

Day 7 – Mallaig to Onich

I arrived at the Marine Hotel in Mallaig cold and wet after a miserable ride across Skye to catch the ferry at Armadale.



Libby greeted me and showed me to my room on the first floor and then took me on a rather circuitous route around the back of the hotel to stow my bike. There was no shed but Lucy sat under the fire escape in an open yard that was guarded by a not very ferocious dog. I was able to wash and dry everything overnight, particularly my shoes, thanks to an electric heater in the bedroom and a heated towel rail in the bathroom. My cycling gear was hung by an open window and was dry by morning.

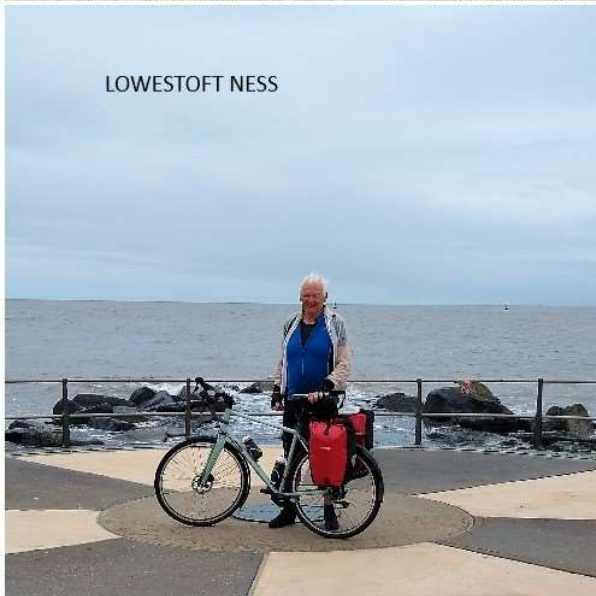
I went to eat at the Crab and Creel restaurant and had a very tasty Cullen Skink with a very ordinary bread roll followed by a pork chop, loads of new potatoes and steamed greens. A couple of pints of Pale Ale hit the spot. Altogether a very good meal in a restaurant that was doing good trade. Opposite the hotel the Co-op stayed open late, and I bought a bottle of Belhaven bitter and some Jaffa cakes to help with the blog.

Breakfast this morning was a walk of all of 10 yards down the corridor. I'd already ordered porridge which was lacking in salt but easy to put right and the best FSB so far with very tasty black pudding and Haggis and the best bacon yet. Jacqueline was queen of the breakfast room and looked after us very well with a lovely smile. After I'd packed, she was able to show me a short cut to my bike which saved a good deal of bother.

I was away at 0934: rain was in the air but the first 25 miles was relatively dry and the wind was not too bad. I passed some white sand beaches: the pictures don't do them justice on an overcast day.



and followed the coast route rather than the main road. I was in sight of sea lochs for most of the day, many of them carved well inland from the open sea. At Lochailort I joined a road that I cycled back in 2019 when I visited Ardnamurchan on my trip to the four extreme geographical points of Britain.



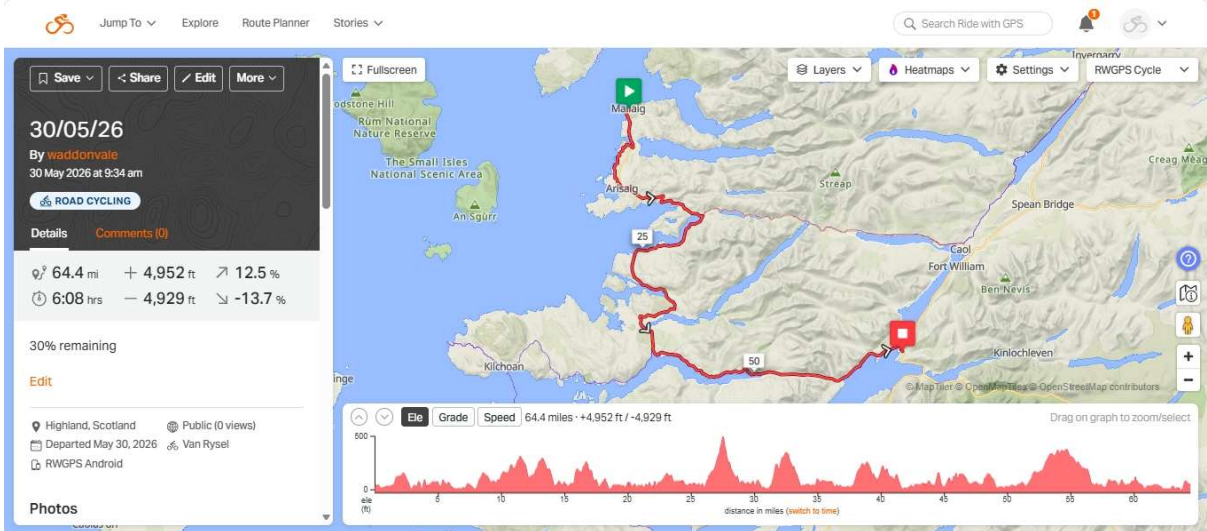
I recognised bits of it including the Seven Men of Moidart, Bonnie Prince Charlie's compatriots. The trees haven't grown



