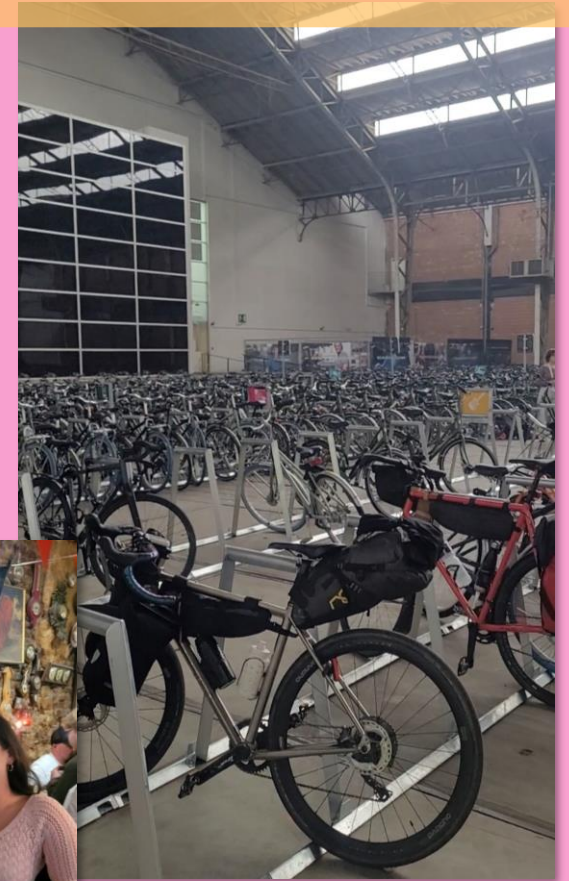


AN INSPIRING NETWORKING EVENT



We maximised our time with planned and unplanned connections. The European Cyclist Federation (ECF) organise Velo-city and manage the EuroVelo network of trans European cycle routes. We chatted with CEO Jill Warren and the EuroVelo and Cycling Tourism Director Agathe Daudibon. We also made the link to Greenways in Ireland (Transport Infrastructure Ireland), Deirdre's old Council pals from Leicester, bike bus social media star 'Coach' Sam Balto, and remade connections with the Urban Cycling Institute and others.

We were interviewed for the (in)famous 'War on Cars' podcast, Deirdre got a free tattoo of a bicycle, and we were reminded of the importance of our work when we see everyone living the cycling life daily all over the world.



Attendees living and breathing the cycling life

GERMAN SUPPORT



"Scottish fans have difficulty returning home because there is a German fan hanging on each leg"
from satirical German website

[Der Postillon](#)

Stuttgart, Brussels, Utrecht

In a personal side trip, James headed off to Germany by train to support Scotland in the European football championships. Ultimately disappointing, but the welcome and warmth to the Scottish fans shouldn't go unnoticed. People appreciated the good fun of the Scots fans, as well as people kept asking about Scotland and its countryside... and it feels appropriate to be working on a project that links the countries. What can come out of this? Germany are one of the main target markets for VisitScotland, and its notable German tourism on routes such as the West Highland Way long distance walking route.

He also visited the Belgian capital Brussels, and some extended time in the Dutch city of Utrecht. The latter where bike life is embedded, and the former which is really seeking to become more like its Dutch neighbours. Utrecht's bike park for 12,500 cycles is a place that needs to be seen to be believed...



RETURN LEGS

Ferry from Rotterdam, Eurostar from Brussels/London

James spent some time on a cross country to ride to the Hook of Holland on the North Sea Coast, and one end of Rhine Route. From here, EV15's start/end is directly connected to the UK by passenger ferry to Harwich in the South-East of England. Taking the train from the port to London he spent a few days there before taking the train back to Glasgow.

Due to family ill-health, Deirdre had to be nimble and change her plans and book a change in her return journey. She booked her bike on a very early Eurostar train in Brussels to go onto London and back to Ireland via a quick overnight to repack her bag back in Scotland. This option required a very early start in line with the sunrise with the bustle of London traffic being a confronting 'welcome back'...



