



### **Rob interviewing Clement Perrichot of the tourist office in Carhaix**

**Clement:** In Carhaix you can see, not many, but quite some statues. It's a municipal project. The aim of the project is to announce Bretons 'popular history with great figures who weren't like kings and queens and duchesses and stuff like that, to show to people a different kind of history, like a more popular, and sport is of course has a great place in it, and especially cyclisme, as it is very popular in Brittany.

**Rob:** And this is a particularly important month, in June, because the Tour comes very close by, not to Carhaix this time, but...

**Clement:** Not this year

**Rob:** Not this year, no, but it has been in the past

**Clement:** Yeah, yeah

**Rob:** So these statues have been her since... when?

**Clement:** They were like inaugurated in 2018. In July 2018. Actually ten days before the Tour passed through Carhaix. So, it was quite a sight to see – physical cyclists, real flesh cyclists, pass by the four statues of really really popular, and some of them ancient, cyclists.

**Rob:** We've got four famous cyclists here. Let's start with one of the earliest winners

**Clement:** Yeah, he is behind the three others, so he is the first one. We go back a century. It's Lucien Petit Breton. His real name was Lucien Georges Mazan. Quite a person, he had a rich but short life. He died, like, at the age of 37 or 38, unfortunately during the first world war. He is the first cyclist to win two Tours – it was in 1907 and 1908.

**Rob:** Very early on. And he's wearing ...

**Clement:** ...the old-fashioned cap and the glasses of course.

**Rob:** They are actually located in sort of chronological order, aren't they? So Le Petit Breton is at the back. What about his name? Is he actually Breton?

**Clement:** No, no, it's a nickname. It shows his nickname because, he was born in Loire Atlantique, which is, it's Brittany to us, and probably he identified as a Breton so chose his nickname to hide from his parents. Especially his father, who wasn't really like supportive of his choice of career. He started to bicycle when he was in Argentina, because the family moved from Loire Atlantique to Argentina very very early after he was born. That's where he started cycling. He won the Tour of Argentina, and when he came back in France he continued his career. He had quite ups and downs. Of course, when he won the Tours, he was at the highest, but after that, he tried to carry, but he was more frequently like not ill, but you know physically harmed, and wasn't at the best. Unfortunately, the first world war took us.

**Rob:** And I understand that he was a very fast cyclist.



**Clement:** Yeah

**Rob:** He was a world record holder. That's Le Petit Breton. Who's the fellow with the leather headgear here?

**Clement:** This is Jean Robic. He won the first Tour de France after the second world war. He was really, like, popular, especially among the countryside, among the lowest classes of the population, because he was bred from the lower people. He wasn't born in Brittany, but his family was from Morbihan. A few years after he was born the family came back to Brittany, and that's where, in Radenac in Morbihan, he started cycling. He was also very good at cyclo-cross as well. He died in 1980. But during his career he was also considered like the 'anti-Bobet', which is the third cyclist chosen to be among the four here.

**Rob:** He was a very small guy.

**Clement:** Yes, very very..

**Rob:** And they called him 'biquet', the kid goat, because he was so small. And he was a very good climber. Obviously, his speciality was climbing, but in order to go down the mountains afterwards, he used to put bottles in his pockets, weighted with stones, so that he would be heavier, and therefore faster, down the hill.

**Clement:** Yes, cyclists, especially back then, were really like small but with heavy muscles, and that's what the artist here, Annick Leroy, chose to represent. She took a picture of him when he was ascending the Mont Ventoux.

**Rob:** She's made it so that he's slanting, he's actually leaning over. Lots of speed, lots of action in there. Just next to him, we've got Louison Bobet.

**Clement:** Yep

**Rob:** He was his rival in some ways.

**Clement:** Yeah, in some ways, but mostly his rival in the heart of the French people. Because Bobet was more upper class, more a classy, well-spoken guy. He was really popular in the cities. So both of them were quite good competitors, and Louison Bobet he won three Tours, so he was like a very big star back then. It was a record.

**Rob:** He won three Tours?

**Clement:** Yeah, yeah. It's in '53, '54 and '55. So, a long time after Jean Robic, but Jean Robic was still in the heart of the French people, and in the minds of them...

**Rob:** Interesting.

**Clement:** I think it was a challenge for the artist to try to catch cyclists. It's not something that she was used to do. She actually asked real cyclists to pose for her so she can have a look at the muscles, the effort, the faces and stuff like that. Here, on both of them, it's really like something.



**Rob:** And way out front is the only one that still lives...

**Clement:** ... is the famous 'Badger', Bernard Hinault of course.

**Rob:** The Badger?

**Clement:** Yes, Badger. It was his nickname. I don't know why it was the Badger, but it's the Badger. Maybe it's because he's stubborn. He's from Cotes d'Armor, he's from Yffiniac, and he won five Tours. Back then it was also a record, only owned by Eddie Merckx and Anquetil. So, two also great names of cycling. And yeah, Hinault is a true Breton, he is a true Breton and we were really proud to see him when we inaugurated the statue. He came in Carhaix.

**Rob:** And did he like his portrait?

**Clement:** Yeah, I read an interview of the artist. When she showed him the statue, at first he was silent, but it was not because he was disappointed, it was because of emotion. He was really, really emotional when he saw his face so well represented. When you see the profile of the statue, you can really really see his strength.

**Rob:** So these are very impressive, very different kind of statues to find in the town.

**Clement:** Yep

**Rob:** Well. Clement Perrichot, from the tourist office here in Carhaix, thank you very much indeed for your time

**Clement:** You're welcome. Any time.