

# THE IMMEASURABLE WILDS



TRAVELLING TO SCOTLAND WITH A  
VELOMOBILE



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# 1 Preface

*(Stolen without permission from Stuart at „Yellomobile.net“. I hope he will give me his consent when I get hold of him.)*

In the deepest, darkest recesses of the velonaut brain there is a seed of madness. It is the seed of speed. It is the need to go faster, for speed at all costs, for absolutely unreasonable amounts of velocity.

It was not always so. We all started out very practically – choosing our new machine to commute in comfort, or its protection from the elements, or its stability, or its year round abilities, and of course its aerodynamic properties which allow us to do more, with less energy.

But that was back in the beginning. We all wrote our checks with trembling pens in trembling hands and submitted our order after long and torturous deliberation. This was followed (for most of us) by a long and torturous wait for the machine to be built. When at last we proudly beheld our shiny new addiction in all its splendour, we quietly vowed to protect it like a child – our lovely little time machine.

First, a ride round the block to set our mind at ease, a week to become accustomed to the enclosure, a month to get used to people looking at you like a madman (or woman), two or three more to gain recumbent muscles and feel one with the machine, and then – the speed. You didn't notice the change but it's been happening all the time – the way your heavy vehicle now whizzes by ultra-light upright racers, the way you don't feel the wind anymore, the way you can now coast forever, and the way the brick wall of max speed has magically transformed into something soft as a pillow – something that can be pushed and negotiated with. That's where the madness begins...

You didn't realize, but it has taken that long to break down all of the accepted 'knowledge' about human power and machines. Sure, you realized that you would go a bit faster in a velomobile because of something called aerodynamics but it isn't until you become one with the machine that you suddenly realize you are doing something... superhuman. You have the power to propel yourself faster than you ever believed possible. And once that belief is broken, well, there are no limitations anymore. You've found that the only thing chaining you to the past was your past view of reality. And all of that has been swept away by the seed of speed.

Once you accept your madness, you find yourself subtly transported into the future and are blissfully free... to dream again.

## 2 A velomobile called EVA

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all? I am! Without any doubt; Beyss designed and built me in an enlightened moment. He found the ideal aesthetic form for the velomobile, and there will never be anything more beautiful. I emphasize the ideal aesthetic form, not the ideal practical form; but more on that later. He wasn't so gifted when it came to naming me. What's the point of EVO-R, why not EVA? Other velomobiles have all prettier names than me: MILAN, STRADA, etc. But I am the fairest! I have, or rather had, about 50 sisters; all of them as beautiful as me. One, with an olive complexion, rode to the North Cape. The others are spread across the globe and are protected and cared for like no other velomobile.

As the youngest, I stayed at home with Beyss for a long time until it was decided that my place would be in Switzerland with Dynamik. Dynamik initially wanted to pick me up himself in northern Germany. Luckily, Elmar (the guy who sold me to Dynamik) stopped him. Dynamik would never have been able to do it anyway. Elmar carefully drove me south in his van to the Swiss border. There, I was ceremoniously handed over to my new owner. Of course, not without the horrific story of the careless velomobile driver who missed the first bend and met his end in a forest ravine. Couldn't these people take better care of us?

I almost suffered the same fate. With more luck than sense, we narrowly missed an oncoming timber truck on the first long downhill stretch. Afterwards, there was a long break. My owner probably needed a whisky or something alike to recover from the shock. Then we continued leisurely and sensibly to Dynamik's house, where I found a warm and dry spot in his study.

My new owner thinks I'm the prettiest but not necessarily the most practical. Well, what do you expect from a beauty queen? They don't exactly make a good impression in the rain. He says I'm dangerous. Then he should take care of me and drive slowly. He didn't want to. So I was fitted with a rear brake. I also got new front wheels with cooling elements so that you can't fry eggs on my hubs after every downhill section. Then my beautiful top was cut in half so that you don't feel like you're in a coffin. The aerodynamics is still pretty good but now you get a bit wet in the rain. As I said, a beauty queen is not for rainy weather.



Rhine gorge near Versam

After all my supposed weaknesses had been ironed out, we set off on a sort of Mini-Tour de Suisse. Along the Rhine towards the mountains, over the Oberalp Pass, over the Furka Pass, and then down into the Valais. And then, just after Münster, the terrible thing happened. I still

get dizzy thinking about it. The route was perfectly straight with a downhill slope of about 5%. In no time, we had accelerated to 70 km/h, because after all, I was not only incredibly beautiful but also incredibly fast. People later said I took off like a rocket. Then, after the last house, it hit us. A gust of wind from the right, I tip slightly to the left, a steering correction, and I tip slightly to the right, another steering correction, and then everything happened very quickly. We slid for 200 meters on the tarmac. It seemed like an eternity. We finally came to a stop on a patch of grass. A nice lady said Dynamik was probably in shock and needed to be taken to the hospital. But he didn't want to hear about it. He didn't even care that my entire left side was scratched and even had a small hole in it.



After sliding 200 m on tarmac

Mirror, mirror on the wall...? Yes, that was once upon a time. Not since the Furka Pass incident, I suppose. And it wasn't my fault at all. My owner has spent his life dealing with structural dynamics, but he knows nothing about aerodynamics. So I just dream of better times in Dynamik's study. It's cold and wet outside, and that's not something for a princess anyway.

A package arrived for me today. I'm carefully hoisted onto a soft bed, the lights are switched on, and I undergo surgery. Since the operation shouldn't take longer than eight hours, Mrs. Dynamik didn't object. She's actually been very generous with me. She drives a three-wheeled model herself, albeit without the drapery. Apparently, she crossed the Death Valley and conquered the Andes with it. We can only dream of that.

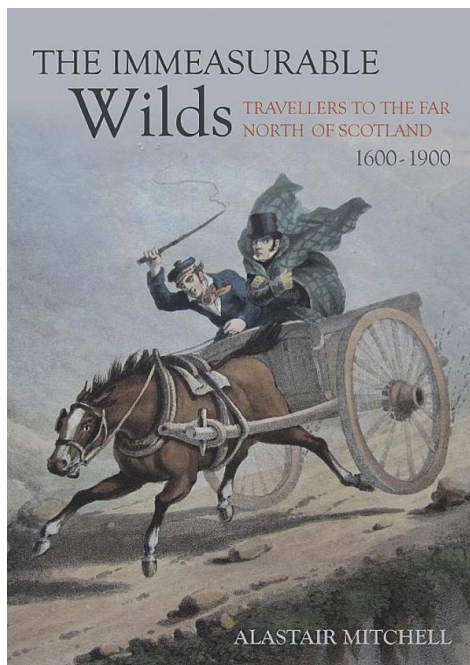
After eight hours, I'm back on my wheels. My injuries have healed, and now it's time for cosmetic surgery. And that takes a little longer for a beauty queen. After all, we owe it to our status. After two weeks, I'm back in Dynamik's study room again, flawless in my beauty, admired by everyone. Even Elmar stopped by for a quick visit. When asked who generally buys a beauty like me, he replied laconically: "Yes, those are people of a more mature age who buy themselves a piece of youth."



Now spring is coming again. After this incident on the Furka almost ten years have gone by. Every year Dynamik takes me on a long trip to the most remote corners of Europe. We have been in Sicily, in Spain, in Greece and even on the Isle of Man and in Korfu. And Dynamik has learned to handle me in an appropriate manner. This year Dynamik plans to go on a real long tour: An extended version of the famous "LEJOG" from Lands' End to John o'Groats. But we will start in Switzerland and we will also drive back. All in all we have to cover some 3'500 km. Of course Dynamik would never admit that he is doing a LEJOG, he is pursuing historical reasons as he explains below.

### 3 The Immeasurable Wilds

The title "The Immeasurable Wilds" is taken from a book written by Alastair Mitchell. The subtitle "Travellers to the Far North of Scotland 1600 - 1900" fascinated me. Wouldn't it be exciting to visit a country which 300 years ago was almost unknown to the average European? One of the most famous travellers was certainly Samuel Johnson, who made an epic tour to the Western Islands of Scotland in 1773. When Johnson asked Voltaire what he thought about this idea, he answered: "Well, as long as I don't have to go, it is certainly a good idea."



Travellers to the far North ...



The Velomobile EVA with DYNAMIK on the Col des Etroits near Ste. Croix in Switzerland

EVA that's me, the Velomobile of DYNAMIK. You know me from chapter 2. I have been with DYNAMIK in all corners of Europe but not yet in Scotland. DYNAMIK says, Scotland is wild and beautiful and he has an old friend there, whom we are going to visit. Every day I will put DYNAMIK's the daily notes in this place. And I will add all the incidents and details DYNAMIK would never write down.

## ***Dijon, 13.6.25***

*The Immeasurable Wilds: this is how the English scientists called the most Northerly part of Scotland. And this part I am going to visit with my velomobile EVA. (ALVA – my second velomobile – is still imprisoned in Greece.) It is still a long way to Scotland. To avoid frustration already on the first day Karin (my beloved wife and companion on two or three wheels) took me to the "Col des Etroits" (altitude 1250 m) in the car and from there it was mostly downhill, at least for the first sixty kilometres. But temperatures were rising the lower we got. As usual I hadn't cared to take water with me. I had chocolate with me in liquid state, but this didn't help much. It's not a good replacement for water. As I reached Dijon towards seven o'clock, I had 37°C in my velomobile.*

*Dijon was celebrating the 150th anniversary of their famous market place "Les Halles". It is a very nice steel structure like the Eiffel tower, but not so famous. The streets were crammed and everybody was enjoying an evening out in the warm air. I took refuge in an air conditioned restaurant. I'd had enough heat that day.*



*Dijon celebrating the 150th anniversary of their famous market place "Les Halles".*





*Our route of today*

## 4 Dijon – Troyes

DYNAMIK always preaches that before you are going to visit a country, you have to know and understand its history. And so he explained me how Scotland came into existence and how it lost its independence. It was in 1286 that the Scottish King Alexander III died. His only heir was his granddaughter Margaret, the Maid from Norway. She was actually brought up in Norway and in 1290 she boarded a ship to Orkney to become Queen of Scotland. But the weather was so bad she became terribly seasick and died shortly after her arrival in Kirkwall on the Isle of Orkney. Not everybody was convinced that it was just because of this seasickness but the fact was that Scotland was again without King and had fourteen noblemen who pretended they had the right to the throne. Not a very comfortable situation.

The next chapter of this simplified Scottish history is for tomorrow. There are still a few days till we reach the Scottish border. Let's turn to the diary page of DYNAMIK. It must have been a hard day. We drove through the loveliest countryside like the Val Suzon with its wild river but we didn't spend time there. DYNAMIK just kept pedalling.

### *Troyes, 14.6.25*

*Today was a fight against the heat and steep mountains. Three times I had to climb from 300 m to 600 m. In one small village a farmer was worried about my water supply and offered to fill up my water bottles. He had been a lorry driver in the time when lorries didn't yet have air conditioning and so he knew what heat means. After the last mountain it was time to stop for lunch. I found a small restaurant in an abandoned train station with tracks that hadn't seen a train for many years. Two Harley drivers were rather enthusiastic about my velomobile. But when I explained them that uphill meant going at 5 km/h and only downhill I reached 50 km/h, their interest was a bit reduced. At 6 a 'clock I reached the outskirts of Troyes and took the first hotel at hand. As it was Saturday, I didn't want to run the risk of finding no hotel room in the historic centre. Therefore we have no lovely pictures of historic Troyes. At least EVA had a safe place.*



*A safe place for EVA in the Hotel garage*



## 5 Troyes – Reims

As we said, Scotland was - in 1290 - left with fourteen rivals for succession but no king. To prevent civil war, the nobles of Scotland came up with a brilliant idea. Or was it the most idiotic idea? Why not ask Edward I of England if he couldn't be an impartial arbitrator. Well, Edward needed not be asked twice. He interpreted his new function for Scotland in his own way. Scotland should be a feudal dependency to England and from now on England would decide who was to become king of Scotland. Edward I chose John Balliol, a weak figure with no influence. And that's how Scotland lost its independence. But, as we will see, not for too long.