ON THE C2C, IN D&G

Experiences visiting
and moving in
Dumfries & Galloway





AROUND STRANRAER

The Kirkpatrick C2C connecting to Stranraer and the Rhins of Galloway

The starting (or finishing) point of the C2C is the town of Stranraer, a gateway to Galloway and Europe through its connections via passenger ferry to Ireland. It also has a train to Glasgow. The town has suffered from some decline in recent years, including from the relocation of the passenger ferry terminal northwards to Cairnryan. However, without the ferry terminal in the harbour there is now opportunity to use the water for other purposes. The C2C route is part of wider attempt to regenerate and breathe new life into the area- including through outdoor activities.

Spot James joining 'Rhins Active' in 2021 being filmed by the brilliant [Scarlett Visuals](#) on 'Why We Cycle' around Stranraer:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-mpbMDH-Sk



THE RHINS OF GALLOWAY

An offshoot of the Cairn Ryan C2C

The two Rhins form a distinctive hammerhead at the very southwest of Scotland, and one end of the C2C route. They offer some fantastic cycling and walking opportunities, including the newly formed Rhins of Galloway Coast Path walking route that commences right next to the start of the C2C in Stranraer. Places to visit include Logan Botanic Gardens, villages such as the picturesque Portpatrick, and numerous lighthouses including that at Scotland's most southerly point at the Mull of Galloway.



Not only about cycling... how can the C2C connect to other active mobility routes such as the Rhins of Galloway Coast Path?:

<https://dgtrails.org/rhins-of-galloway-path>

James's research includes using walking as a way of learning about nature and places. Such as water...

<https://doi.org/10.1002/wat2.1758>





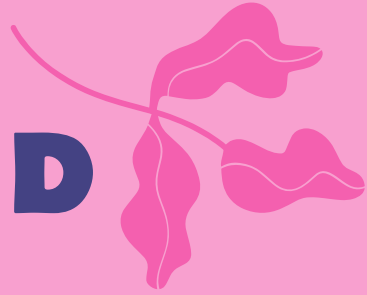
WHERE IT ALL STARTED

Kiermill, the smithy of Kirkpatrick Macmillan

Northwest of Dumfries, between the villages of Keir Mill and Penpont, is the family smithy of Kirkpatrick Macmillan- the inventor of the bicycle, and the whom the C2C route is named after. It isn't clear if he designed and built his bike while working there, but there is a plaque on the smithy wall telling his story. Unfortunately, the C2C doesn't directly pass through Kiermill on its route, which is maybe a missed opportunity given the potential historical interest to cycling tourists.



DUMFRIES AND AROUND



Loops in and around Dumfries on the C2C

In a couple of half day loops from Dumfries took James south towards the Solway Firth, via Mabie Forest, and north to the Southern Upland hills via Ae Forest. Both wooded areas known for their mountain and gravel biking.





A MID-WINTER PEDAL

Cycling the C2C- Portpatrick to Ecclefechan

Between Christmas and New Year, in mild but wet conditions, James cycled much of the D&G section of the C2C, with overnight stops at Portpatrick, Creetown, Dumfries and Lockerbie. A winter cycle brings specific challenges, from weather, road conditions, light, and the seasonal availability of services. However, if the C2C is to be sustainable year-round it needs to cater for cycling at this time of year. What are the needs of cyclists during such periods, and can the route adapt to meet those needs?

