

The Bicycle Diaries – Pauline is cycling from Portobello round the world



We have been following Pauline Symaniak's travels since she left Edinburgh on her bike called Shirley in June 2010. She is cycling round the world and [raising money for Oxfam](#) on the way. Pauline saved for five years to enable her to make this trip, and she has already raised about 22% of her target.

We spoke first of all to Pauline's man on the ground in Edinburgh, Graham, to give us some general information about Pauline's trip:-

"She is currently in Chile heading for the island of Chiloe south west of Puerto Montt in the Chilean Lake District. Her 1000 mile journey from Buenos Aires after getting off the trans-Atlantic container ship, proved to be physically very difficult. The container ship voyage, I can safely assume, has been the highlight so far for her. At about half way across Argentina she was interviewed by Argentinean TV and a local school asked her to speak to the primary school kids about her adventure. Christmas was spent in the town of San Carlos di Bariloche and she crossed over the Tromen Pass on New Year's Day into Chile.

Temperature wise has been mostly 'scorchio', but on reaching the foothills of the Andes it cooled off and since crossing over there has been a lot of rain. The whole trip is basically chasing the sun so there is really no point when Pauline will encounter winter. I know she was very jealous of the great dumps of snow we had recently as she is a huge winter sports fan!

We are intending to meet in Boston in mid May. Prior to this Pauline will cycle the length of Chile (maybe on the Argentine side of the Andes though, due to better roads and scenery) then cross into Bolivia to finish at Le Paz but not before visiting Lake Titicaca. From Le Paz there will be 2 flights that will take her to Boston.

From Boston we are roughly following the Trans America Northern Tier cycle route all the way to Seattle, Washington, with no doubt the odd bear encounter crossing the Rockies! Yikes!

She's had a couple of punctures but just today had to return to the city of Puerto Montt for a new inner tube as I think the one she has is now beyond repair."

We also posed a few questions to Pauline herself which she has now had time to answer for us!

How is it going?

It is going wonderfully well for me. I have had no regrets about leaving my job and home to do the trip. I've not felt homesick though I do think about Portobello a lot. Last night I camped by the Pacific Ocean and the sound of the waves made me think of home in 'Portie'. It is proving to be a great adventure and my dream come true.

What are the upsides?

It is wonderful to be on the road every day with everything you need on the bike – no worries. no hassles, none of the usual "baggage" we carry around with us in life. I am meeting some amazing people – local people but other cyclists too from all over the world, including one family from Scotland who are cycling the length of the Americas.

The downsides?

It was very tough cycling across central Argentina – heat, long distances, no campsites or hotels for days on end, saddle sores – and yet I had a fabulous adventure there and met great

people. My friend joined me for the cycle across northern Spain and I spent time with family in Portugal – it was difficult re-adjusting to being alone after those two spells.

What are you missing most about Edinburgh???

I miss rolling out of bed on a Sunday morning and ambling along the beach at Portobello, stopping for a relaxing coffee on the promenade and watching the waves and picking up groceries on the High Street.

Have you met any famous people on the way?

As I've now been on Argentinian TV, I think I'm the famous person!!!!!!

What is the nicest place on your travels (for whatever reason) so far?

I fell in love with France – wonderful cycling, pretty little towns. But I've also falling in love with Argentina – the Lake District is spectacularly beautiful and the people incredibly warm and friendly.

What about the weather on the journey?

As Graham said, I'm jealous of the snow back home! I'm looking forward to colder temperatures in New Zealand.

Where did you spend Christmas and New Year?

I spent Xmas in Bariloche on a rather cold, wet day and I was the only person staying at the campsite!!! I had a small present to open that I'd carried from Portugal and I made a nice Xmas lunch but I spent most of the day replacing the broken zip on the flysheet of my tent. I spent New Year camped camped in the Tromen Pass in the Andes at the foot of the spectacular Volcan Lanin under a sky full of stars.

Remember you can [support Pauline here](#)