



Trémargat with Jon Chambers

If Christmas means calories, then the New Year *should* mean exercise. For some it *will* mean just that. After a year's absence, 2013 sees the Tour de France return to Brittany. So, what about you getting your bike out and slogging up some of those inclines? Who knows, Bradley and co might be out practising, in which case you can sprint past them and then pace them for a few hundred miles.

Too strenuous? Difficult to please, eh? You want exercise that's gentle and invigorating at the same time? Well, this month we've got just the thing. What about a stroll in the woods along the Trémargat Trail?

One of the great treasures of Central Brittany and the major reason, I suspect, why so many of us have decided to come and live here, is its fabulous countryside. There are huge tracts of unspoilt land, some of it looking as it's probably looked for millenia, undisturbed by people, let alone industry.

Walking around Trémargat is a trail written about by Robert Millar. Luckily, for those of us who are going on his guided walk the circuit, apparently, is less than half the length of the average feature film. In other words, the walk is about seven kilometres. Anyway, it's time to get the hiking boots on and join up with the group.

This is the start of the walk. We're at the car park in Toul Goullig. A car park may not sound very exciting but the massive boulders dotted around here give a suggestion of what's to come because just down the footpath is a 'chaos'. Coming from Birmingham, I'm no stranger to chaos, but this one has to be the most natural and beautiful one I've yet seen. 'Chaos' is a geological term, by the way. I'm not going to define it here because it would take too long and because I don't really understand it. But, this particular 'chaos' is a group of enormous boulders that have tumbled down the valley, in some places, completely obscuring the river that flows underneath. Come here and I'll show you what I mean. We're very close to the river now, you can hear it but you can't see it can you? That's the 'chaos'.

Right, we're in the village of St Antoine and I've got Rob's book with me here. Here we are. He refers to the village as 'a ghostly hamlet' and in the depths of winter, the village is, indeed, quite ghostly. If you find yourself here, you'll probably have the place to yourself. You certainly won't see any villagers and, hopefully, no ghosts either because it's actually a deserted village. Many of the houses in this hamlet, have walls that have collapsed over the centuries, but it's gradually being restored. And when you look at some of the fine architecture, you can understand why. It's almost impossible not to marvel at

how some of these massive stones were hoisted into place. It must have taken an enormous amount of ingenuity and cooperation.

So. the walk around Trémargat, not a bad way to start the New Year.