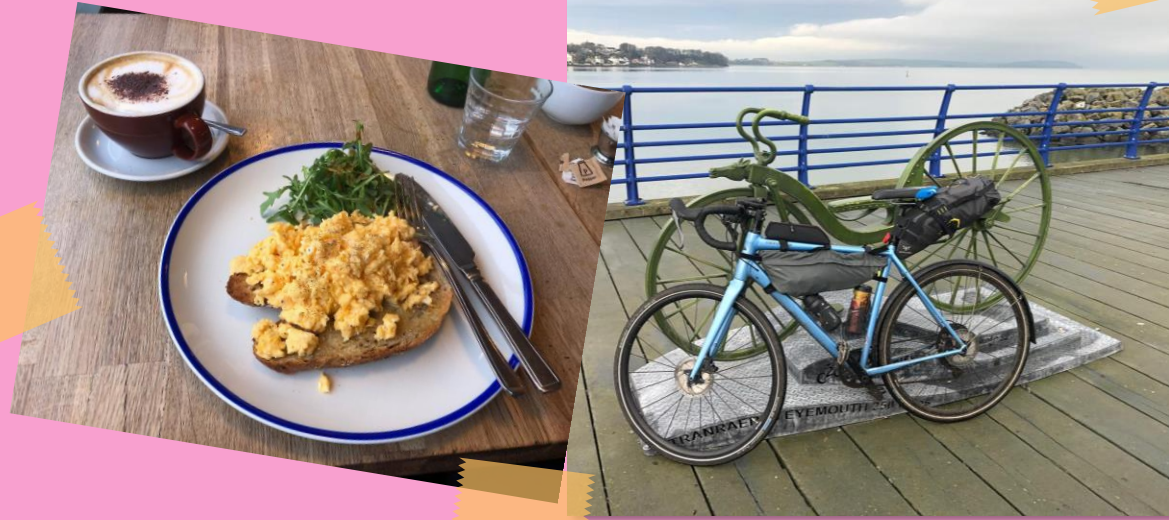
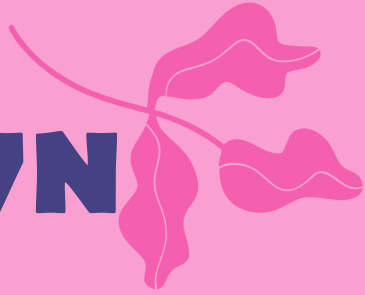
South of Scotland Destination Alliance's (SSDA) landing page for the C2C route:

www.scotlandstartshere.com/kirkpatrickc2c

Organisational toolkits for engaging with the C2C route and cycling tourism: www.ssdalliance.com/destination-development/cycle-tourism



STRANRAER TO CREETOWN



SoS winter tour: stage 1, Wigtown leg. 'Wig' from old Norse 'Vik' meaning 'bay'. Hence 'Viking'.

Cyclist count: 11. (Inc. one wee girl with blonde curly hair popping out from under her helmet, who gave me a wave 🙌. Hopefully she'll be pedalling the C2C in future.)

Distance	Elev Gain	Time	Achievements
90.02 km	743 m	4h 3m	🍷🍷🍷 22

100% This activity completed 20% of the Rapha Festive 500! 500 km [See More](#)

Start and end hidden

Stranraer Newton Stewart Wigtown



Glimpses of sea and water

The Kirkpatrick Macmillian bike sculpture at Stranraer marina is a distinctive departure point. Unfortunately, it's disconnected from the train station, where cyclists might arrive, and the route signage is understated. [Fig & Olive café](#) is the perfect place to fill up, whether starting, or connecting to, the route in Stranraer. It's one of the best cafes in the whole region.

Across quiet back roads takes you eastwards, then south to 'The Machars', and cross country to Wigtown. You can see Creetown across the River Cree, but you need to cycle north to the cross point at Newton Stewart. There's a notable really steep hill between Newton Stewart and Creetown, but the village itself is a welcome stop off. Great accommodation at [Barholm hostel](#), with a local shop open late, and then Lairds Inn for food on Castle Cary caravan site. These are the things a cyclist needs!

CREETOWN TO DUMFRIES

Villages and rolling hills

Out of Creetown is a climb, but this is a beautiful section of the route of the hills to Gatehouse of Fleet. The weather is misty, but this adds to the atmosphere. I recall cycling some of this route to conclude Raider's gravel race, and you can see why it is so appealing. I enjoy food at café/laundrette 'Iron Brew'. The section from Gatehouse of Fleet east is tricky, and I'm glad of my touring/gravel bike. Is this suitable for all? The route heads east to the artist town of Kirkcubright before north and west to Castle Douglas. Just the one café is open, and I'm glad of their soup. I'm getting tired as I cycle the last miles to Dumfries, and glad of well-earned beer.



