

## Case Study

## Falkirk Towpath

## Delineation



### Background

The Union Canal is a 30 mile (48.2 km) canal in Scotland, travelling from the Falkirk Wheel to Edinburgh Quay in the heart of the capital. It was opened in 1822 but became disused in the 1930s. In June 2008 it was reopened and the canal was largely restored and is now enjoying a new lease of life as a fantastic boating, cycling and walking facility.

Scottish Canals wanted to encourage use of the canal towpaths but were concerned with the low levels of light. They wanted to improve the level of safety and provide advanced notice of obstacles around the water's edge, bridges and entry/exit points to the public.

This section of towpath leads directly to the City Centre and is very popular. The towpath is also part of the 10,000-mile national cycle network. However, with the towpath being so close to the water's edge, safety is a major consideration for towpath users, especially during the hours of darkness.

Given the aesthetic impact on the location and the rising electricity costs of traditional street lighting, this was deemed not suitable and an alternative, less invasive and more sustainable solution was sought.

### Key Benefits

- Increased towpath visibility of up to 900m for pedestrian, cyclists and wheel chair users
- Increased safety in the hours of darkness
- The flush profile of the studs are less than 4mm ensuring they are unobtrusive to bicycle wheels, walkers and are wheelchair friendly

### Solution

Scottish Canals worked with Mackenzie Construction who were tasked with improving the towpath experience. Mackenzie approached Clearview as they had used SolarLite studs in the past.

Over 13km of the Union Canal towpath has now been significantly improved with the installation of around 3,000 Bi-Directional SolarLite Active Road Studs. These now delineate both edges of the towpath at night to provide cyclists and pedestrians with more clearly defined guidance and visibility of the path ahead for up to a distance of 900m.

Powered by energy harvested during daylight hours through solar panels built into the surface of the studs, the SolarLite Active Road Studs automatically illuminate during the hours of darkness. With the studs embedded into the surface of the canal towpath and sitting only 4mm proud of the surface, they maximise night time visibility whilst ensuring they are unobtrusive and inoffensive to the towpath's users.

The majority are white LED studs installed at 10m intervals to mark the edges of the towpath, with red studs at 5m intervals warning of hazards such as the towpath narrowing on approaches to over bridges. Green studs highlight towpath entrances and exits.

Clearview SolarLite Studs now help delineate both the Falkirk and Edinburgh Quay ends of the Union Canal.

*The lights on the canal towpath allow our walking group to safely walk throughout the year, even in the dark winter months.*

*They are both practical and aesthetically pleasing.*

**Linda Malcolm**

Stirling, Falkirk and District Ramblers