### *Reims 15.6.25*

*Today the long expected weather change set in. It really poured down. But as I was sitting at a nice breakfast table in the hotel, I didn't mind. When I took out my velomobile, it had already stopped and the temperature was much better than the day before.*

*From Troyes I headed northwards. The terrain was slightly rolling with light uphill sections followed by really fast downhill sections. Châlons-en-Champagne is a good stop for lunch with nice old buildings in the old town centre. In the direction to Reims I took first the A4 but this road was too busy. I left the A4 and zigzagged a little through the countryside until a bicyclist told me that there was a nice path along the canal. And this was certainly the best part of today's ride. The canal "almost" brought me right into the centre of Reims. "Almost" because there is an elevator for bicycles from the canal path to the road leading straight to the cathedral. But EVA was just 10 cm too long and so I had to make a long detour.*



*Along the canal right into the centre of Reims*



*The cathedral of Reims, a real marvel*





*Our route of today*

## 6 Reims – Valenciennes

As was to be expected, Edward I did everything to undermine both the authority of King John and the independence of Scotland. But a new lead figure for Scotland appeared in the person of Robert the Bruce. After several battles and internal intrigues and murders Bruce was crowned as King Robert I in March 1306. Edward I had died and in 1314 his heir Edward II moved with a large army northwards to break the siege of Stirling Castle, the last castle still under English control. And here in the memorable battle of Bannockburn Robert, with his small Scottish army, defeated the much larger English army and secured thus the de facto independence of Scotland. In 1320 in the Declaration of Arbroath Pope John XXII confirmed the Sovereignty of Scotland? The Abbey of Arbroath (we will certainly visit this place) is the place where Scotland is born as an independent Nation. But it didn't stay so for too long.

However, we are still in France, the country with which Scotland has an "Auld Alliance". The terms of the treaty stipulated that if either country were attacked by England, the other country would invade English territory. Presently there is no danger of this sort and DYNAMIK could write his diary in peace.

### *Valenciennes, 16.6.2025*

*A new wonderful day, sunny but not too hot. I left Reims in direction of Laon, where I had my first "Café au lait avec Croissant". EVA first got a lot of attention but then the guests returned to their main occupation, which was filling out lottery forms.*

*Towards midday I reached Guise where I had a short lunch on a bench in the city park. An old man (like me) kept me company and explained that I had to visit the "Familistere" created by Godin. He had been working at Godin's his whole life. 1200 workers lived and worked there but it has been sold and only 120 are now working there.*

*What he didn't tell me was that 1840 Godin built a foundry to produce iron stoves. All the profit from this business was used to build a palace with over 1000 roomy flats for the workers. They had schools for the children, insurance for the employees and even a theatre. At the end of the year the remaining surplus was distributed among the employees. It worked fine as long as Godin was alive but not any longer.*

*What Godin achieved is a utopia come true. Obviously this is possible even in Capitalism, but only if the owner is involved in governing the company. In large public companies the owners are the shareholders and the company is governed by CEO's. And the CEO's have been appointed to increase the profit and not the wellbeing of the employees. The exploitation of labour has been delegated.*





*The Familistere in Guise*

*After 150 km I reached Valenciennes and there I found the most beautiful hotel I have ever visited. "Auberge du bon fermier" is more than 500 years old and I have been told that Louis XIV was there too.*



*The most beautiful hotel "Auberge du Bon Fermier" in Valenciennes*

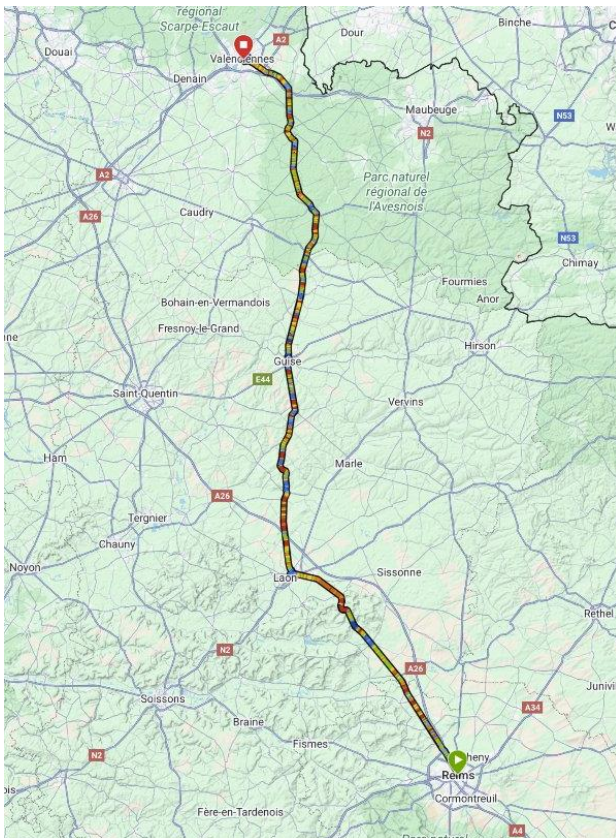




*The narrow staircase leading to my room*



*Supper in a historic surrounding*



*Our route of today*



## 7 Valenciennes – Vlissingen

As DYNAMIK never plans ahead we have two more days on the continent. He will explain that in his diary. And this way we have two days more for the short history of Scotland. As we said Scotland gained its independence 1320. And in 1328 Edward III signed the treaty of Edinburgh acknowledging Scottish independence under the rule of Robert the Bruce. And everything could have been fine. However the battles with England went on but Scotland bravely kept its independence. But some 200 years later in the year 1503 the Scottish King James IV married Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII of England. And what might have been a family affair led eventually to Scotland's loss of independence. But more about that later. Let's see how DYNAMIK explains his brilliant planning.

### *Vlissingen 17.6.25*

*Yesterday evening I had an unpleasant surprise. When I looked up the ferry departure in Zeebrügge, I found out that this ferry doesn't operate anymore. During Covid it was decided that there is too little demand and that was the end of the ferry. So there is no ferry from Zeebrügge to Hull. It almost looked as if I had to bury my Scotland project. But then I found an alternative: the Amsterdam to Newcastle ferry. It just means 200 km more in Belgium and the Netherlands but also 200 km less in England. And the bit from Zeebrügge to Amsterdam is supposed to be one of the most scenic routes: Some ferries, some bridges and a lot of coast.*

*Crossing Belgium and the Netherlands with a velomobile is a treat. It is absolutely flat and the pavement is good. I took the bicycle road along the "Schelde-Kanal" to Gent, a section I can highly recommend: Beautiful landscape and good pavement. In Gent I had to restock energy with a large plate of spaghetti Bolognese and three cokes. When bicycling you are allowed to do that. Gent is very interesting with lots of Palaces and Churches. Then I headed northwards towards Breskens, my first ferry port. And indeed, there was a small ferry especially operating for bicyclists. And this ferry brought me to Vlissingen, the destination of that day.*



*Chocolate and cake in Tournay*





*Gent with its wonderful palaces and churches*



*The Ferry to Vlissingen especially for pedestrians and cyclists*



*Our route of today*



## 8 Vlissingen – Den Haag

In 1603 James VI of Scots inherited the throne of England. It seems there was no other heir around or was it due to some intrigues? And overnight Scotland, Ireland and England were united under one person. Of course they were officially independent but the idea of James VI was to create a new "Imperial" throne of "Great Britain". Two generations later in 1660 under Charles II Scotland again became an independent kingdom. James VII followed his brother (Charles II) on the throne, but he was a fervent Catholic and thus not very popular. All hope was on his daughter Mary (a Protestant) who had married William of Orange of the Netherlands (that's where we are right now). But when James VII produced a male heir and England and Scotland had little inclination to return to Catholicism, his life was in danger and he abdicated. Mary and William were put on the throne but the disposed James still lingered in the background. But that's for later. Let's see what DYNAMIK is writing about the Netherlands.

### *Den Haag, 18.6.25*

*The Netherlands are the country of bike routes with all advantages and disadvantages. The biggest disadvantage is that on most normal roads bicycles are forbidden. And it is almost impossible to find your way on the bike lanes as these bike lanes have very few street signs. But once you have found the right bike lane like the bike lane along the coast, you are perfectly fine with a velomobile and you can travel at tremendous speed.*



*Barrier north of Neeltje Jans, an artificial island built for the construction of the barriers*

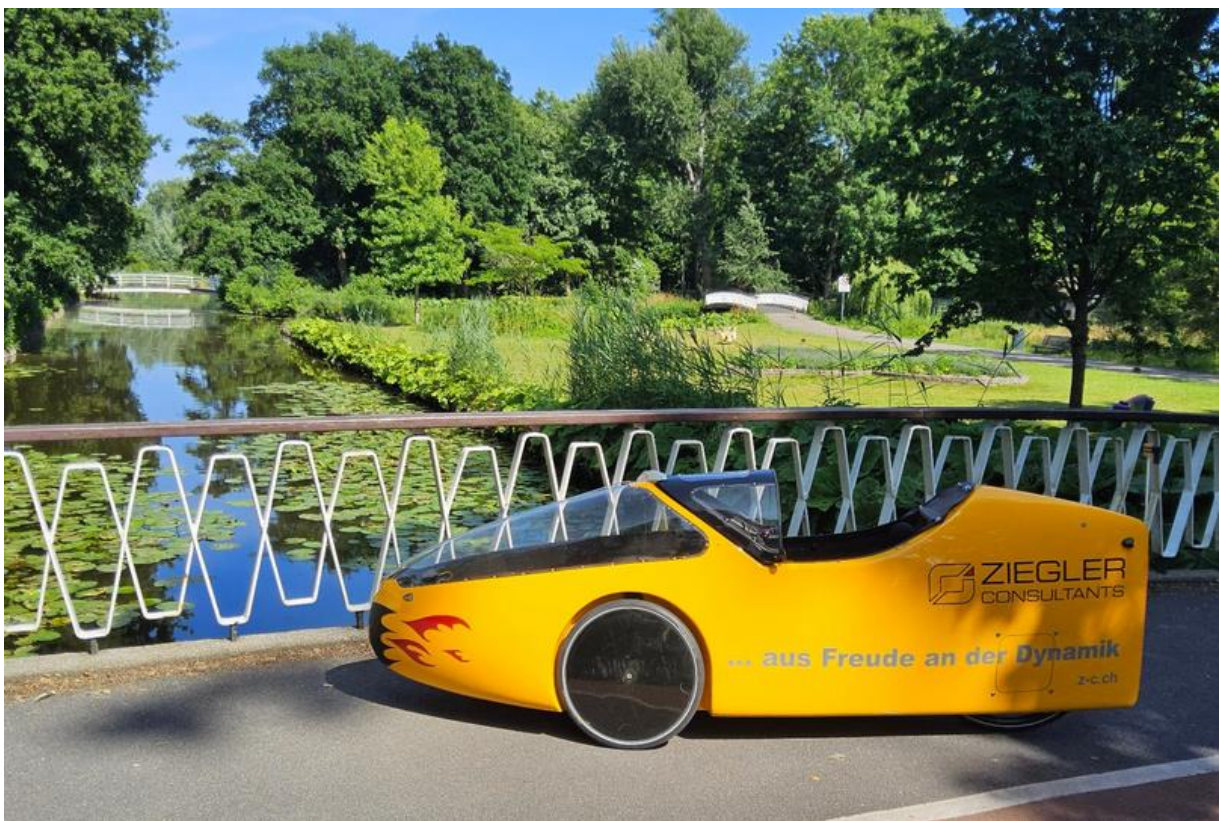
*The bike lane along the coast, over the barriers and across some islands, was really beautiful. The barriers were built to prevent flooding of the low lying parts of the Netherlands. Originally designed as simple dams they have eventually been built as barriers that can be opened and closed. Normally the barriers are open and do not influence the habitat of the area inside the barriers. Only at very high tides the barriers are closed and protect the land inside.*





*Riding on these dams is a dream*

*The crossing of the big harbour of Rotterdam was a bit difficult. For bicycles there is a tunnel, but first you have to find it. Luckily a nice co-bicyclist offered to show me the right way. On the other side of the harbour I headed towards Delft. Here the bike lanes run through a fairy land: Old trees and water streams with lovely bridges.*



*Fairyland just outside of Rotterdam (close to Schidam)*



*To find my way I just kept a more or less northerly direction and suddenly I was in the old part of Den Haag. And that was a good place to stop.*



*Old town of Den Haag*



*Our ride of today*

## 9 Den Haag – IJmuiden

For 400 years Scotland was an independent nation. It fought innumerable battles against England and did not surrender. But in the year 1707 Scotland was united with England in the so called "Union Act". The Scots did not lose their independence in a battle but Scotland was sold by their own magistrates. How come? The main factor was the Scottish attempt to build a colony where we have today the Panama Canal. An incredible amount of money was put by the Scottish nobles in the chest of the "Company of Scotland" in order to build a colony in the Darién Gap, where the distance between Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean is only 100 km. The idea was brilliant and promised incredible wealth and influence. Scotland would - if successful - control the world trade. But it was a complete failure. Most of the colonists died and Scotland lost about 25 % of all its money. And in this situation England achieved what it did not achieve on the battlefield. England promised to pay the loss from the Darién disaster if the Scottish parliament would agree to the Union Act. And the nobility of Scotland agreed to unite Scotland with England.