The region is attracting notable high-quality road and gravel cycling events year on year. What value do these events bring, and who benefits? Some of these include:

The Galloch: www.gallochgravel.com
Raiders: www.raidersongravel.com
Frontier 300: www.frontier300.co



DUMFRIES TO ECCLEFECHAN



Reacting to the weather conditions

It's the 30th of December, and there are weather warnings for wind and rain. What do you do if this happens if you are cycling? I follow the route north out of Dumfries, but I take a wrong turn somewhere and find myself on a busy road in wet conditions. There are busy, unfriendly roads in the region- and it's something many people say to me. 'I'd love to cycle, but the roads...'. I find the C2C route- signage becomes more important when the conditions worsen. I get to Lockerbie and dry out. The weather is not suitable to get to Langholm, and I luckily have accommodation at Lockerbie. The weather improves a little, and I make a cycle to Ecclefechan. Even though this is a marked cycle route, it is along a busy road. It's not welcoming. I stay overnight in Lockerbie, and on wet conditions on New Year's eve I get a train back to Glasgow.

LEISURE TIME

Villages and rolling hills

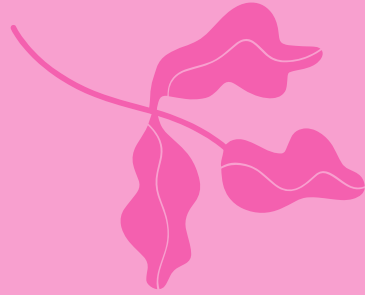
We both have been lucky enough to spend some leisure time in Dumfries and Galloway too since Workshop 1. Of course, James has significant links with the area but Deirdre, as a relatively new resident of Scotland, has made a conscious effort to visit D&G and get to know the area. Herself growing up in a small coastal town in West Cork, Ireland (also coincidentally on Euro Velo 1), she feels a connection!

The Sandhead to Stranraer running race along the Rhins of Galloway Coastal Path was the ideal opportunity to see the trails less travelled. We got to talk to local runners, run on the famous Rhins, see the Oyster Festival Weekend in action and have a fine post-race feed in the Fig & Olive café. Some trail running and subsistence in Glentool was also invigorating on the last day before the café's winter break.

Barholm Accommodation in Creetown was an experience of a warm, clean, friendly bunkhouse with storage for dirty bicycles and kit and a e-vehicle charging station. From restaurant server to B&B owner, everyone reported the increase in visitors to the area, especially outdoor lovers.



LINKING TO OTHER PROJECTS



Scottish Cycling's Rock up and Ride Program

At the start of November, we visited Newton Stewart to run some initial data collection for an evaluation of [Rock up and Ride](#). This children and communities cycling program has been funded via several Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland, including SWestrans.

Any hardship of travelling down on a dark November evening was cancelled out by the colour and noise coming from Douglas Park. Girls and boys, parents and grandparents were out in force for the skills and confidence-building sessions run by Galloway Hillbillies.

We were there to collect data from the children and to chat to parents. But we got so much more. It helps us understand the cycling physical and social context outside of cities and in other areas of D&G. It also helps us to identify barriers and opportunities and think about links between projects. After all, everyone wants to get more people on bicycles!



SIGNAGE ISSUES

Multiple messages on the C2C

Key to successful and usable cycling routes is signage, and while many long-distance cyclists use their own navigation in the form of GPS computers- physical signs are key for many other users. They also signal to motorists the right of cyclists, as well as raising the visual profile of a route.

The C2C has some identified signage, but it can be confused with signage for other cycle routes (including EuroVelo 1 at Stranraer). However, this is something that can be worked on over time.

As James noted in his mid winter pedal, there is a bit of lack of signage around Stranraer announcing the starting point. Compare this to the big sign presented earlier on the Rhine route making that clear...



WORKSHOP 3: WHAT'S NEXT?

Getting Strategic
and looking to
2025...