The rain now started, not heavy but proper Scotch Mist and everything was soon drenched. I stopped, as in 2019, at the food store in Acharacle for some water and Jaffa Cakes and, as much as anything else, to stretch my legs. My left knee is niggling me and needs a walk every now and then to ease the ache. The road took me through Salen, where I stayed the night in 2019, and then eastwards along Loch Sunart. The road was narrow with passing places, through dense trees with no views and the journey to Strontian was miserable. I now had to climb over the watershed to Loch Linnhe, not steep but I kept the motor running the whole time as I had plenty of battery power left. I was relieved to reach Ardgour where the Corran ferry takes vehicles across the Loch,



I only had 2 miles on the far side to arrive at my lodging for the night, a self-contained pod. Hopefully I'll be able to dry everything by morning although the weather forecast is for more rain so It'll soon be wet again.



Day 8 - Onich to Lochgilphead

When I arrived at Onich cold, very wet and pretty miserable I wasn't sure that I'd be able to dry everything out to set off this morning. My accommodation was described as the Shack and pods at Inchree and I was given exclusive use of Pod 2.



Joining instructions were good and I was soon inside. The pod consisted of a double bed with a mini kitchen and a separate shower room. Gloriously there was a blow heater in the shower room and another in the main room: the latter dried my sopping wet shoes whilst a combination of the heated towel rail and blow heater dealt with the overshoes, gloves and jackets so that all were wearable or packable by morning. There was room for Lucy inside, which was merciful as there was torrential rain overnight to the extent that it woke me. The next problem was food. I'd done some research and found that there was a restaurant about quarter of a mile away called Roam West and that was it. Foolishly I hadn't thought to book but was prepared to wait until something was available. In the event I shuffled up there in the spitting rain in my deck shoes and, after a bit of head scratching was told they were very busy, but I should get fed in the next half hour or so. So I was surprised to immediately be given a table and a pint of Hazy Day IPA which, I was slightly disappointed to discover, is brewed by Greene King in Suffolk. Anyway, it was good enough to have a second. I started with good mushroom broth, went on to Venison sausage and mash and seasonal veg (somewhat undercooked to my taste) and finished with Cranachan cheesecake. The main constituents were excellent and the service attentive – all in all a good experience. Fortunately the pod was down the hill so I rolled down comfortably.

The bed was vey comfortable and I slept well until the rain-storm woke me. The bike has been giving problems with gear shifting and I tried to rectify it but not much improvement. I'll try to get to a bike shop and see if they can help. I can make do using the motor instead of changing gear but I'm afraid unless something is done, I'll end up with a broken cable. Having faffed about I got going just after 0900 knowing that I had about 75 miles to travel and some quite lumpy ground.

It was about 3.5 miles to the bridge at Ballachulish, just about spitting with rain but it soon cleared to an overcast day with very occasional sunshine. Thank goodness it was nothing like yesterday and I ended the day with dry feet. There is a cycle path over the bridge so no dramas, indeed I was on cycle-paths until I got to Connel bridge 31 miles into the journey. These did add a bit to the direct journey because they looped away from the main road and, in places, were very steep: but nice not to contend with traffic.



The falls of Lora are a tidal rapid where Loch Etive meets the Firth of Lorn and you get a great view of them from the historic Connel bridge which has traffic lights for one way traffic. The cyclist and pedestrian get their own carriageway

tacked onto the side of the bridge



Once past Connel I took a wrong turn and ended up doing a bit of a loop through the hills above Oban but not much lost. The Sunday golfers were out in force at Glencruitten.

The weather was not conducive to photography so not much to show. When you are wearing full gloves, as I have for the last couple of days, it's a hassle to get the phone out and set it up to take pictures so it tends to stay in the pocket.