### *IJmuiden, 19.6.25*

*Today I had to find my way again through the maze of bike lanes. But I made it surprisingly fast to the sea side of Den Haag and there was the Coast Bike Lane. Once on this lane, it is pretty easy. The Coast Bike Lane follows - as you would expect - the coast line, meandering nicely between dunes and sometimes through forest. I was in no hurry as I planned to stay another night in the Netherlands and take the ferry on the following day in IJmuiden.*



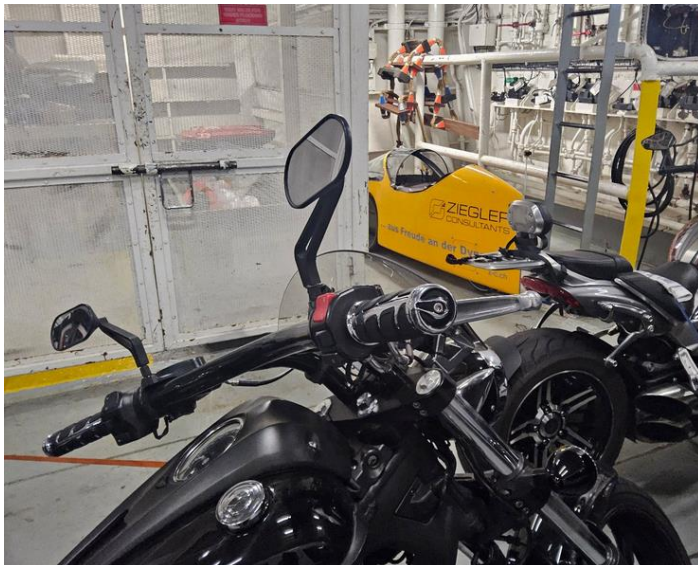
*Quite a few cyclists on the Coastal path to IJmuiden*



*In Catwik it was time for hot chocolate and cake. Sweets are excellent in the Netherlands. Slowly I proceeded northwards enjoying the superb Coast Bike Lane through the dunes. Towards two o'clock I reached the harbour of IJmuiden and drove up to the ticket office to ask for the exact departure time of the ferry tomorrow. "Oh, there is one leaving right now", the lady at the counter replied. She quickly made out the ticket and I got on the boat. Sometimes it is best to do no planning at all.*



*Leaving the continent*



*EVA on the ferry in good company with motorbikes*



*Our ride of today*

*Now I am sitting in a comfortable armchair, watching the waves slowly pass by. The speed matches nicely the speed I had with my velomobile the last seven days. In these seven days I have covered about 1000 km. The boat will cover another 1000 km and then I will have reached Scotland or at least the Southern tip.*

## 10 Newcastle – Eyemouth

With the "Union act" the question about the status of Scotland was actually settled. But the last chapter of Scotland's independence was written on the battlefield. In 1745 the son of the disposed King James VII, better known as "Bonny Prince Charlie" landed in Scotland with a large army in the Western Isles. After some initial success he had to draw back his troops and in Culloden, not far from Inverness, it came to the final disastrous battle. Within two hours the army of the Bonny Prince suffered an overwhelming and bloody defeat. While more than 2000 of his soldiers lost their lives on the battlefield, Bonny Prince Charlie could escape and flee to the Western Isles. With the help of a young woman (Flora Macdonald), who put him in the cloths of her maid, he managed to reach the Isle of Skye. There he boarded a French ship, which ferried him to France. He never returned to Scotland. But for Scotland this defeat had long lasting consequences: Scots were not allowed to carry weapons and the wearing of the tartan, the traditional clothing of the Scots, was prohibited. Even bagpipes were banned.

This was in the years after Culloden, i.e. after 1745. Now, 280 years later, Scotland is a prosperous part of Great Britain. The tartan and the bagpipes are an important part of Scottish culture. Millions of tourists are pouring into Scotland every year to admire the traditional costumes and to listen to the sound of the bagpipes. Today DYNAMIK crossed the border of Scotland. Maybe this short history of Scotland helps to better understand what we find today in this land full of old castles and other historic sites.

### *Eyemouth, 20.6.25*

*At 10 o'clock I left the ferry and headed northwards. It's a different world here: All these old brick buildings and old churches. Everything is so neat*



*Typical English houses in North Shields (North of Newcastle)*



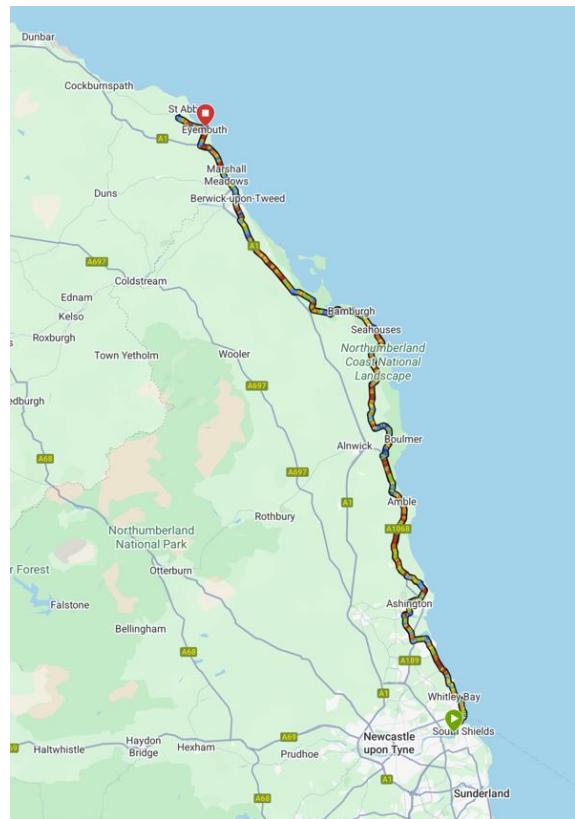
*Outside Newcastle I followed the small roads along the coast. I passed Alnwick and later Berwick using mostly the Coastal Road. And then I crossed the Scottish border. You can't miss it. They have big signs.*



*Coastal Road near Bamburgh*



*Crossing the Scottish border*



*Our ride of today*

*Eyemouth was the place I had selected for tonight. But without a hotel reservation it can get very exciting. A group of girls from the football ground shouted as they saw me and accompanied me to the first hotel. But we had no success. Two other hotels in the centre of the village were also full. It's because in Scotland the summer holidays have already started, I have been told. While I was leaving Eyemouth not really knowing what to do, a woman exclaimed in the nicest Scottish dialect that my velomobile was really beautiful. I took this opportunity to ask her about a B&B. She was so nice and phoned all her friends but to no avail. Eventually she called the restaurant "The Ships quarter". Nobody answered. She called a few other friends but nobody had a free room. Eventually she could reach someone at the Ships quarter. They had rooms but they were not ready for guests. Only the restaurant was open. Upon some discussion about my desperate situation they found a solution and I got a room. No idea how she made it. Sometimes in life you need an exceptional portion of good luck.*



*Sunset in Eyemouth*



## 11 Eyemouth – Kirkcaldy

Now we are really in Scotland. The first historic site appeared already in the morning when we approached Dunbar: The Memorial for the battle of Dunbar 1650 where Cromwell defeated the Scots. Unfortunately Cromwell does not appear in my short history of Scotland. DYNAMIK said that Cromwell didn't have a lasting effect. For today a visit of Stirling castle and of the battlefield of Bannockburn was planned. Both places belong to the most important historic sites of Scotland. But as rain set in, DYNAMIK decided to take the shortcut over the famous bridge over the Firth of Forth. So no pictures of Stirling and Bannockburn.

### *Kirkcaldy, 21.6.25*

*A sunny morning waited for me. In Eyemouth it was almost too hot. We made a short stop in Dunbar to visit the memorial of the battle in 1650, when Cromwell defeated the Scots. In Dunbar I also got an adapter for EU-UK. Yesterday, in Eyemouth, I discovered that my adapter had remained on my desk at home. Without an adapter I can't charge my equipment and that is the reason why the Garmin plot below is not quite complete.*



*Memorial for the battle of Dunbar 1650*

*Soon the fog set in. In Edinburgh it was really cold. I skipped the old town of Edinburgh and followed the seafront instead to find the access to the big bridges. I didn't even know which one was open for bicycles. Finally I got on the cable stayed bridge. There is a large lane on the left side which nobody used. So I assumed this was my lane. It is an impressive feeling to cross the Firth of Forth with a tiny velomobile on such a huge bridge.*

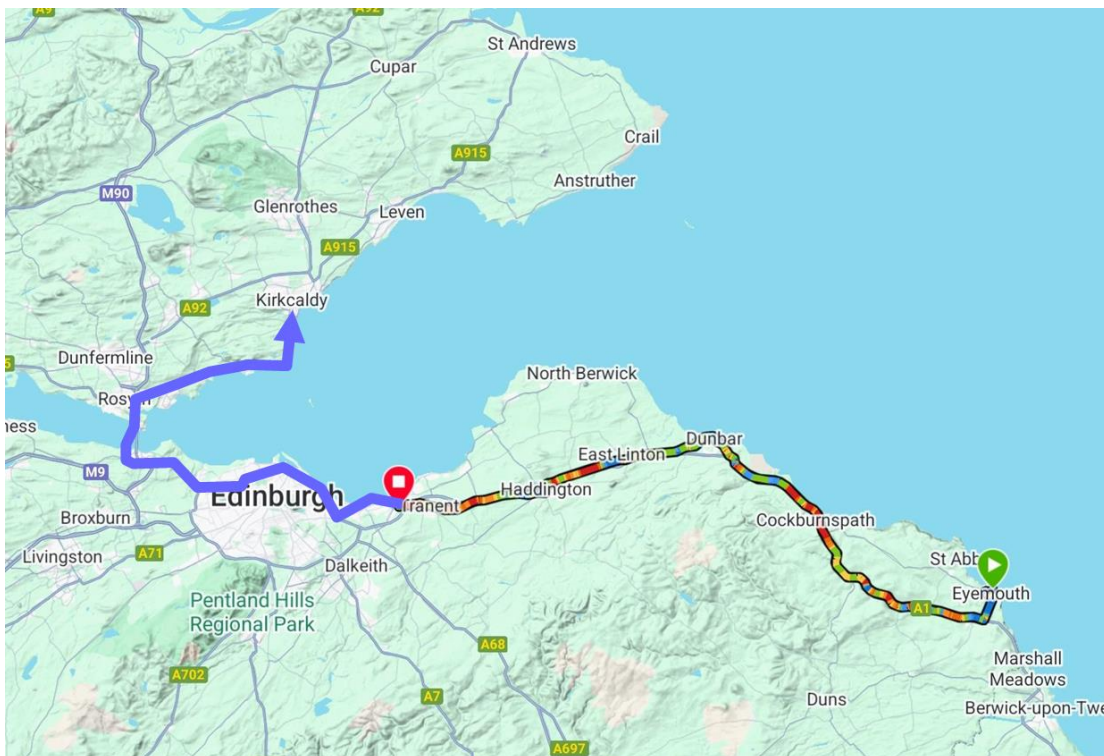
*Meanwhile it started to rain and I stopped for a late lunch. But soon the sun came out again and I continued westward. At four a clock I made the first attempt at getting a hotel room. No*

luck, but the receptionist was very helpful and secured me a room in the next town of Kirkcaldy. It is not a hotel I would have chosen myself: Modern and outside of the town. But on a Saturday evening you certainly can't be choosy. The town of Kirkcaldy is nothing special and the seafront even less.



