



Trémargat by Rob Millar

Elaine So I'm here in Trémargat, uh, with Rob Miller, to find out more about himself, perhaps, and also how he came to be so interested in this particular village. So, Rob, if you'd like to tell us something about yourself.

Rob Okay, well, uh, I've been in Brittany now for about eight years, and, uh, I love it. Uh, I love, uh, all this nature, natural places, and the people, the way that we get to meet people, and so on, and in order to celebrate this, uh, affection I have for Brittany, I wrote a little guide book, and really it's a collection of places that I've visited which I've really liked, and had a little walk, and described different circuits in different places that I've been. And one of the places I really, uh, think is special in this part of the world is Trémargat.

Elaine Why is that in particular? Why, why, Trémargat because it's a small village, and there's lots of very interesting towns?

Rob Trémargat is interesting because it appears to be a very quiet place like many villages in Central Brittany. But, in fact, it has a life all of its own, based on the spirit of, a sort of organic spirit, there are, there are a lot of people who have come from other areas in France to establish themselves and set up small businesses and farms. A lot of organic farming goes on here, but there've also been artisans. There's wood turners and potters and also people who like to celebrate the tr... more traditional aspects of rural life using techniques such as, uh, lime and hemp and, in fact, there's a hemp-producing place just outside Trémargat where you can buy all sorts of products for building, insulation, and so on. And another place on the other side where they process hemp to make, uh, fabrics and cooking oils and cosmetics and all sorts of other products. And, uh, there's just a different atmosphere to this place. It has a café in the centre of the village, which is run by an *association* and its volunteers run the place and it's owned by the volunteers, which is really great, and they have concerts there, and they have all sorts of different events that go on there. They've just established an *epicerie*, which is also run by volunteers, and they sell products which are made and processed locally: goats' cheese, meats, bread, *crêpes*, and, uh, all sorts of products like that. I just think that it's just a very unusual village. In fact, it's the only village in Brittany, which in the recent Presidential elections, actually

elected the Green Party candidate, Eva Jolie. She didn't get too much success in the rest of Brittany, but in, in Trémargat, she came out top, which is, huh, a sort of an indication of the kind of, uh, *ambiance* of this village.

Elaine It seems to be particularly pro-active, which, as you say, is really quite unusual when so many villages are sleepy little places, even towns, appear to be half-asleep most of the time, and yet...

Rob Hmm.

Elaine ...here you've got a village outside, definitely outside in the countryside, which is fairly buzzing with activities.

Rob Well, it's it is there is a, uh, lot of activity going on here, but it's very subtle. Lots of inventive people come and set up here. Lots of alternative ways of living.

Elaine So it take takes one like, somebody like that and so the people have said yes it's definitely, and I believe the mayor is on board all this. The *mairie* is keen to support all these innovative ideas.

Rob Yeah, yup, and we've just had lunch in, uh, the restaurant in the village here...

Elaine Yeah...

Rob ...which is very unusual in the choice of menu, in that there's cooking influenced by all sorts of countries. But a really nice idea is that, huh, on a Monday lunchtime there's a set meal, but you can pay whatever you like, which is very unusual for this part of the world.

Elaine Well, it was absolutely excellent. [laugh] I can see why people come there again and again and again. It was packed. It was packed. In fact, they had to bring out a special table for us.

Rob Indeed. And it was very tasty, too.

Elaine It was brilliant. And, also uh, on top of all this, you seem to find time to also teach French, or give French and English lessons?

Rob Uh, yes, yeah, that's, uh, really how I put, uh, butter on my bread, as they say. I do, uh, private lessons in French and, uh, in English. *Uh, c'est pratique de pouvoir faire ça aussi.*

Elaine [laugh] *Ah oui.*

Rob *Pour gagner sa vie.*

Elaine *Ah, oui, oui. Merci bien.* Thanks very much, Rob. Thank you. That was, uh, really interesting, and I'm sure it will inspire people to

come and visit Tremargat and realise that there is just so much on offer here.

Rob Yeah, it's definitely worth a detour as they say.