At the end of the day I joined the Crinan canal which saves a long journey from the Firth of Clyde to the Atlantic for small craft



It's been a long and tiring day. I think the worst I have felt so far with muscles aching and a feeling of lassitude not helped by the bike problems. I have a plan which may improve matters.....



Save ▾ < Share Edit More ▾

Fullscreen

Layers ▾ Heatmaps ▾ Settings ▾ RWGPS Cycle ▾

Highlands Road Cycling

By [waddonvale](#)
31 May 2026 at 9:14 am

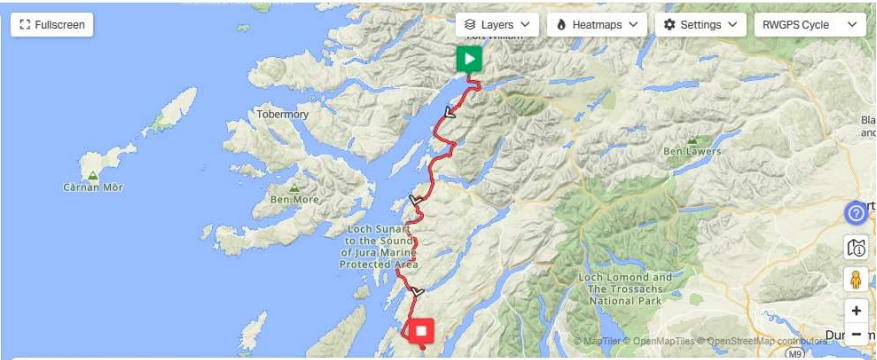
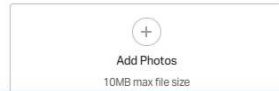
ROAD CYCLING

Details Comments (0)

📏 76.6 mi + 4,197 ft ↗ 24.9 %
🕒 6:59 hrs - 4,228 ft ↘ -14.4 %

📍 Highland, Scotland 🌐 Public (0 views)
📅 Departed May 31, 2026 🚴 Van Rysel
📱 Garmin Edge Explore 2

Photos



Day 9 – Kintyre

My B&B last night, The Corran was a surprise: a Victorian former doctor's surgery on the main A83 full of interesting art, very much to my taste, including an original E H Shepherd Christopher Robin drawing. It would have been nice to have a tour of all the rooms, but what I saw appealed.



No food available in the evening and a quarter mile walk to the Indian restaurant probably did me some good, shaking out the aches from my legs and knees. The restaurant, recommended by Pauline, the larger-than-life manager of the Corran, was tiny and was almost full when I arrived. I had to sit and wait for 20 minutes but it was worth it: good onion Bhaji and poppadums. Generous and well cooked Lamb Biryani and stuffed paratha. I'd noticed that booze was BYO and called in at the Co-op for a couple of bottles of pale ale to help it all go down. I felt very full.

The shower was a bit unreliable, but I got myself washed. There was no opportunity to dry anything and the clothes I washed were still damp this morning. I slept fitfully despite a comfortable double bed in a large room, partly because I am concerned about the gear change on the bike which has become very stiff. Because of this I had searched for bike shops and found what looked like the perfect candidate in Tarbert, through which I was due to pass today. I rang several times, but it was engaged. When I finally got through to Dave, he said that he was no longer doing bike repairs but suggested I might try Kintyre e-bikes in Campbeltown, my destination. I reckoned I'd probably be OK getting there but decided to cut my journey down, missing out the Mull of Kintyre, celebrated in song by Wings and written whilst Paul McCartney was resident in Kintyre. My legs and knees are aching and the thought of cycling 70 miles is not appealing so I cut it down to 49 miles and even that was exhausting. After a well-cooked FSB with running commentary from the loquacious Pauline,, I started cycling at 0937 in the rain, on the main road that follows the Crinan Canal which discharges into Loch Gilp at Ardrishaig. The forecast was for rain all day but mercifully it stopped before I reached Tarbert and stayed away for most of the day with odd showers. The wind was on my nose all day

but not over strong. The west coast of Kintyre is fairly flat with the odd steepish pitch which I negotiated with the motor rather than changing gear. Because of the weather the phone stayed in my pocket most of the day and what pictures I took are poor. Just past Tarbert is West Loch Tarbet which almost cuts the Kintyre peninsula in two and several ferry services start from here to the outer Isles.



The road climbed past Kennacraig and there were rhododendrons in full bloom to brighten the otherwise dull afternoon



After Clachan the road closely follows the Atlantic coast with the low island of Gigha evident to the west



Only 35 miles into the journey I was finding it hard to keep going and stopped several times to recover.