Seafront of Kirkcaldy

Back in the hotel I discovered that the adapter from Dunbar was not EU - UK but India - UK. The receptionist of the hotel (being from India as well) promised to solve the problem. But he wasn't successful. Eventually with a screwdriver and a plyer, I made it work.



Our ride of today



## 12 Kirkcaldy – Stonehaven

Traveling to Scotland in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was an adventure probably like canoeing the Amazonas for us today. Samuel Johnson - the famous English writer - was one of the first to embark on such an adventure. In 1773 at the age of sixty-three (well that is ten years younger than DYNAMIK) he travelled with his friend Boswell from Edinburgh to Inverness and then further westwards to the Hebrides.

Our journey of today from Kirkcaldy to Stonehaven is what Johnson and Boswell covered in four days in a cart drawn by two small horses. Johnson was impressed by the quality of the roads. He writes: "Where the bottom is rocky, as it seems commonly to be in Scotland, a smooth way is made indeed with great labour."

In St. Andrews they visited the ruins of the Cathedral. In disappointment he writes: " ... even the ruins cannot long be visible, unless some care be taken to preserve them; and where is the pleasure of preserving such mournful memorials? They have been till very lately so much neglected, that every man carried away the stones who fancied that he wanted them." Well, Johnson might be surprised if he saw the ruins today.

Of course they also visited Arbroath Abbey. Johnson writes: "The monastery of Aberbrothik is of great renown in the history of Scotland. Its ruins afford ample testimony of its ancient magnificence: Its extent might, I suppose, easily be found by following the walls among the grass and weeds." Again, Johnson would be surprised to see how well the Abbey of Arbroath is reconstructed.

They proceeded northwards to Aberdeen. Johnson notes: "We travelled on with the gentle pace of a Scotch driver, who having no rivals in expedition, neither gives himself nor his horses unnecessary trouble." But they reached Aberdeen four days after leaving Edinburgh.

Now let's see what DYNAMIK writes about this part of the journey.

### ***Stonehaven, 22.6.25***

*Today was a historic day. The first stop was St. Andrews with its famous Cathedral: Famous for the romantic ruins. And then St. Andrews has the oldest University of Scotland. While I was having a hot chocolate with cake just in front of the cathedral ruins, a young man asked me if I was the owner of the velomobile outside. He himself also owned a velomobile and he even knew the sad story about my velomobile ALVA who is kept prisoner in Greece. ALVA seems to be worldfamous.*



*Ruins of the Cathedral of St. Andrews*

*The next stop was Arbroath. The Abbey of Arbroath is the place where in 1330 the Sovereignty of Scotland was confirmed by the pope. For the next 400 years Scotland was an independent kingdom. But in 1710 Scotland became again part of the UK.*



*Abbey of Arbroath*



*From Arbroath I travelled further along the coast to Montrose and finally to Stonehaven. Stonehaven is a good place to stop: A nice harbour and the ruins of Dunnottar castle. Dunnottar castle is best known as the place where the Scottish Crown Jewels were hidden from Cromwell.*



*Ruins of Dunnottar Castle*



*Our ride of today*



### 13 Stonehaven – Buckie

Johnson and Boswell made virtually the same itinerary from Aberdeen to Elgin as DYNAMIK did today. They visited the Buller of Buchan and were excited. They must have found the right path to the spectacular rock formation. DYNAMIK somehow got lost on the muddy path but he won't mention this in the diary. Johnson writes: "... we soon turned our eyes to the Buller of Buchan, which no man can see with indifference, who has either sense of danger or delight in rarity." The rest of the journey was rather boring for Johnson. He was also a bit upset about the dinner they got in Elgin. He writes: "About noon we came to Elgin, where in the inn, which was supposed to be the best, a dinner was set before us, which we could not eat. This was the first time, and except one, the last, that I found any reason to complain of a Scottish table."



The spectacular rock formation of the Buller of Buchan, which we tried to find but didn't. This picture is from Internet.

Now let's see what DYNAMIK writes in his diary:

#### ***Buckie, 23.6.25***

*This morning at six o'clock the sun was already up in the sky but the hotel didn't offer breakfast. So I was quite early on the road. In no time I reached Aberdeen and could cross the town before the traffic was too bad. While I was heading towards Peterhead, dark clouds appeared and it started to rain: A good moment for a stop at Cruden Bay to get a full Scottish Breakfast. A full Scottish breakfast consists of Lorne sausage (square sausage), link sausages, haggis, black pudding, tattie scones (potato scones), bacon and eggs, fried mushrooms and tomatoes, baked beans and buttered toast. That should last for the whole day. An hour later the rain had stopped and I carried on.*



*A short visit to the Bullers of Buchan (a famous cliff formation) was not really exciting as the footpath was muddy and slippery.*



*Bullers of Buchan*

*Peterhead and Fraserburgh are both big fishing towns but not really attractive: Rows of derelict old industrial buildings and huge modern industrial buildings, all connected to the fishing industry. But after Fraserburgh the scenery changed. This part of the coast, between Fraserburgh and Inverness, is really beautiful and untouched by modern time.*





*The coast after Fraserburgh*

*The road is often close to the water but with a few detours over steep hills. On one occasion I had to push my Velomobile as the gradient was 17 %.*



*Here I had to push EVA. You can't see it in the picture but it was really steep.*



*This coast has also a large number of old fishing ports which seem virtually untouched by modern fishing industry. Buckie is one of those and here I found a lovely old hotel, the Brigg and Barrel.*



*My hotel in Buckie*



*Our ride of today*

## 14 Buckie – Durnoch

In Inverness we left the itinerary of Johnson and Boswell. We headed north while Johnson and Boswell turned to the west at Inverness and made their way to the Western Isles. It seems that Johnson was a bit disappointed. He writes: "We came thither too late to see what we expected, a people of peculiar appearance, and a system of antiquated life ... Of what they had before the late conquest of their country, there remains only their language and their poverty." I guess DYNAMIK was quite happy that things have turned to the better. Perfect roads, excellent food and a warm bed every evening.

Today DYNAMIK has been showing off his knowledge of Scottish history but in the wrong place. In a coffee shop not far from Dingwall he had a long discussion with a motorbike rider. This motorbike rider was really excited about me. He was also quite knowledgeable in history. For a long time they talked about Scottish history and DYNAMIK (thinking that the motorbike rider was certainly Scottish) dwelt on the unfairness and the injustice of the English towards the Scots. Only to find out at the end of the discussion that the motorbike rider was English, not Scottish.

### *Durnoch, 24.6.25*

*The day started well with half a Scottish breakfast. That was more than enough for me and the road ahead. The road was easy, good tarmac and no mountains. At eleven o'clock I reached Nairn. Nairn is a place to remember. My wife Karin and I have been here on our first holiday together. That was back in 1972. That's more than 53 years ago. It's still a lovely town and I had a commemorative hot chocolate.*



*Nairn, a lovely old town*



*I continued on the coastal road to Inverness and entered the county of Sutherland. Some 800 years earlier this bit of land was owned by the Norwegian Kings and for them this area is in the South, hence the name.*



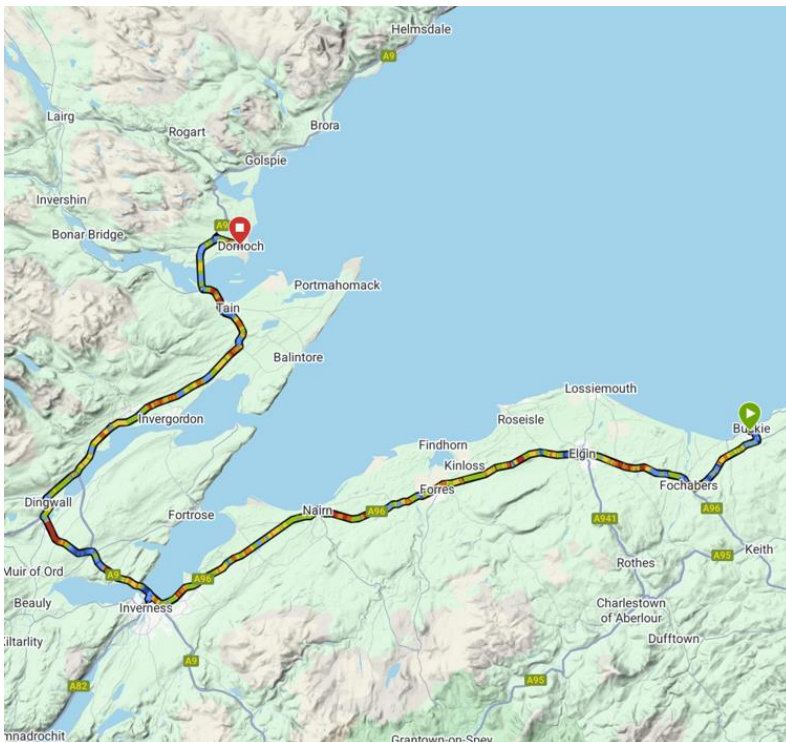
*Crossing the Dornoch Firth*

*It is still quite flat here and I could find no wild things; except the prices for the hotels. We are now in the neighbourhood of Dunrobin Castle and this seems to increase the prices somewhat. The hotel I found in Durnoch is called the Castle Hotel but it never was a castle, it is a converted old farmhouse. They have preserved the old structure and everything is nicely done. We are here also in Whisky country. On the small table in my room there isn't bottle of water as usual but a small bottle of whisky. Best quality.*





*My hotel in Dornoch*





## 15 Dornoch – Wick

Today we are driving up the most Northerly part of Scotland, a part which only a few travellers ventured to visit in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Bishop Forbes made the journey from Inverness to Thurso in 1762. Mitchell writes in his book *The Immeasurable Wilds*: "(The Bishop) having left his wife in Inverness as he knew just how poor the roads would be, and having forded the river at Helmsdale, he was then faced with Ord Hill, and proudly announced that he 'rode up every inch of it, a thing rarely done by any persons ... Its steepness, and being all along on the very brink of a precipice are the only difficulties'. It was so steep 'that no machine can be drawn up it by any cattle whatsoever, unless it be empty; and even then, there must be some sturdy fellows at the back of it pushing it forward to assist the horses; for if they are allowed to make the least stop, backward they must tumble by the very declivity of the place.

I guess DYNAMIK has seen steeper hills in Switzerland and having a gearing of 32 (in front) to 46 (in the rear) crawled up the "terrible hill" at a leisurely pace.

