

Grenzerfahrten – A film about a bikepacking journey on the former Iron Curtain launches a new long distance gravel route and bikepackinggermany.com

A new film from Edinburgh-based filmmaker and adventurer Markus Stitz documents his self-supported cycling journey along the European Green Belt. Born and bred in Germany, Markus travelled 700km along the former Iron Curtain on a gravel bike through the federal states of Thuringia, Lower Saxony, Hesse, Bavaria and Saxony in October 2020, shortly after the 30th anniversary of the German reunification. '**Grenzerfahrten**' (Borderline Experiences) launches the **Iron Curtain Gravel Trail**, a new bikepacking route mapped by the round the world cyclist, which is available to download for free on www.bikepackinggermany.com.

Markus, who was born in the town of Heiligenstadt in the Eichsfeld region, experienced the division caused by the former border first-hand as a child. He grew up in the German Democratic Republic and turned ten in 1989. This marked the year when the Berlin Wall fell on 9 November after thousands of people took to the streets in Leipzig and other cities to demand their freedom. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of the inner German brought an end to the Iron Curtain, which divided Europe for more than 44 years between the end of World War 2 and the end of the Cold War.

Markus comments: 'As a 10-year old child I couldn't really grasp the significance of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which has been one of the most important events in my life to date. I have travelled across the world on a bike and made Scotland my home in 2009, which would have not been possible without the fall of the Iron Curtain. My grandparents lived in the 5-kilometre-access-zone running parallel to the former border in East Germany, but I had no idea of the fortifications when I visited them as a child. My father, who sadly died in 2015 when I cycled around the world, travelled almost daily in the area for work, and had much greater insight into the history of the Eichsfeld region. His love for the area inspired me to cycle along and close to the European Green Band, which has since become one of the most untouched and wild areas in Germany. I was really pleased when Schwalbe UK, one of my longest standing supporters, commissioned me for a film last year after they had seen '[No Stone Unturned](#)'. As my film about Kyrgyzstan is, this documentary is a very personal account, and I hope it inspires many people to experience this important chapter of European history on two wheels in the future.'

Tim Ward of Schwalbe UK comments: 'At Schwalbe UK we have been associated with Markus since his round the world trip and have been inspired by all the great adventures and the videos he has produced. We knew we wanted to commission Markus to produce a video for us, but with wider travel largely restricted this year we weren't sure what we could do. Then when Markus came to us with the idea for the Iron Curtain ride all the pieces suddenly clicked into place and we thought "that's it!". The idea ticked so many boxes for us, what with the tie-in with the 30th anniversary of the reunification of Germany and our increasing focus on the gravel riding segment; the guys at our head office in Germany thought it was an amazing idea and were onboard straightaway. Germany might not necessarily be on everybody's bucket list for adventuring riding, but the great thing about bikepacking is exploring new ideas and discovering new places off the beaten track. Markus' route really shines a spotlight on this, perhaps overlooked, corner of Europe and its associated history. I'm sure that when people watch the video they'll say "Wow, that place looks amazing!">'

The Iron Curtain Gravel Trail spans 687km from the Dreiländerstein to the Dreiländereck, packing in 11,300m of elevation. It is designed to be ridden on loaded gravel bikes, but is equally fun on mountain bikes. After successfully mapping bikepacking routes in Scotland since 2017 'Grenzerfahrten' inspired Markus to share his route on www.bikepackinggermany.com, which the professional route planner hopes to build into a **new bikepacking resource for Germany**. He comments: 'I have seen bikepacking and gravel riding growing rapidly in the last few years, and would like to use my expertise gained through developing www.bikepackingscotland.com in other countries outside of Scotland. I spent about four weeks in October 2020 developing two journeys in Thuringia, and this is the first finished route.'

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Grenzerfahrten will premiere on YouTube on 13 January 7pm GMT - followed by a live Q&A with director Markus Stitz and Martin Moschek of Bike Tour Global - more information can be found in this Facebook event <https://fb.me/e/41wqo47Kl>

Grenzerfahrten is available to watch and embed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/qlj1QusAhvw> - with subtitles provided in English and German.

The **Q&A** on YouTube can be watched here: <https://youtu.be/oTEI2K7uMfQ>

A **video** detailing the **Tout Terrain Vasco** bike and kit used for riding & filming can be found on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/f-Qk6CVwelq>

Stills for publication purposes can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pypolkvuncfpync/AADGWzidKDddmVKiY1liLpuVa?dl=0>

For more information about the film please contact Markus Stitz at markus.stitz@gmail.com or +44 (0) 789 525 0508. For more information about Schwalbe UK please contact Tim Ward at timward@schwalbe.co.uk or +44 (0) 7540 721767.

About Schwalbe Tires

Schwalbe are specialist bicycle tyre experts. Schwalbe is the brand. Bohle is the company. Owned by the family Bohle since its establishment in 1922, the company is now being managed by the third generation. Schwalbe's headquarters in Germany, with subsidiaries in France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and USA/Canada, and distributors in over 40 countries.

www.schwalbe.com #rideschwalbe

About Bikepacking Germany

Founded by round the world cyclist Markus Stitz Bikepacking Germany is a resource for bikepacking and long distance gravel routes in Germany. Bikepacking Germany will work with destination marketing organisations and the bike/outdoor industry to create sustainable products and inspiring content.

www.bikepackinggermany.com

About Markus Stitz

Since becoming the first person to circumnavigate the world on one gear with bikepacking bags in 2016, Markus has moved gradually into filmmaking. After writing and directing a number of films about his own Bikepacking Scotland routes, he released 'No Stone Unturned' in 2019, produced entirely on an iPhone in the wilderness of Kyrgyzstan. In 2020 he released 'Distance', 'Drovers' and 'Unhurried'.

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About Tout Terrain

Tout Terrain was founded in Gundelfingen at the beginning of 2005 by industrial engineer Oliver Römer. The products from Tout Terrain stand for innovation, quality and function. We concentrate on the development and manufacture of well thought-out and innovative products that are consistently tailored to the user, offer maximum cycling pleasure, little maintenance and a long service life. The focus of the product range is on everyday bikes, touring bikes and touring bike accessories as well as products for children's mobility. The products are developed on site in Gundelfingen. www.tout-terrain.de