Finally, the road dropped down into Campbeltown, a whisky destination for those in the know. At one point there were 30 distillers in the town but now there are only 3. The Dellwood hotel was on the road into town, so I had no problem finding it.

I immediately went in search of Kintyre e-bikes, but the unprepossessing single door exterior was firmly bolted. Tracey, the owner of Dellwood suggested another outlet but, again, it was closed. Finally, I went back to the hotel, had a good look at the derailleur and, after a conversation with Rob at home and a couple of twists of a screw I think I may have solved the problem. If so, I would have felt a proper muppet if I'd taken the bike to an "expert". I've another 68 miler tomorrow to find out if I've solved the problem and there are a couple of ferries en route, which I've booked, to ease the pain of cycling all day.

Jump To | Explore | Route Planner | Stories

Search Ride with GPS

01/06/26
By waddonvale
1 June 2026 at 9:37 am
ROAD CYCLING

Details | Comments (0)

49.7 mi | + 2,758 ft | 11.0 %
4:11 hrs | - 2,742 ft | -9.6 %

Argyll and Bute, Scotland | Public (0 views)
Departed Jun 1, 2026 | Van Rysel
RWGPS Android

Photos
Add Photos
10MB max file size

Layers | Heatmaps | Settings | RWGPS Cycle

The map shows a cycling route in Scotland, starting near Glasgow and heading north. The route is marked with a red line and a green play button. The grade profile graph below the map shows the elevation change over the 49.7-mile distance. The graph has a y-axis for elevation in feet (0 to 800) and an x-axis for distance in miles (0 to 45). The profile shows a significant climb to about 800 feet around the 25-mile mark, followed by a descent. The route passes through areas like Beinn Tarta Mhìill, Beinn an Oir, Goat Fell, and South Arran Marine Protected Area. The map interface includes various controls like zoom, pan, and layers.

Day 10 -Campbeltown – Rothesay

Well the first thing to say is that the gear changing problem has been solved and I have had no problems today. That is a huge relief and made today's journey psychologically better.

Tracey gave me a room at the side of the Dellwood Hotel (the bit tacked on the side)



and told me to take the bike into the room which I did after much head-scratching as the door to the outside and the door to the room interfered with each other and I had to lift the bike up and wriggle her through the gap. Having done that, I did the usual and then thought about food. I really didn't fancy a 500 yard walk down the hill and back so extricated the bike and went to get fish and chips and a bottle of wine. Food was good and wine made it better. I then had to wriggle the bike in again.

Having got the bike back in the room I looked hard at the derailleur and realised that the limit screw which moves the derailleur further away from the cassette was fully extended, hence the problem because the jockey wheel on the derailleur was interfering with the cassette. A couple of inward turns moved everything away from the cassette and hey presto I have a working gear system which operated perfectly today.

The major plus point of the room was that it contained a very efficient electric heater that dried my sopping shoes, and the kit that I washed, very swiftly. There was a bar in the hotel, but I made do with my bottle of wine and went to bed at 10. The double bed was comfortable and I slept fairly well.

Breakfast this morning was a good FSB with Lorne sausage (look it up if you don't know) and I shared the room with a foursome of American golfers who are over for a week playing local courses and visiting distilleries.

I was away at 0934, my route up the east side of the Kintyre peninsula. When I planned it I didn't realise quite how hilly it would be, totally different from the east coast. It was reminiscent of cycling in Devon and Cornwall with short steep climbs and then drops back to sea level before doing it all over again.



In view of the rain the camera stayed in my pocket for much of the morning but it would have been nice to get a picture of the otter that loped across the road in front of me as I was descending fast.



It would have been quite fun, as I was feeling Ok in myself, but it rained incessantly until I was about 5 miles from Tarbert so by the time I arrived at the ferry I was very wet and cold. The ferry takes 25 minutes to transport you from West Tarbert, across Loch Fyne, to Portavedie and cost me £3.80



I arrived at about 1340 for the 1440 ferry and started talking to a lady who keeps a sailing boat in the area, currently at Portavedie, and had been across to do her shop at the Tarbert Co-op. She and her husband live in Cumbria and sail up and down the coast leaving the boat in different harbours through the winter. As we were waiting about 20 cyclists turned up on posh bikes. Talking to one of them on the ferry journey they are from a Perth cycle club and are on a 5 day trip around the area. Steve was interested in my journey and, having asked my age, hoped that he'd be able to do the same when he gets there. At 65 he looked pretty fit, so I expect he'll still be cycling at my age. Many of the others in the group were considerably younger. They took off from the ferry at great speed and I didn't see them again.