### *Vick, 25.6.25*

*Dunrobin Castle was - without any doubt - the highlight of the day. It is a fairy tale castle par excellence. It stands upon a rock and overlooks a fantastic garden and a vast blue sea. The rooms are beautiful and nicely furnished. Even the doll houses for the duke's children can be seen. We were shown tamed falcons and hawks and it is quite amazing what these birds can do.*



*Dunrobin Castle*





*Stunning view from the terrace*



*The library (guarded by two lions)*





*One of the dining rooms (unfortunately I was not invited)*





### *A child's dream*

*After chocolate and cake in the castle cafeteria I went back on the road. North of Helmsdale the steepest bit awaited me. This steep part was dreaded already 300 years before our time and most people took the inland route instead. But in a velomobile with good gearing and a lot of patience this is no problem. Twenty kilometres before Wick, the destination for today, my batteries were down. Refuelling was needed in a bakery. The lady admired EVA and wanted to know where I was coming from. When I told her that I had pedalled all the way from Switzerland, she exclaimed: "How insane". But her hot chocolate and cake were superb and brought me safely to Wick.*





*After the steep ascent of Helmsdale the road was flat again till Wick*



*Our ride of today*

## 16 Wick – John o’Groats

Today DYNAMIK has reached the final destination of his journey. Most people after reaching John o' Groats load their bike in the car of friends or on a bus and travel homewards. I guess they are happy to have reached the goal and also a bit sad that all is over now. I bet that DYNAMIK was sincerely happy that this is not possible with a velomobile. He had to ride home himself. And this gave him another two weeks of velomobile fun.

### *John o' Groats, 26.6.25*

*The shortest street of the whole world - according to Guinness - has a length of 2.06 m. And is actually the front door of Makays Hotel, the hotel I slept in yesterday. Luckily I didn't get the triangular room over the front door. The street has one number and this is the bistro in the hotel.*



*The shortest street in the world*



*The first thing this morning was to call Bob. Bob is an old friend of mine, retired captain of large ships and lives near John o'Groats. He has sailed all the seas of the world and every time he and his wife came to visit us in Switzerland he had so many interesting stories to tell. He had been retired already many years and lived in a lovely cottage on the most northerly edge of Scotland. Of course I wanted to visit him. His wife answered the phone and told me that Bob was in the hospital in Wick, just opposite the hotel I had been sleeping on that night. I went straight to the hospital and found Bob sitting on his bed with a nice breakfast in front of him. I put my arm around his shoulders and asked: "Hey Bob, what are you doing here?" He chuckled and with a smile he said: "I am trying to die". We both laughed but didn't know that this should be the last time that we met.*

*I left Wick and before lunchtime reached John o' Groats, the final destination of my trip: 1800 km on three wheels without the slightest problem. The place was full of bicyclists and everybody shared their stories. It was a nice gathering. A young woman arrived on her racing bike. She had just made it from Lands' End to John o' Groats. "Yes, there were a few more mountains than I have expected" she said. But she made it. A couple from Australia had made it on foot. It took them three months. All of them were happy and ready to talk about their unique journey.*



*John o' Groats, the final goal of so many bicycle tours*

*The Castle of Mey and its gardens were the next highlight. The Queen Mother used to come there. The castle has a huge walled garden with wonderful flowers. In the main dining room there is a stag's head. The story goes that the Queen Mother once said that each castle must have a stag's head. So a friend brought her a stag's head made of fur. It looked a little bit like a teddy bear with antlers. The big ears covered the eyes. "No wonder he was shot" the Queen Mother said, "he couldn't see properly".*





*Castle May and its famous walled garden*



*A paradise of roses*



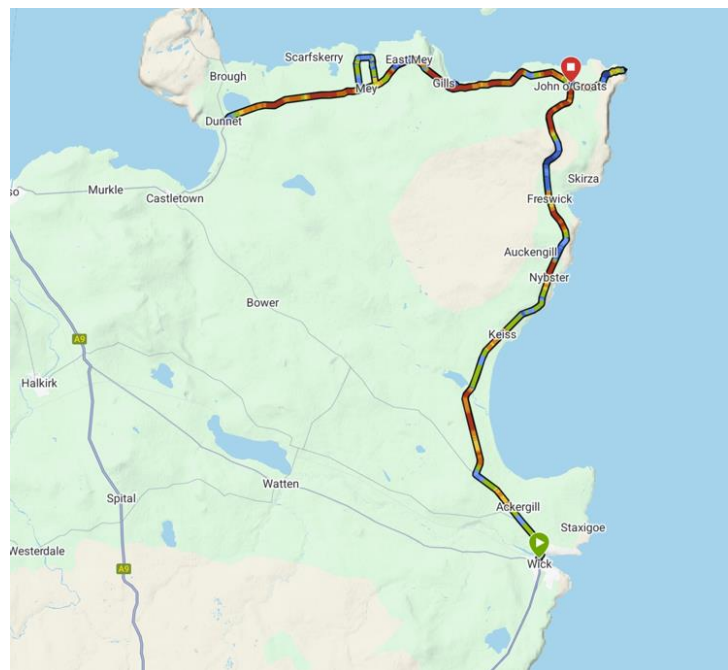
*Finally I paid a visit to the Duncansby Stacks. And even the sun was slightly cooperative for the picture.*



*The Duncansby Stacks*



*Rock formation near the Duncansby Stacks*



*Our ride of today*



## 17 John o'Groats – Kirkwall

This morning DYNAMIK faced a difficult decision: Which way to take for the way back to Switzerland? Follow the northern coast to cape Wrath and from there take the road over the mountains to Inverness or visit the Orkneys and take the ferry back to Aberdeen. He has been on the Orkneys, but that was ten years ago. Not with me but with his wife and on two Scorpion trikes. Since then I guess the National Health System (NHS) has a questionable reputation in Scotland. His wife went into a pharmacy to buy some sun cream while DYNAMIK was waiting with the Scorpions outside. A Scotsman approached DYNAMIK and asked if the woman was disabled that she had to use such a vehicle. DYNAMIK answered: "Yes, the woman has difficulties walking. So NHS has paid her this trike. They are also paying me and my trike to assist her on her travels." The Scotsman stamped off in dismay, knowing now where his money is so badly squandered.

### *Kirkwall, 27.6.25*

*A weather forecast in Scotland is quite simple: It will be sunny with rain in between and lots of wind or the other way round. Usually this fits. Today I started in John o' Groats in a drizzle. And as the sun did not show signs of appearing I decided to take the ferry to the Orkneys. During the ferry crossing the weather turned to bright sunshine so I had a nice welcome in St. Margaret's Hope.*

*The first stop was the Italian Chapel. Italian prisoners of war who were working on the Churchill Barriers during WW II built this chapel during their free time. Apart from being confined, they seemed to have had a relatively good time. They played football against the British and were quite good at it. Once they caught a seagull and painted one wing green and the other red and shouted: "Italian airplanes in the sky". For this they were severely punished for cruelty against animals.*



*The Italian Chapel made of a WW II barack*





*With a lot of dedication the Italian prisoners of war created a place of worship*

*Now I am sitting in a cafe bistro in Kirkwall with hot chocolate and cake. I have already visited the cathedral. It has an impressive size and is rather beautiful inside. As soon as it is brightening up outside, I will further explore the town. Tonight at 11 o' clock I will take the ferry to Aberdeen.*

*Ten years ago my wife and I have visited the Orkney and the Shetland Islands with our Scorpion Trikes. The scenery is fantastic but it is a harsh surrounding. It is not easy to live here. We visited friends who own a house with a garden close to the sea. They had to build high stone walls around the garden to protect it against the constant wind. Their neighbours had their entire kitchen garden in a poly-tunnel greenhouse.*

*From our friends we learned also that the saying that "Scots are parsimonious" is not entirely unfounded. Back in Switzerland on a hiking tour with them we had a small lunch consisting of cheese, dried meat and bread. As I don't like cheese rind I did cut it off quite generously. "Oh no!" our Scottish friend said, "You can eat at least half of it" and cut the cheese rind after their tradition.*





*Kirkwall Cathedral*



*Main entrance*

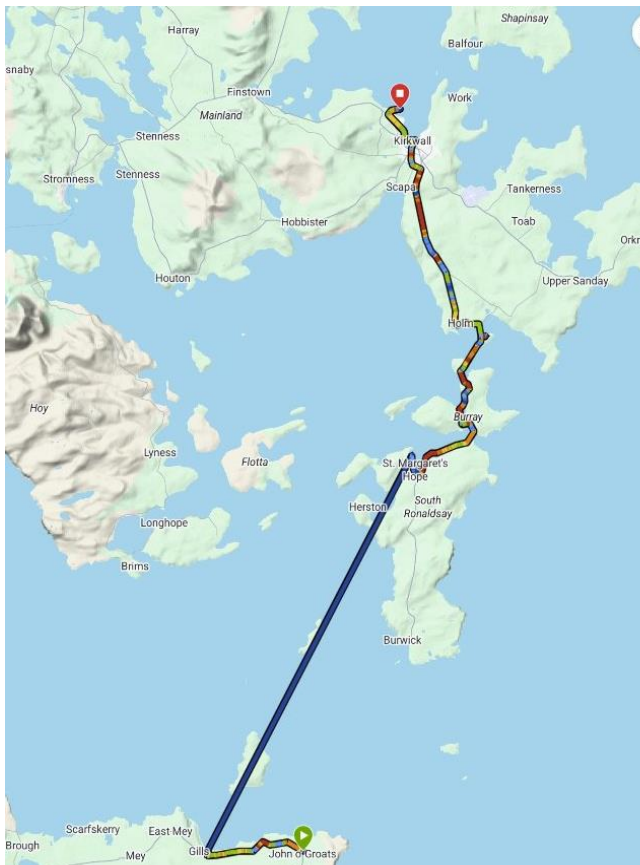


*Inside the cathedral*





*The Earls palace in Kirkwall (built by Patrick, 2nd Earl of Orkney in 1607)*



*Our ride of today*

## 18 Kirkwall – Lundin

I guess DYNAMIK will never again go on a ferry without booking a cabin. After a sleepless night on a sofa he was so glad to take me from the ship and start pedalling. Roads are so much better than ships and we covered easily 150 km.

### *Lundin, 28.6.25*

*Last night was not really relaxing. The ferry from Kirkwall to Aberdeen had no cabin left for me. But I found a nice place on a sofa. Soon a couple from the Shetlands joined me and talked and talked. Actually it was quite interesting to listen to this Scottish dialect. But why does every sentence need to have at least three f\* words? He said for instance: "Oh, it was f\* ing hell yesterday." and she replied: "What the f\* do you mean?" And they went on like this, talking about drugs in the family and divorces and so on and all with a lot of f\* words, until I fell asleep.*

*Next morning in Aberdeen the weather was dry and sunny and I reached Dundee already at midday. The Tay Bridge is quite special. It has a middle lane for bicycles and pedestrians. With strong wind it can be quite precarious. At the end of the bridge over the Tay a group of Harley drivers spotted me and invited me for a drink. They were really excited about EVA. Finally one of them offered me 10 £ for the "Good Reason". I had to decline. I explained him that I was doing this for purely egoistical reasons. His colleague suggested he should give the ten pounds to him, as he had to buy a new machine anyway.*



*Coastal road near Montrose*





*Dundee Tay Bridge with the bicycle lane in the middle*



*Coastal Road with Dundee Tay Bridge in the background*

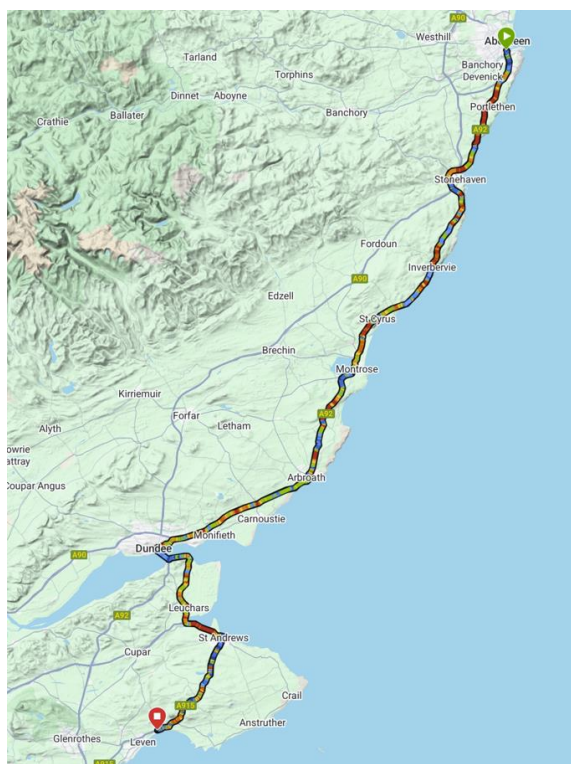
*In the afternoon I passed St. Andrews. The derelict Cathedral looks even more romantic in sunshine. Finally I reached Lundin with the famous prehistoric stones. The hotel "Old Man-*



sion" had a nice room but the prehistoric stones I couldn't find. They are part of the ladies' golf ground, which was closed. So I went back to the hotel and enjoyed an evening meal with a unique view over the golf course and the bay.



