



The International Tandem Club in Brittany

- Rob Well, I'm sitting in the sunlight, in the campsite, in Gouarec , talking to Tony Pritchard. Tony, tell me, why are you in Brittany?
- Tony That's a very good question. Geoff, who runs 'Breton Bikes' e-mailed us last year and said 'I operate from this campsite', and think it would be a good place for the Tandem Club to, uh, to have a rally.
- Rob And this is an international rally, I gather.
- Tony It is. Every year we run a rally somewhere in Europe, except the last three years we've been in France, before that were in Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg .
- Rob And how many people are involved In your international tandem rally?
- Tony There's 179 of us here.
- Rob That's an odd number.
- Tony It doesn't divide by two, no. Well, we have three seat tandems called Triplets. We have families with odd numbers of children and a couple of people come and bring a tandem but they don't bring a partner and they will take out some of the children or some of the older people, to make up the numbers.
- Rob You've been in Brittany for a few days now. How are you organizing the outings?
- Tony For this rally, Geoff from 'Breton Bikes', because he's already got some routes which he gives to his customers, and he gave us some of those and developed some others specifically for us and we put them on our website www.tandemclub.org.uk
- Rob Nice plug
- Tony So people were able to download them, we also provide the GP extracts and whatever information we can gather, so that when people get here they feel they know something about the site and

they don't have to do their own research, they can go straight out and explore the countryside.

Rob And people are doing that on an individual basis, they're not going out in big groups?

Tony No, the routes we provide are purely optional, we suggest certain days you get to certain places and you meet other people on the way, but people are free to start at whatever time they want at any speed they want to, stop at whatever cafés they find.

Rob So what are the big differences, do you think, between cycling round in Brittany and cycling round in Britain?

Tony Oh! We love cycling in France. Certainly this part of France is made for cycling because the traffic levels are very low. There's a very good network of cycle paths. We have the Nantes-Brest canal so we have at least two directions we can go which are flat and we generally find that French motorists are much more accommodating and they'll give you a little toot from a long way back to say that they're coming and they'll give you plenty of room, they're very patient when you get to the bends and wait until they can see before they pass - just like England!

Rob I wish it was like that! And we've heard from you Tony, now we are going to talk to the lady who is behind you on a lot of these outings. Jan.

Jan Hello.

Rob Hi, tell me what your impressions are of Brittany, from the back seat, let's say

Jan Extremely good and very picturesque and as you say, as Tony just said, and the drivers are very thoughtful

Rob Would you say that actually, as a straight forward, is tandem cycling safer generally than solo biking?

Tony I think that one of the things riding a tandem is that people do notice you. Very often people on solo bikes find that people in cars, when they come to a junction, don't see them but generally they see a tandem, and certainly they spot the triplets .

Rob They're very visible aren't they.

Tony Absolutely!

Rob That's great. Thank you for letting me speak to you and I'm going to see if I can speak maybe to one or two from a different country. Now I'm talking to another keen tandem rider and his partner from Holland. Jan hello.

Jan Hello.

Rob Hi, tell me, you've got a Tee shirt here that tells me that you've been riding tandems for quite a long time, what's the attraction for you?

Jan Oh, I think to start at the beginning, we have been riding tandems for over thirty years and I always say it's one of the very few things you really do together, and you don't get separated, you don't miss each other. It's quite nice to win. It's nice being out in the open, we always camp. We tow a little boat trailer and we camp all over, in fact all over the world, almost.

Rob Ok.

Jan And it's fun.

Rob Have you been involved with this group before?

Jan Yes we have been members of the International Tandem Club for, I guess 1990 and then we were already of over 10 years standing, and then we thought that was the second International Tandem rally ever, it was held in Holland and it was only 10kms from our house; so we went there and we thought 'Oh that's fun'. So the next day we brought our tandem. We attended one ride for the day. Ever since then we missed one rally, that's all.

Rob What for you is the bonus of doing this in a big group?

Jan Its fun, it's nice. You know a lot of people. You know different people. You know a lot of people from England, from Germany, Australia, United States, Canada. Only one, to be honest, from France.

Rob What's the difference for you Anya, may I ask you, about cycling in Brittany and cycling in Holland?

Anya Holland is flat! And here are the hills and that's much nicer sometimes, it's heavy but....

Rob You're happy to, to ride up hills?

Anya Yes.

Rob And who takes the, um, the front seat?

Anya Always Jan.

Rob Is there a reason for that?

Anya Uh, not really a reason but I don't think, if I take the brakes and all the stuff around and I don't have any time to look around and now I have all the time in the world to look around and I can tell him what I see. That's the thing on the tandem. Tandeming is not boring, it's very nice. We do it for over thirty years.

Jan You can do it to quite an old age because there we have a couple, the children are three and four, I guess. They have been tandeming now, it's two years, I guess, and we've also couples here which are over eighty, I guess so it's you just can continue cycling, just keep moving, cycling. Keep tandeming!

Rob Thank you very much indeed Jan, Anya, thank you.

Anya Thank you Rob.