//



The weather had cleared considerably and there was even sunshine as I made the long climb away from Loch Fyne past Kames and up through the Kyles of Bute. Some very pretty scenery including hillsides covered in Rhododendrons



At the top of the climb is a viewpoint with a board explaining the geography





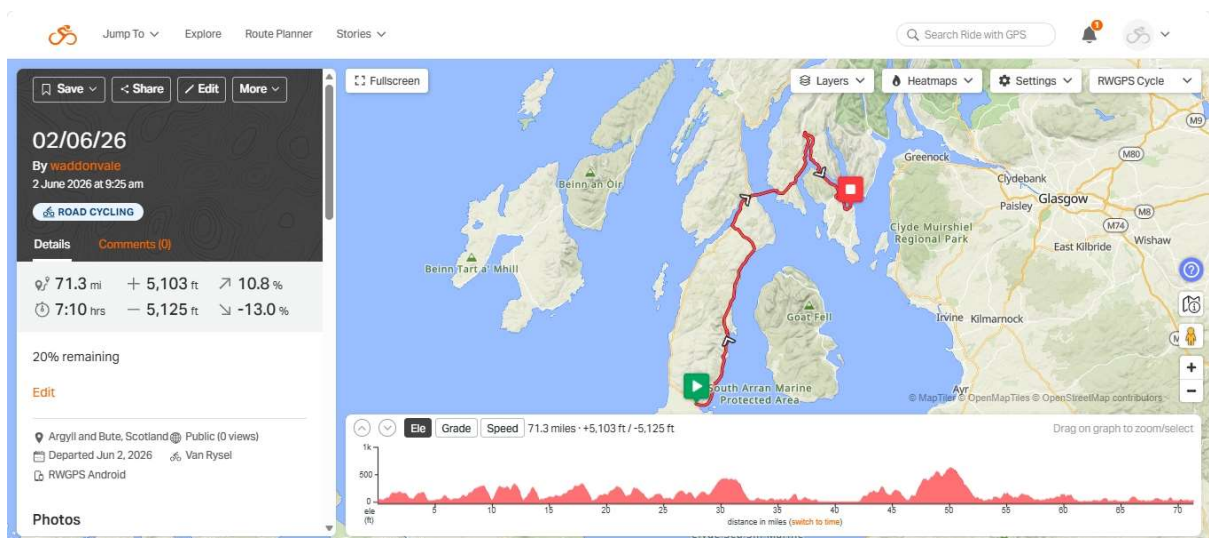
Once around the Kyle I had about eight miles to go to the next ferry which was to take me across to the Isle of Bute.



I was getting quite weary again but there was plenty of juice left in the battery so it stayed on for the rest of the journey. The ferry takes you from Colintraive on the mainland to the Isle of Bute: it's a very short hop and cost me £1.70.



Once on the island it was a flat 7 mile ride to Rothesay. As my B&B was beyond the main town and I didn't fancy venturing out again, I took the opportunity of feeding myself on the way through, once again, on very nice haddock and chips, this time with mushy peas and I brought a bottle of wine back to the hotel with some Jaffa cakes for pud.



Day 11 – The Ayrshire coast

St Ebba is a nice gentile B&B set in a row of similar establishments on the sea front of Rothesay and run by Kristine who has been in the business for 16 years so knows what it takes to make the punters happy. She showed me where to put my bike, just about under cover, but with little or no security. My room was in the attic which was quite a struggle as the second staircase was steep and narrow. The room itself was fine, spacious enough for me to spread everything out but without any drying facilities, so I didn't wash anything but hung clothes up near the window to roughly dry. My shoes and overshoes dried on the window sill.

I composed the blog with a bottle of wine and slept well in a comfortable bed. Breakfast was ordered the night before and I ate good porridge and an FSB. The haggis had run out so I got an extra sausage. My breakfast companions were a man from Hull who specialises in taking public transport around Britain and doing sights, and a couple who are cycling somewhat lesser distances than me but taking their time and days off, today being one of those.

If I had hurried I might just have made the 0905 Calmac ferry to Wemyss Bay but elected to take a bit more time and leave on the 1000. I'd booked my ticket the night before, £4.35 for me and the bike.