*A glass of wine and a spectacular view, what more could you wish!*



*Our road of today*



## 19 Lundin – Dunbar

So far we have covered 2'200 km without any mechanical problem. My gearing is perfect and I don't make any troubling noise whatsoever. DYNAMIK didn't even need to pump my tires in these three weeks.

### *Dunbar, 29.6.25*

*Again a sunny day with wonderful scenery; the road followed the coastline. After chocolate and cake in lovely Burntisland I was ready to tackle the Big Bridge crossing the Firth of Forth. Luckily a local cyclist showed me the way over the middle bridge. It is the middle bridge that is meant for bicyclists. Obviously my ride over the western bridge on my way up to John o'Groats was not quite legal. The middle bridge leads to Queensferry, a marvel of an Old Scottish town.*



*The famous railway bridge over the Firth of Forth. It has been completed in 1890 and is considered a symbol of Scotland.*

*From Queensferry there is a bicycle path along the shore. But this is nothing for velomobiles. I had to turn back after a few kilometres and follow the normal road. Once I had reached Portobello, the scenery was again wonderful: Lots of golf courses, lots of grazing cattle. I passed the ruins of Tantalón Castle with its famous rock out in the sea.*





*Tantallon Castle looking out to the Bass Rock*

*Towards 6 o' clock I reached Dunbar, time to look for a Hotel. On my way up I had already made a stop in Dunbar. That's where I got the India-UK converter instead of the EU-UK-converter. Dunbar is declining. I took the best looking hotel "The Royal Macintosh", but also this building is in a "difficult" condition. When I asked at the bar for a recommendation for a nice restaurant, the lady said, I should go to the Pizza Place. Upon my reply that I didn't come to Scotland to eat pizza, she said: "But I love pizza very much." (And it showed, but I didn't tell her). Finally I found a good evening meal at the Chinese restaurant. They sold mostly take-away but I could eat my "Sweet-and-sour chicken" at a lonely table.*



*Also this hotel has seen better times*



*Our road of today*



## 20 Dunbar – Newbigging-by-the-Sea

This evening DYNAMIK was not in the best mood. The hotel was not bad. It had a nice view over the beach. But when it came to the evening meal, it was a big disappointment. DYNAMIK walked twice through the whole village to find out that only three take-aways were open and not a single restaurant. A holiday resort without a restaurant? Times have changed.

### *Newbigging-by-the-Sea, 30.6.25*

*We are heading south. It's getting really warm. In Berwick it was time for the first chocolate with cake. While I was looking out of the window, I saw something really extraordinary. A seagull lifted a cup of coffee with her beak and put it on the ground, so she could get at the coffee; isn't that clever?*

*Refreshed I carried on this time always taking the coastal road. I even made a short visit to the Holy Island Lindisfarne. Here they built the first monastery in 634 AD. On Lindisfarne you must be careful to leave before the tide rises, or you might be caught on the island.*



*Approaching Lindisfarne*



*Later I made a short stop at Bamburgh Castle (without visit). The holiday resorts here are quite posh, especially Bamburgh and Seahouses.*



*Bamburgh Castle*

*The road was nice to travel. On a steep ascent a woman on a hand bike overtook me and shouted "What bike is that? " And she was gone. Velomobiles are not so fast uphill. Later we met again and had a long chat. She is paralysed from the hips downward and does all the pedalling with her arms. She has electric assistance and so she can cover quite a good distance per day. Together with her husband she is making long bicycle tours; isn't that courageous.*

*Towards 6 o' clock I reached Newbigging-by-the-Sea. It's not a terribly posh place. The hotel "The Old Ship" had decent rooms but no food, only a bar. All restaurants were closed so I had to resort to take-away and eat in the hotel room. I don't like to do that but: No food is not a solution either. At least the beer in front of me was from the hotel bar.*





*The Old Ship in Newbigging-by-the-Sea*



*Seafront in Newbigging-by-the-Sea*



*Our road of today*



## 21 Newbigging – Newcastle

We are leaving Great Britain. For DYNAMIK Great Britain means a lot. He has been “Foreign Language Assistant” in England for a full year in 1974 / 75. He tried to teach the English youngsters a little bit of German. They liked him and taught him English. This turned out to be particularly handy fifty years later on our journey to Scotland.

But now a new problem is cropping up: Which way to take to travel back to Switzerland. On one hand the distance should be minimized on the other there should be no mountains. It seems that the route along the Rhine is the best choice. Rivers never flow upwards.

### *Ferry Newcastle - Amsterdam, 1.7.25*

*No breakfast today. The lady of the hotel couldn't offer one before 9 o'clock. At the most she conceded to have it ready at 8.45. So I started southwards at 7.30 with an empty stomach. I wanted to be early enough to get a ferry ticket to Amsterdam. The road along the coast is quite nice. Tynemouth is a little marvel. But I couldn't stop before I had my ticket. The street signs for the ferry harbour are a bit confusing but after a few detours I made it to the ticket office. I got my ticket WITH a cabin and returned to Tynemouth for my last chocolate and cake. The lady at the coffee shop was quite impressed by EVA and also by the distance I had covered so far. The rest of the day was pretty uneventful: At 2.00 on the ship and at 5.00 sailing southwards.*



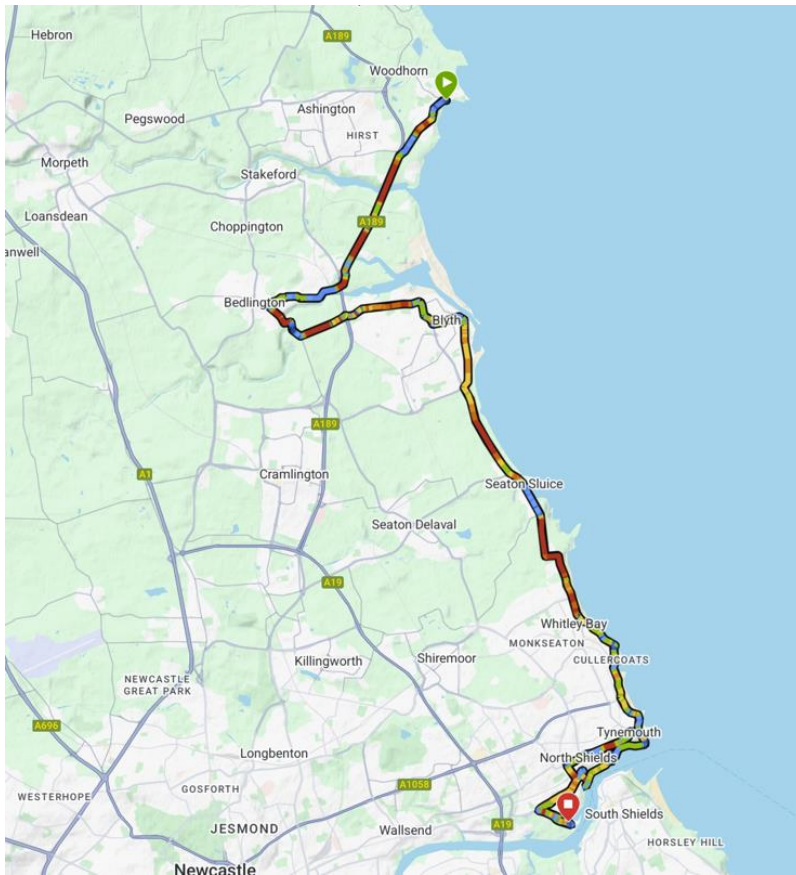
*My last chocolate and cake in GB*



*Ready for the ferry to Amsterdam*



*Leaving Newcastle*



*Our road of today*



## 22 Ijmuiden – Utrecht

It seems that DYNAMIK cannot get used to the bicycle path system of the Netherlands. We are stopping at each intersection to study street signs and are still getting lost. No wonder that we covered only 75 km today. Tomorrow we will reach the river Rhine and there navigation will be much easier. We just have to follow the blue (or grey) band of the Rhine. I for my part cannot complain. Tonight I got a special place in a "Bike Hotel" as you can see in the picture overleaf.

### *Utrecht, 2.7.25*

*We have left Scotland and are heading towards the Rhine. They say it's a romantic road. And last but not least the Rock of Loreley where a young lady combs her golden hair with a golden comb. In the last days Scotland was a bit too cold. On the continent, however, the temperature made a jump from 15 to 30 centigrades. Is there nothing in-between?*

*In the Netherland it is not easy to find your way. You must use bicycles routes and those are badly marked. Eventually I reached Utrech and this is enough for today.*



*A nice part of Amsterdam; it must be romantic to live here.*





*That's the place for EVA, really posh*



*Our road of today*



## 23 Utrecht – Xanten

A velomobile has one disadvantage: It is so comfortable that you do not like to stop and get out. For instance today we drove through Nijmegen - the oldest city of the Netherlands - and DYNAMIK did not stop. Only later he found out what he had missed.

### *Xanten, 3.7.25*

*It is a new experience to travel with a velomobile in a region where there are absolutely no mountains. It's so much easier. Once you have accelerated to 30 km/h you have nothing to do. Just keep pedalling a little bit to keep the speed. Everywhere there are canals and dykes. It's beautiful. In Wijk they had a small ferry; makes a nice interruption.*



*Ferry of Wijk*

*This afternoon I left the Netherlands and entered Germany. In Kleve, where I made a short stop, a man came to me and explained that he too had had a trike. But his family said that this was for people with disabilities, so he sold it. He suggested that Xanten is a good place to stop. And it really is.*

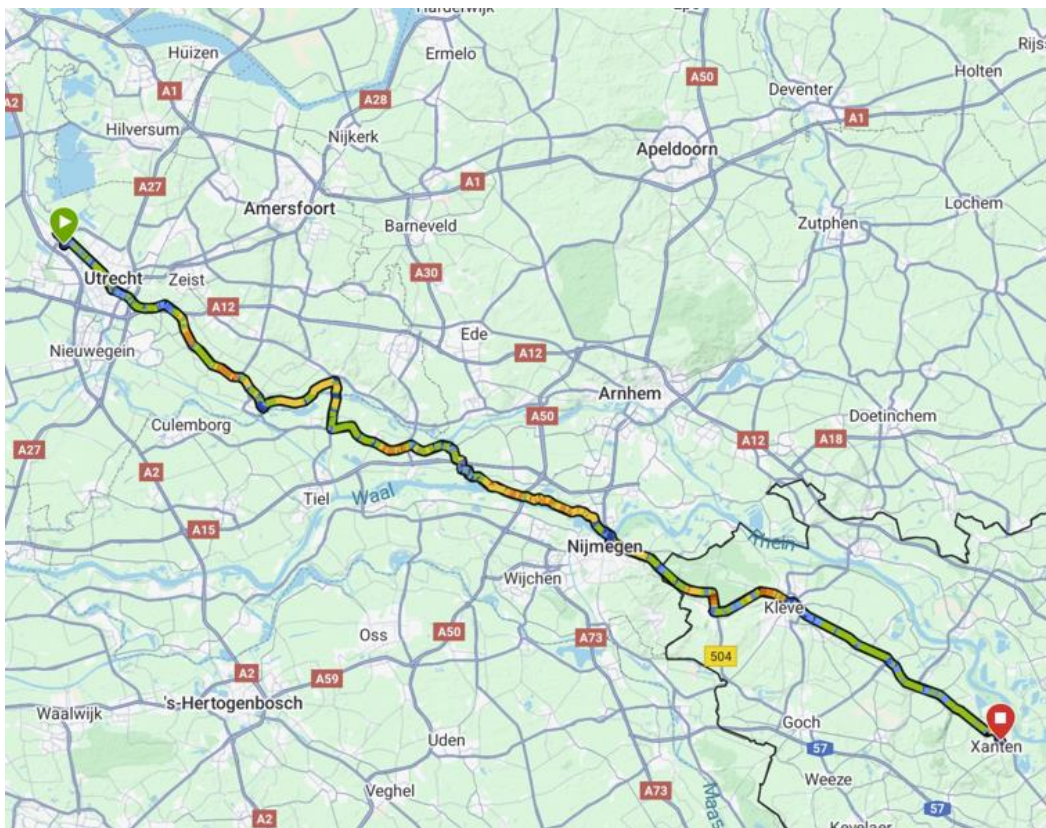




*Medieval town centre of Xanten*



*Xanten Cathedral*



*Our road of today*



## 24 Xanten – Köln

The diary notes of DYNAMIK are getting shorter. It seems that the river Rhine does not live up to his expectations.