Strategy Objective 1: To facilitate and encourage safe active travel (walking, wheeling, and cycling) for all by connecting communities and travel hubs



What are we aiming to do?

- Improve the physical environment for active travel for all groups
- Improve existing and provide new active travel connections between settlements and linking transport hubs and communities
- Better promote walking, wheeling, and cycling for travel and leisure
- Widen access to bicycles and potentially micro-mobility

What will the impact be if we achieve this objective?

- Improved access to jobs, schools, colleges, shops and other services
- Reduced car travel and emissions
- Increased tourism
- Increased health and wellbeing

Theme 1: Enabling More Sustainable Development

- Locating new development in locations which reduce the need to travel or are served by existing active travel and public transport links, or where this is not possible, provide new active travel and public transport links
- Providing on site facilities such as showers / changing rooms etc., at new and existing developments
- Incorporating the concept of 'local living / liveability' and '20-minute neighbourhoods' into all future development and land-use planning processes
- Applying an 'Infrastructure First' approach to major new developments

Theme 2: Connecting our Communities

- Improving existing and providing new active travel routes in line with the Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy.
- Working to high standards in accordance with relevant technical guidance such as Cycling by Design and Designing Streets
- Reviewing and updating the Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy
- Undertaking promotional activities and community engagement to encourage use of active travel modes
- Spending at least 50% of the SWestrans capital budget on active travel

Stantec **SWESTrans**



SWestrans' Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 for the region and is a key document to refer to:

www.swestrans.org.uk/article/23892/Regional-Transport-Strategy

A STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

The C2C aligning with SWESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy 2023-42

It is critical to the long-term sustainability of the C2C that it should align with the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). It is notable that number 1 of the 6 strategy objectives (above left), and number 1 and 2 of the resulting themes (above right) of the RTS are quite explicitly connected to active travel and communities. However, the strategy doesn't explicitly refer to the C2C's role as part of achieving these objectives. Seeing the route as a thread linking different communities, and the wider opportunities this brings, should highlight which parts of it are most appropriate to serve this purpose. The route is a whole, but also a web of interconnections between communities.



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

A key focus- linking communities

Theme 2 in the RTS notes some interesting commitments, including spending at least 50% of capital budget on active travel. Does this remain the case? How can work this help achieve objectives of connecting communities?

What are projects, both large and small, that align with this? And where does the C2C fit in?



Theme 2: Connecting Our Communities

- DCS Improvements to the active travel network will be delivered through a combination of incremental improvements to existing routes and new bespoke routes where appropriate
- The active travel network will be developed in accordance with Cycling by Design, Designing Streets and other relevant technical guidance
- An integrated active travel network linking both within and between our settlements will be developed in line with the Spatial Strategy articulated in the Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2
- The Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2 will be kept under review and updated on a regular basis to ensure it is being effectively implemented
- A dedicated Active Travel Team will work on prioritising, designing, and delivering schemes and projects in collaboration with funding partners
- Awareness raising to facilitate behaviour change will be delivered through close community engagement and campaigns to encourage the use of active travel
- SWestrans will spend at least 50% of its capital budget on active travel



Active Travel Spatial Strategy (Source: Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2 2022-2032)

SWestrans' Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 Easy Read:

<https://swestrans.org.uk/article/23892/Regional-Transport-Strategy>

THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND BIGGER PICTURE



Images:

Left- DWOG (UCI in Dumfries)

Right- BBC (Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes)

In December 2024 South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) reflected on cycling related achievements in the region when nominated for the inaugural UCI 'Cycling for All & Sustainability Awards' at the 2024 UCI Mobility & Bike City Forum.

What does this open up for 2025 and beyond?...