It was spitting with rain when the boat left on time but there are plenty of seats, albeit up two flights of steep ladders, and I settled down next to and started talking with John who lives in Rothesay whilst his female partner lives in Largs,

which is on my route. John had his partner's dog with him and was on his way to Glasgow to arrange a conference. He talked generally about the area, including his allotment in Fairlie (even further down the coast) and the large pods of dolphins that now reside in the Firth of Clyde and, as a result, a pod of Orcas that have returned after many years. It was a pleasant way to pass the 25 minute trip and, as we parted he suggested I might like to look in on the railway station at Wemyss Bay – impressive architecture





It was, inevitably, raining as I made my way down the Ayrshire coast, the first 15 miles on main roads but not busy. At Largs there was a cycle path along the prom and then back onto roads at Fairlie. My Grandmother was the daughter of James Tennant, an industrialist whose uncle had invented a special technique for bleaching cloth and had made his fortune by patenting the process. James ran the business and lived at Fairlieburne House, since demolished and replaced with several des res's. As I was passing, I took a picture



It was mainly cycle- paths until I reached Ayr, some better than others with a lot of tree roots showing through the tarmac. I took shelter at a bus-stop for about 15 minutes whilst a particularly heavy shower passed by, but I was still wet through. Onwards through Seamills, Saltcoats and Ardrossan with the wind, whipping up the waves, and becoming a distinct problem to cycle against



Eventually I headed inland to get away from the worst of the wind, wiggling my way through Irvine and along the edge of the golf course at Troon that has hosted the Open Championship many times, last in 2024. Past Prestwick airport (Glasgow for Ryanair) and through the middle of Ayr itself. The weather at this point was so revolting that I kept going rather than taking in some of the sights of the town including the horse race course and the birthplace of Robert Burns. I'd been off course for over an hour when I got the familiar ding dong to tell me I was back on track. The weather improved dramatically and the sun came out as I headed out into open country with some steepish hills to climb. The first 55 miles were pan flat and I'd only used the motor to battle the headwind but now I switched it on and went as fast as I could manage, knowing that I wouldn't arrive until after 6pm and uncertain about eating arrangements. Five miles from my destination in Girvan I passed Turnberry Golf Course



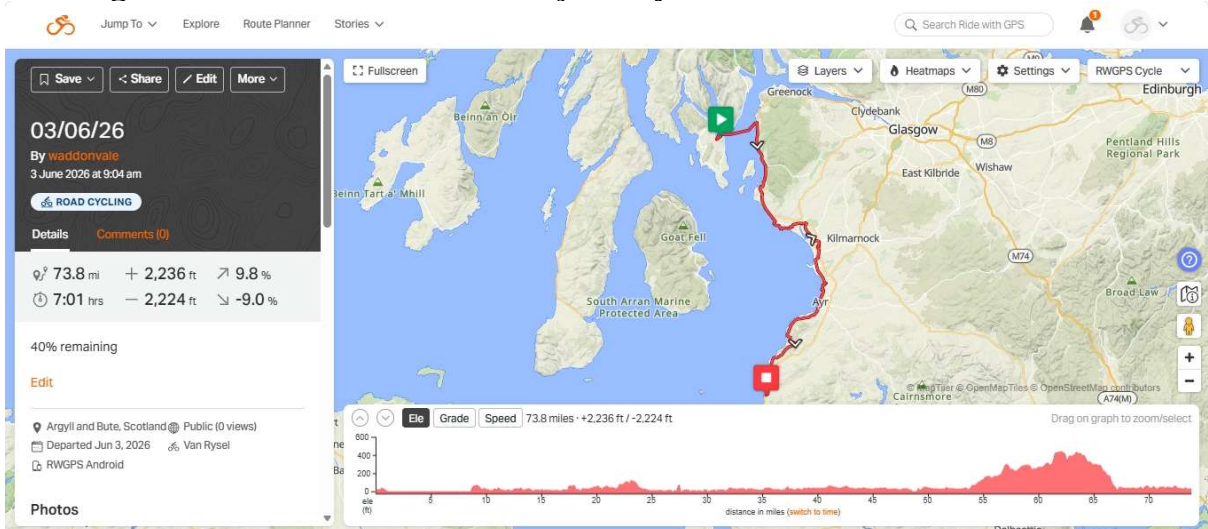
Typically, under-stated!

As a special end to a day made difficult by the weather, I was treated to Ailsa Craig rising magically from the Firth of Clyde



My hotel is a doss house, a tiny room and in need of a lot of TLC. Breakfast is continental left in the room and instructions to leave the key in the door when I go. The bike is in a covered area along with the rubbish bins and a broken bed. No food at the hotel despite it being advertised so I'll go round the corner for Chinese.