### *Köln, 4.7.25*

*Is this “The Romantic Rhine Route”? So far I haven’t seen much of it. Germany is an industrial country and all industries settled along the Rhine. As a bicyclist you are mostly quite a bit away from the water. Once I saw a sign for a ferry to Monheim. That must be lovely, I thought and followed the sign. On the way to the ferry it was really picturesque but the ferry runs only Saturday and Sunday; bad luck.*



*One of the rare spots (near Monheim) where the bicycle path was close to the Rhine*



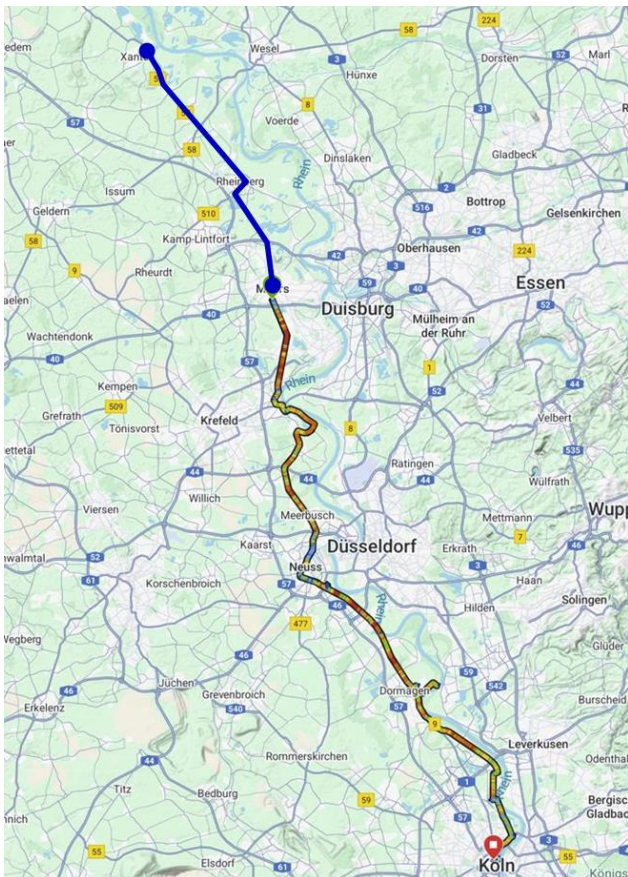
*The rest of today's journey was pretty uneventful. At six o' clock I reached Köln and got a simple room not far from the Dome.*



*EVA in front of the "Kölner Dom"*



*And if the light is switched on it is even better*



*Our road of today*



## 25 Köln – Koblenz

I guess DYNAMIK has learned something. Hotels can be booked via internet.

### *Koblenz, 5.7.25*

*The section between Köln and Koblenz is really what I understand under "Romantic Rhine Tour". The Rhine meanders through several mountain ranges and the bicycle path is mostly right next to the Rhine. There are many small touristic villages. I would say it was one of the most beautiful days along the Rhine. And the big advantage: No mountains to climb.*

*In Bonn I went into a cafeteria. Before I ordered, I made sure that they had free Wi-Fi. This way I could not only enjoy a good coffee but also see what hotels there are in Koblenz and reserve the hotel room. On a Saturday night this is quite advisable.*



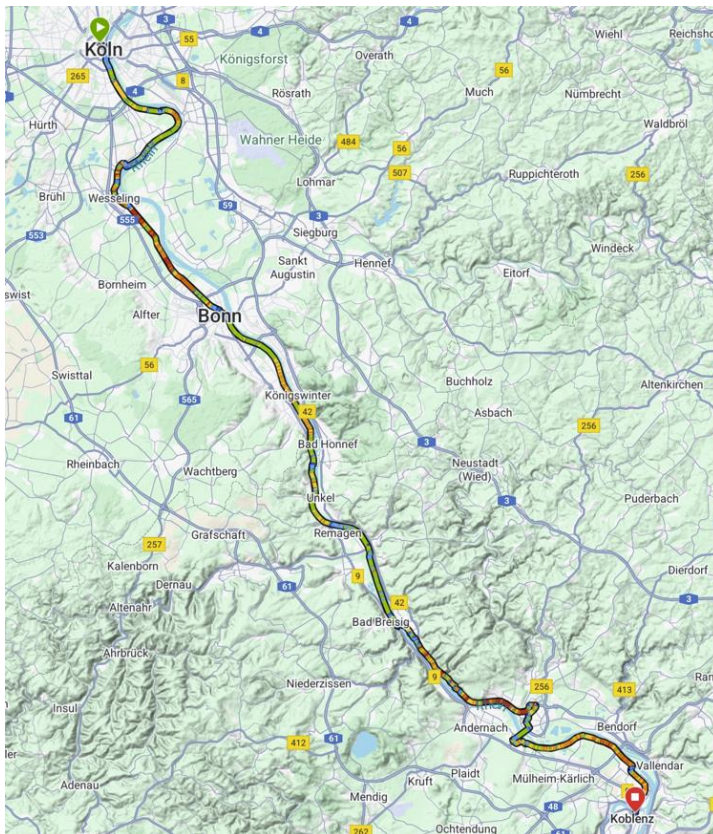
Romantic bicycle path (near Remagen)



*Koblenz is a well preserved old town. It is a bit noisy but it is Saturday evening.*



*Old town centre of Koblenz*



*Our road of today*



## 26 Koblenz – Worms

Well, the Lorelei story is - as so many other stories - an invention of a romantic poet. The reality is much simpler: The name Lorelei consists of two words Lore (or lureln) and ley. The first means "murmuring" and the second "rock". So it is the "murmuring rock". The heavy currents and the small waterfall created a murmuring sound. It must have been quite difficult to pass the rock in the old times. The first records of accidents date back to the 10th century. But even today accidents happen there. In 2011 a barge carrying 2'400 tons of sulphuric acid capsized near the Lorelei rock.

### *Worms, 6.7.25*

*Today the route became even more romantic than yesterday. The rocks on both sides of the Rhine were almost vertical. At least the rock where Loreley was sitting combing her hair looked quite impressive. Who doesn't know the famous song by Heinrich Heine?*

*Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet  
Dort oben wunderbar  
Ihr goldnes Geschmeide blitzet,  
Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar.*

...

*and in the last verse:*

...

*Ich glaube die Wellen verschlingen  
Am Ende Fischer und Kahn;  
Und das hat mit ihrem Singen  
Die Lore-Ley gethan.*



*Burg Katz*





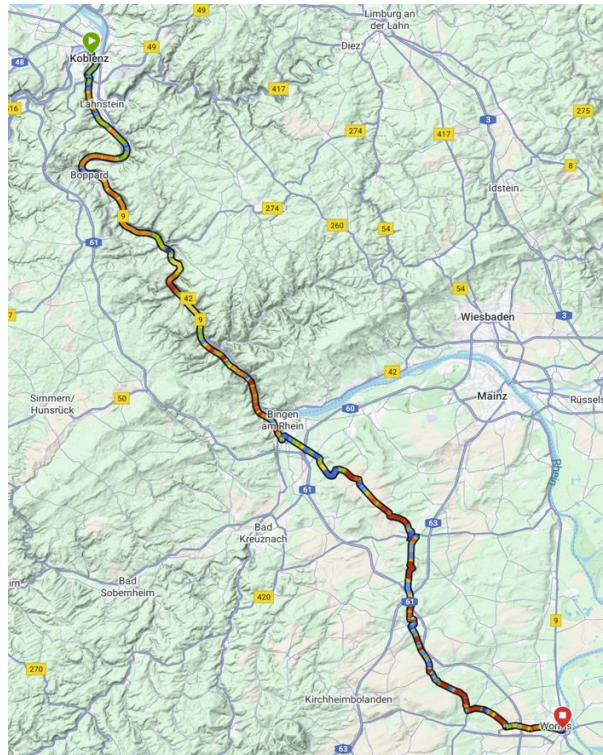
*Lorelei rock*

*When I passed the Lorelei Rock, it had started to rain and Lorelei wasn't there. Who would comb her lovely golden hair outside in the rain? I myself took shelter in a cafeteria and there I was really spoilt. I had only ordered "Milchkaffe" but - because I had such an interesting velomobile and had covered over 3000 km - I got in addition an orange juice and four cakes: Isn't that great.*

*The Rhine Gorge ends at Bingen and from there on it gets flatter. I took the road over the hills that lead directly to Worms. The bit between Bingen and Worms is rather boring but Worms is a real marvel: So many beautiful churches and above all the famous cathedral.*



*St. Peter's Cathedral in Worms*



*Our road of today*



## 27 Worms – Kilstett

Today was a perfect day for DYNAMIK. No plans except that we should reach Strassbourg. Of course we didn't reach Strassbourg. We spent a lot of time in Speyer and at the end of the day we came across a wonderful Half Timbered House in a small village which happened to be a hotel and a restaurant. That's where we ended the day.

### *Kilstett, 7.7.25*

*The start in the morning is never easy: How to get to the right road? What would be a good town name to aim at? Because the town you want is never at display among the street signs. With a bit of trial and error and some detours we made it to the historic town of Speyer. Speyer is quite impressive: An old tower at the beginning and a giant cathedral at the end of the main street. And in between: All the well-kept historic houses which are of course used as shops. One could spend the whole day here.*



*Entrance to the historic centre of Speyer*



*Speyer Cathedral*



*We carried on and crossed the border to France and are now in Alsace. The roads are perfect and have only little traffic; Now and then a small village.*



*After crossing the border to France*



*In one of these little villages we met - after 3000 km - the first velomobile. It is quite a new VAW and the owner is happy and excited. He uses it mainly for commuting to work.*