Achievements by the Partnership

- Launch of the 10-year South of Scotland Cycling Partnership Strategy, which aims to make the region one of the leading cycling destinations in the world
- Gaining UCI Bike Region Label
- Hosting three events at the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships, which attracted over 65million broadcast viewers from across the globe
- Official launch of the Kirkpatrick C2C, South of Scotland's Coast to Coast cycle route which offers 250 miles of uninterrupted joy for experienced cyclists from Stranraer to Eyemouth
- Development and opening of a number of active travel paths
- Development of the River Tweed Trail - a source to sea walking and cycling route from Moffat to Berwick-Upon-Tweed
- South of Scotland Cycling Infrastructure Fund which supported 30 tourism businesses, social enterprises and organisations to improve their facilities for visiting cyclists taking part in the Kirkpatrick C2C, or riding the 7Stanes trail centres
- Hosting of significant national events such as the Mountain Biking Innovation & Technology Summit in 2023 and Scottish Mountain Bike Conference in November 2024.

Source: www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/news/cycleaward



C2C IN A NETWORK

The Kirkpatrick Way as linking into the EuroVelo cycle network

The EuroVelo network consist of 17 long distance cycle routes crisscrossing Europe, including EV15 Rhine Route. The Kirkpatrick C2C connects two other of these routes- EuroVelo 1, the Atlantic Route and EuroVelo 12, the North Sea route.

There is significant opportunity for the C2C to take advantage of this connecting between two significant EuroVelo routes, connecting Scotland and the UK to Ireland and mainland Europe via cycle and ferry routes at, or nearby, each end of its extent.

Explore the EuroVelo network and consider the link the Kirkpatrick C2C might offer as part of that. D&G connected to the rest of Europe...
<https://en.eurovelo.com>



REFLECTING ON WHAT WE DID/ACHIEVE

Outputs and processes

- Two workshops in Dumfries with a range of community and policy stakeholder groups, and a number of meetings with influential organisations in a 'mobile workshop' in the Netherlands and Belgium.
- Communication, dissemination and conversations with individuals about the Kirkpatrick C2C and Rhins to Rhine project a numerous events, conferences and forums including VeloCity in Ghent, Cycling Scotland in Glasgow, etc...
- Development of an [evolving Google Map](#) of the two cycle routes and identified key contacts, locations and infrastructure:
- A working document of notes, observations, experiences, statistics, facts. Observations and a repository of project ideas that can emerge from this project.
- This scrapbook of the project, which can grow and evolve.
- A joint blog with the Urban Cycling Institute: <https://urbancyclinginstitute.org/taking-to-the-streets-shouldnt-everyday-be-play-day>
- Supporter of Cycling Dumfries' 'Missing Links' book developed by Sally Hinchcliffe (£100 donated June 2024, which gives three hard copies of book sent to DH, a Pdf version and the rest to local policy makers.)



- We made many friends and connections along the way, learning from them at each point, and sharing what we have observed and come across in our work. A network of people and passion, knowledge and visions, that we hope to continue to work along with, and foster, in the near and long term.

RESEARCH TEAM

james.bonner@strath.ac.uk - 'on the ground' explorer, cyclist and mapper, place focused social-ecological research

deirdre.harrington@strath.ac.uk - health and wellbeing, behaviour change intervention development and evaluation

sarah.dodd@strath.ac.uk - outdoor and active study, crafting enterprising communities, place-based development

juliette.wilson@strath.ac.uk - inclusive community development, food and drink sector production, growth, equity, and waste, rural diversification

MORE ON THE PROJECT

Project overview: ‘From the Rhins of Galloway to the Rhine - Every Cycle Tells a Story’

<https://pureportal.strath.ac.uk/en/projects/from-the-rhins-of-galloway-to-the-rhine-every-cycle-tells-a-story>

Reflection on Workshop 1 in Dumfries in April 2024: ‘Long-distance cycle way research’

www.actify.org.uk/module/2474

**‘From the Rhins to the Rhine — The Active Mobility Hub in the Netherlands and Belgium’
featured in a blog about Slow Travel practices**

www.strath.ac.uk/whystrathclyde/sustainablestrathclyde/sustainablestrathclydeblog/guestblogslowtravelinpractice

Reflections from visiting the Urban Cycling Institute at the University of Amsterdam: ‘Taking to the streets- shouldn’t everyday be play day?’

www.urbancyclinginstitute.org/taking-to-the-streets-shouldnt-everyday-be-play-day