Thank goodness tomorrow is a short journey, I need the rest.



Day 12 – Girvan – Bladnoch

I was given fairly short shrift when I arrived at Girvan last night. The front door of the Royal Hotel was firmly locked at just after 6pm and around the side was a note on the door saying “ring this number”, which I duly did. A young lass quickly appeared and said; “your room is number 6, up the stairs, there’s a continental breakfast in the room and just leave the key in the door when you leave in the morning.”



The room was taken up with a double bed, a fridge and a desk and if there had been a cat it would have been in no danger. The shower was good and I washed my cycling kit and hung it in the window to dry. Sopping wet shoes needed a long blast with the hair drier to get them anywhere near wearable and having given each of them 10 minutes with the hair drier I left them on the windowsill where they were dry in the morning. Overshoes went on the heated towel rail with my socks.

No food available at the Hotel but Girvan is a much bigger town than I had imagined (pop about 6400) and there were several choices for food in the evening. As there is a Chinese restaurant 90 yards up the road that’s where I went and enjoyed a spring roll whilst I ate and drank chicken noodle soup and then followed it with satay beef and egg fried rice, washed down with a couple of bottles of Tsingtao. A pleasant meal of generous portions. Much to my surprise on the other side of the main road from the restaurant was a large ASDA so I went in and bought a bottle of Malbec and some biscuits which I consumed whilst writing the blog.

My route today was relatively short and by the time I’d eaten my cold croissants with raspberry jam and a cherry flavoured yoghurt washed down with orange juice it was 0943 before I got away. I stopped and chatted about the weather with a kilted gentleman, who was staying in the hotel, whilst I loaded the bike: yes, he was pretty certain I’d get wet!

It was spitting and I was in full waterproofs as I cycled through the middle of the surprisingly large town and it was now understandable that ASDA had built a store there.

I emerged from the town onto the seafront cycle path into the usual head wind. At the edge of town there was a large car park with a Council loo block which was getting good use from the occupants of two coaches (one mainly Japanese) that had just parked. Anyone who wasn't in line for a pee was taking pictures of Ailsa Craig, now uninhabited but for thousands of sea-birds, particularly gannets and puffins. The hard granite of the island is used in making curling stones.



Then it was onto the A77 but with a proper cycle track for about the first seven miles. After that ran out it was on to a substantial hard shoulder until, just after Ballantrae, I made for the hills, leaving the traffic behind. The road was not well surfaced and I climbed up 600 feet into the low cloud. Nonetheless I quite enjoyed it and came thundering down to re-join the main road about 16.5 miles in. The way continued downhill until I once again saw the sea after 22 miles.