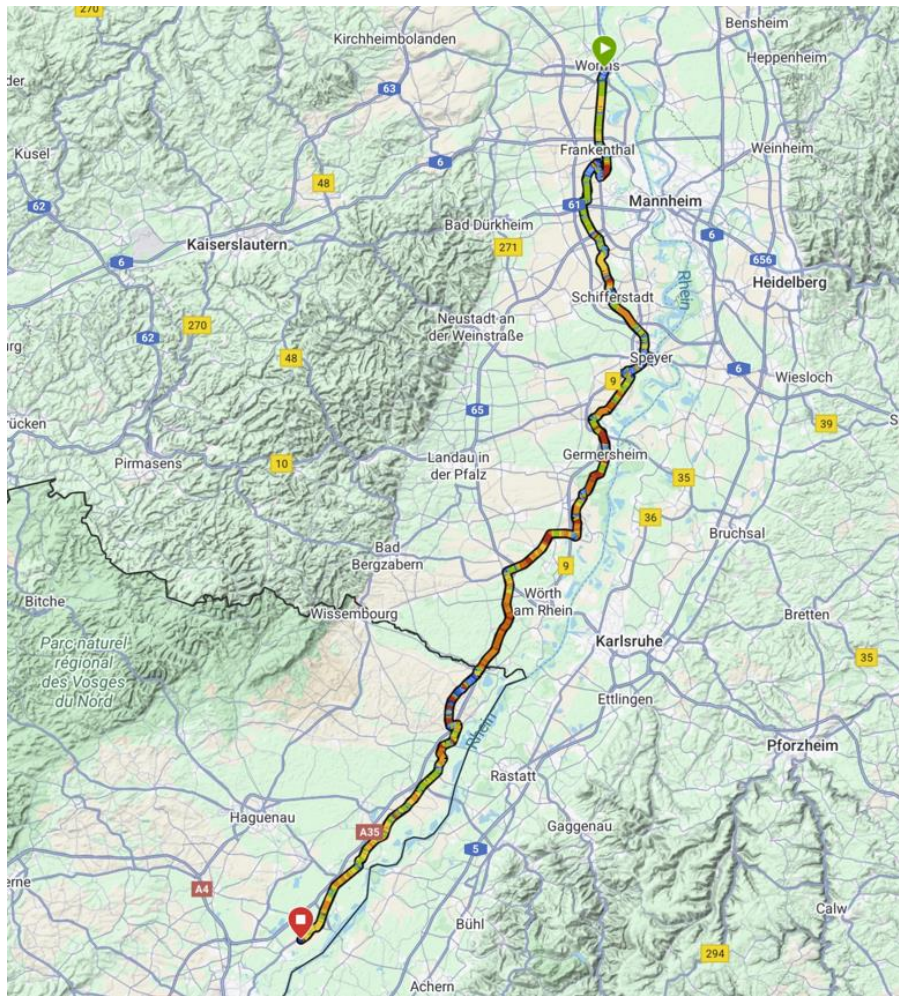
*The first velomobile after 3'000 km*

*We didn't make it quite to Strassbourg as we almost stumbled over this wonderful half timbered house in Kilstett, which is a hotel and a restaurant. Strassbourg has to wait.*



*Nice hotel in Kilstett*





*Our road of today*



## 28 Kilstett – Ottmarsheim

What would DYNAMIK do without the cultural support of his wife? He would miss the most important historic marvels. Not the Cathedral of Strassbourg. This he finds himself. But the "Rotunda of Ottmarsheim". He finds a hotel in Ottmarsheim but has no idea that in a distance of 500 m there is also the famous Abbey of St. Mary. It has been consecrated in 1030 and is one of the rare octagonal churches like the Basilica San Vitale in Ravenna.

### *Ottmarsheim, 8.7.25*

*This morning, after about 20 km on the road, the first cultural highlight came in form of the Cathedral of Strassbourg. You must have seen it to believe it. The size is overwhelming and the thousands and thousands of decorations blow your mind. I wandered around the cathedral and could hardly believe that it has been made by human hands.*



*Cathedral of Strassbourg*

*A little bit south of Strassbourg we stumbled by pure luck over the canal that once connected the Rhine with the Rhone. It has a nice bicycle path with good tarmac. So for about 30 km we were safe. And there is nothing nicer for a velomobile than a well paved canal road.*



*Rhein-Rhone-Canal near Plobsheim*





*Rhine-Rhone-Canal near Nordhouse*

*But without proper reason the tarmac changed to gravel and we left the canal and went back to the D468. This road will bring us to Basel. The scenery here is rather dull. In the far left you can see German mountains and in the far right French Mountains and in between the huge Rhine plane.*

*In Ottmarsheim, 20 km before Basel, I found a nice hotel. What I didn't know was that right in the neighbourhood of the hotel a cultural marvel was hidden. Luckily Karin (my wife) told*



*me – upon my texting her that I was in Ottmarsheim - that I must not miss the Octagonal Church from 1030. What a good idea!*

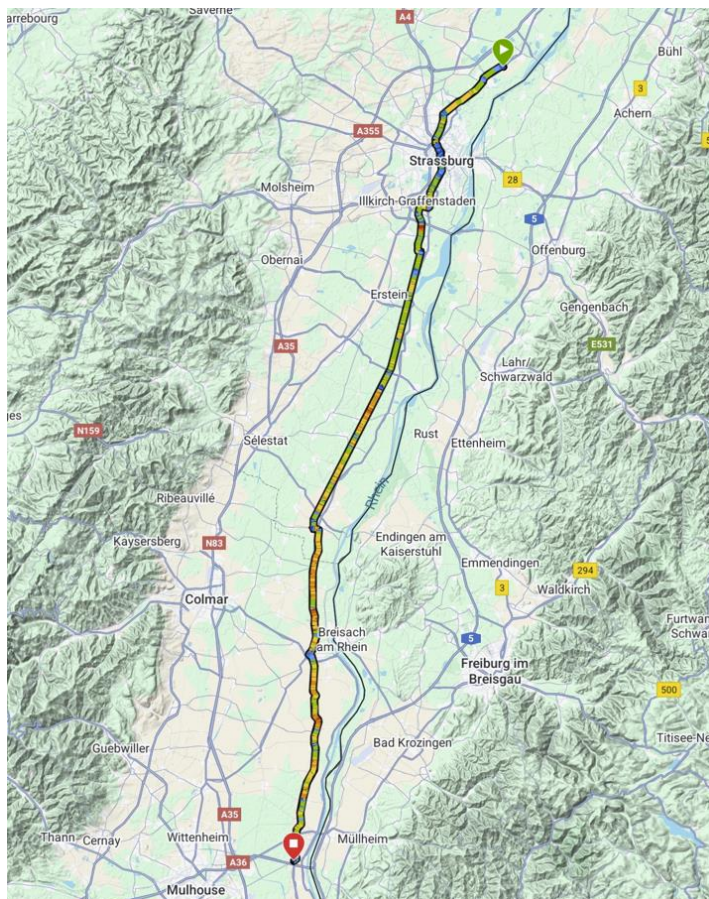


*Benedictine Abbey of Saint Mary*





*Inside the octagonal church*



*Our road of today*



## 29 Ottmarsheim – Zürich

After 27 days on the road we are back home. So this will be the last diary page for quite a long time.

### *Zürich, 9.7.25*

*This morning I started with a strange feeling. I knew that those coming 130 km would be the last of this long journey. I knew that I had to enjoy every single mile. The day was sunny but a bit fresh. Quite soon we reached Basel and - knowing Basel pretty well - it was not difficult to find a nice way leading through the centre and then to Birsfelden where we continued along the Rhine.*

*In Rheinfelden it was time for chocolate and cake (the last one). A young lady approached us and wanted to know everything about EVA. She explained that she was a metalwork teacher and had built with her class a recumbent bicycle. There is obviously some interest in this type of bicycle.*



*The last chocolate with cake of this journey in the medieval village of Rheinfelden*

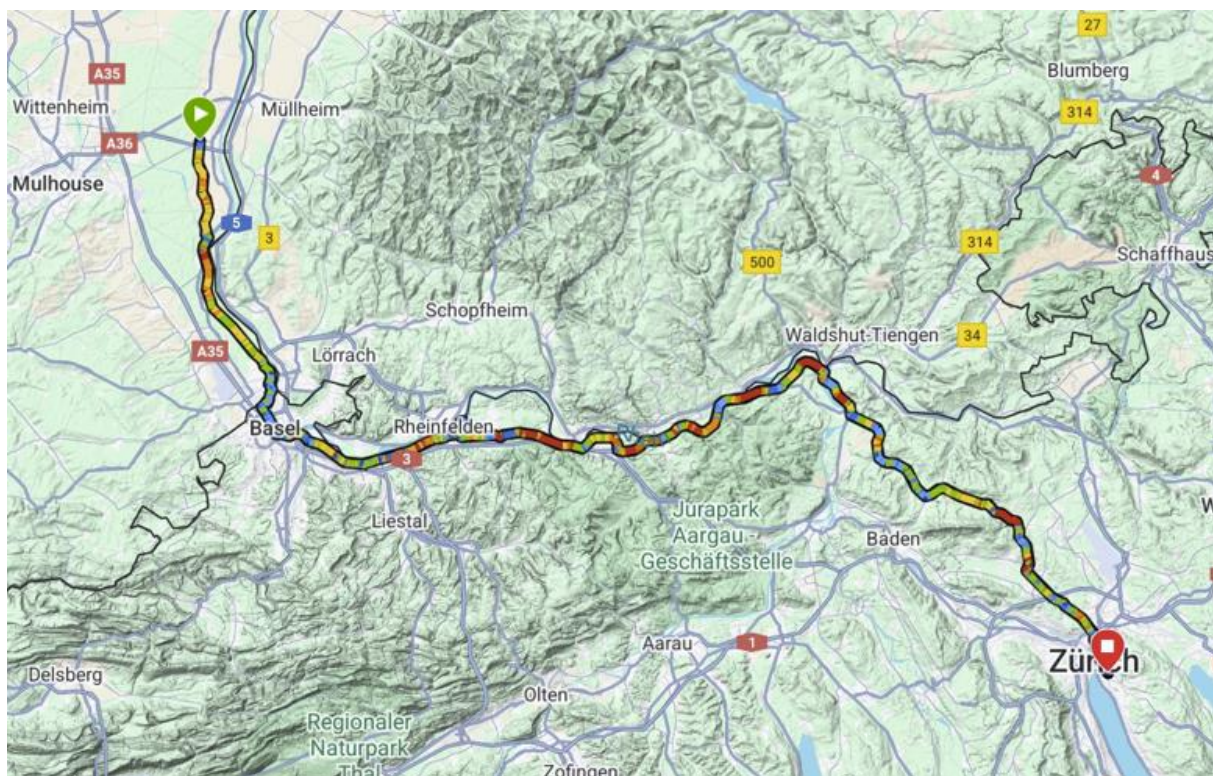


*The road was easy, no heavy climbs and above all, the surface of the tarmac was smooth and had no potholes. It seems that in Switzerland we do not use this coarse stuff for the road surface you find so often in Great Britain but also in France and Germany. The smoothness of the road surface has such a big influence on the speed of a velomobile.*

*I took the road through the Furttal as it is much less industrialised than the Limmattal. And here I got the unique chance to sit on a big trekker. I stopped at the side of a freshly ploughed field and could not believe my eyes. Around the ploughing trekker I saw about two dozen storks walking around and picking the worms from the overturned soil. And in the air there were certainly a hundred Red Kites looking for prey. The farmer invited me onto the trekker, so I could see these birds from really quite close. They are so used to the trekker that they only move away if the trekker is closer than one meter. I never have seen Red Kites or Storks so close.*

*Yet before we reached Zürich, I learned that stereotypes about Switzerland are as true as stereotypes about Scotland. Every Swiss citizen, they say, is in his deepest self a school teacher. Well, I was riding with my velomobile towards Zürich when a silver Mercedes honked behind me and flashed his headlights. I guess the driver was angry because I didn't use the bicycle road with its horrible and dirty tarmac. Then the driver overtook me, stopped his car and jumped out of the car in the middle of the street stretching out his arm. As I wasn't keen on a lecture on the use of bicycle paths I passed at full speed under his arm. It's good that velomobiles are built so low.*

*Soon we reached Zürich, our final destination. A four weeks journey of 3400 km has come to an end. EVA has performed flawlessly, no single mechanical problem, no flat tire. I didn't even need to pump the tires in these four weeks. These four weeks on the road with all the nice people I met and all the cultural highlights were something really extraordinary.*



*Our road of today*

### 30 Epilogue

The map below shows our journey from Switzerland to the northern tip of the UK. It's a trip of 3'400 km. But why should someone cover this huge distance with a velomobile? After all you have to pedal the whole way. There is no engine in my velomobile. One reason is certainly the challenge of the long distance itself. It gives a certain satisfaction once you have made it. Then it is the sheer speed. With a velomobile you can easily maintain 40 km/h on a flat road with smooth tarmac. And 40 km/h from a position so close to the ground seems really fast. It is almost addictive. And then it is the uniqueness of the vehicle. Wherever you stop, people will talk to you. You get easily in contact with the people in the foreign land you are riding through. They will admire you for the long distance you have covered and they will pity you for the long distance you still have before you. And they will tell you the most exciting stories about their family and their neighbours and the country in general. All this makes it exciting and really worth to embark on such a trip.



*Our journey from Switzerland to the Northern tip of Scotland and back again*