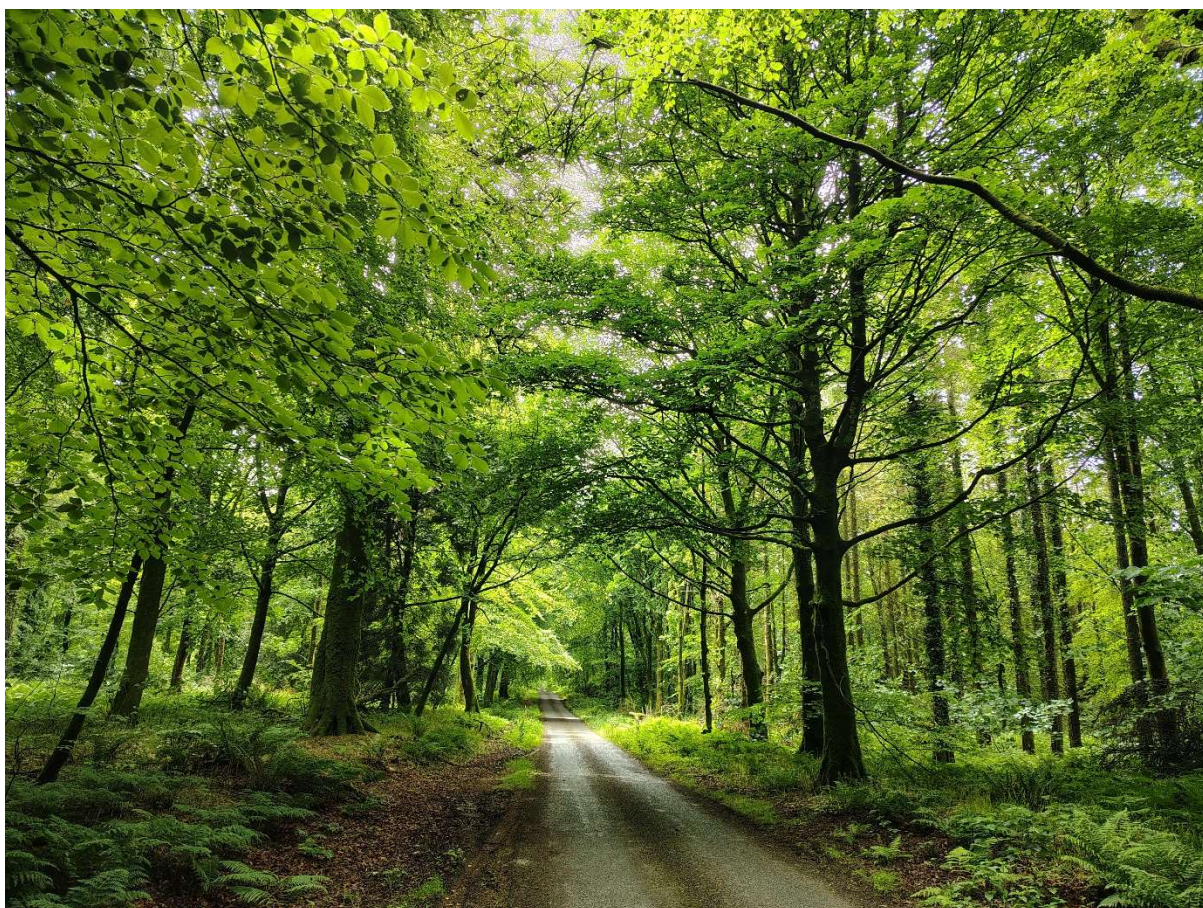


The traffic was much lighter than I had expected given that this is the main road from the Ayrshire coast to the ferry ports at Cairnryan



Loch Ryan is a wonderful natural harbour with protection from all but the worst north-westerly winds. Stena operate ferries to Belfast whilst P&O Ferries link with Larne.

I missed Stranraer and the Mull of Galloway. It would have added too much mileage, so I took to the hills once again finding myself on a track that became more like a river bed for a mile or so landing me in a large farmyard. Having got past that I was in woodland, the first I have really been in on this trip



However I was soon on the A75, wide enough with cycle track in many places and I was making pretty good time. I stopped to take a picture of the wild flowers beside the road



After 42 miles I came across an extraordinary bit of useless engineering. The main road became dual carriageway and alongside it was a well surfaced road open to all traffic but virtually unused and sandwiched between the two a dedicated cycle track – what a waste of money. I then had to make my way across both carriageways to leave the A75 behind for good and take to a lovely quiet country road through Forestry plantations



I surprised a dog walker and cyclist chatting in the middle of the road and continued on until I crossed the river Bladnoch, flowing fast and deep



As I was staying in the village of Bladnoch I thought that I must be getting close but no, there was still another 8 miles to travel. On the way I passed the Torhouse Stone Circle

Four thousand years ago this stone circle was built for a ceremonial purpose, now lost to us. The well-preserved circle has never been excavated.

WELCOME TO TORHOUSE STONE CIRCLE

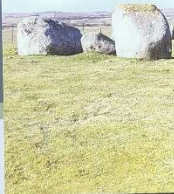


There are 19 dumpy granite boulders, the largest on the south-east side. The central setting of three stones may be an earlier burial cairn, with the circle erected later.

Left: An aerial view of the circle.

LOST LANDSCAPE

Torhouse is a hillside. A set of three stones stand to the east and a single standing stone lies to the south. They may represent three separate monuments built at different times, or perhaps a single complex.



STORIES IN STONE

'Standing stones of Torhouse, in which there is a monument of three large white stones, call'd King Galdus tomb.'

Andrew Symson, Minister of Kirkcubbin, 1684.

Prehistoric stones and burial sites are often linked with local stories of fairies, giants and legendary characters. Folklore claims that the central stones at Torhouse mark the tomb of King Galdus.

A mythical figure who supposedly fought the Romans and gave his name to Galloway (modern place name specialists have discredited this). The three stones nearby are held to mark the burial places of his generals.



And eventually pitched up at the Bladnoch Inn at about 3pm. Owner Derek greeted me and showed me my room and a berth for the bike. It's been an enjoyable day, largely dry but cold.

