

## **Rob Interviewing Mike Lucas who writes in Le Poher**

Rob: I'm with Mike Lucas in the lovely town of Port-Louis. Hello Mike.

Mike: Hello.

Rob: I first heard about you when I read the Le Poher newspaper, the local paper for Central Brittany and came across your articles. How come an Englishman is writing a fortnightly column in the Le Poher newspaper. How did that come about?

Mike: Yes - it's a few years ago now because I've been doing it - it must be five years, and it came about because we were living in Baud at the time, or near Baud in the countryside and one of our near neighbours - an English couple called Andrew and Lindsey - who run an organisation called 'English, Why Not' which is where they take French people and people spend a week immersed learning English with them so they live with them and eat English food, and they eat different food, they eat curry for instance. As a result of that they became friends with Jean-Noel Potin who, at that time, was the Editor of Le Poher and there had originally apparently been an English page and a Breton page but they had, sort of, disappeared so he decided to revive them and Andrew said 'Oh, I've got this friend who could possibly write for you' so Jean-Noel got in touch with me and we've become big friends with Jean-Noel now, of course and he said 'Would you like to do a column every fortnight?' So I said 'Yes.'

Rob: So, where do you get your subjects from?

Mike: I've no idea, you know, really. Suddenly something comes, or it may be something I've done or something that's happened. When we were living in Baud and we were living in the countryside there was so much to write about - country living and about the English living in France and about dealing with fosse septique. I mean, all those sort of things. And then it gradually widened. I've written about Brexit; I've written about... I've thrown a bit of politics in whenever I can - not too much.

Rob: Recently I've noticed you've started writing about moving to Port-Louis. Why did you decide to come here for a start?

Mike: Well, it's funny. Years ago we discovered Port-Louis when we came on a visit and just thought 'This is wonderful - it's great. 'It's almost like a little island because it's stuck out on a peninsula. I love the fact that it's got this wonderful chateau; it's got the estuary and it's got the sea. It's a bit like - I don't know if you know Topsham, next to Exeter? It has that same sort of feel as Topsham. Interestingly enough, where we lived in England; which was in Yorkshire, in the middle of the Pennines; Marsdon, a little village called Marsdon my Theatre company was based, and is based; Port-Louis has a similar feel to it. It is very much a community. It's got a main street, what's called a Grand Rue, which is not that grand. It's cobbled and it's got everything you want - it's got a poissonerie, a boucherie, a boulangerie, an epecerie, a laverie, a supermarket. All in this one street. So it's got everything you want. And, of course, the great thing is we've got the bateau bus which runs across the estuary of the Blabet and the Scorff to Lorient. If you want a bit of city life, you know, the cinema and restaurants - we've got plenty of restaurants here in Port-Louis as well, I must admit. Um - then you've got it on your doorstep. So, I just love the feel of it and we manage, fortunately, very very fortunately because we found this flat right in the centre of Port-Louis, 100 metres from the nearest bar and 5 minutes to the sea. So, we couldn't have landed ourselves better, really.

Rob: It was a good move and we've been reading about your experiences here in the article. The heading of the article is very informative. You haven't always been a journalist. Before, you were the director of a Theatre Company. I think you need to tell us a little about Mikron.

Mike: Right, OK, yes Mikron not micron - Greek ??? but also it was started by Mike, Mick, me and Ron and guy called Ron and my wife at the time, her maiden name was CamerRON. That's one of those stupidly clever names - you know.

Rob: And Mobile.

Mike: And mobile - and the unique thing about it is I had this mad idea in 1970, or something like that, to take a theatre company on the canals of England. Travel round in a boat and perform at venues along the canal.

Rob: Surely, you didn't all live in the same boat?

Mike: Yes, we did.

Rob: Because it was a very small Company?

Mike: Yes, well there was 4 members of the company including me who were acting, then there was my wife, Sarah, who was the administrator and then our nine-month old child. It came every Summer until it got to GCSE's when he did stay at home but he was taught by us or the other members of the Company. And if every child could do that, I think it would be a benefit to every child.

Rob: He's got a story to tell.

Mike: Yes, now he's a post production supervisor in television and he's got his own old narrow boat. So that Company started in 1972 on the waterways and it's been travelling on the waterways ever since and when I handed over in about 2006 I handed over to two other members of the Company - young members of the Company - who had, I thought, the same ideas as me and wanted to carry it on and they've been there since 2006 and are a bit antique now; they're in their 40's and they've done a fantastic job and they've managed to get the Arts Council grant. They've used the media in an amazing way. The reviews they're getting for this current tour, they're on tour at this moment, are superb. They're doing a show about bird watchers - one of the shows - and one of them is about women in the Police.

Rob: Right - so it's very topical as well as... to do with nature.

Mike: Oh, yes, I mean, we've always done topical stuff. In my day I did a show about transport - general transport - particularly about the railways. I've done shows about historical figures as well - like Brunel and Trevithick and people like that. Suffragettes - I've done a show about Suffragettes. So many variable subjects - the environment. And they're all original shows with original music - there's always music in them.

Rob: The Mikron Theatre Company - that's what they're called.



Mike: They are. If you go on line and tap in 'Mikron Theatre Company' it's a very good web site and there's some old film and television programmes made in the 70's and 80's in which I feature so if anybody wants to see me in my youth they can.

Rob: Mike Lucas - there's such a lot you can tell us. I think this is going to have to be two-part interview so what we're going to do is sign off just now and I'm going to come back sometime soon..

Mike: All right!

Rob: ...And take up the story a bit further.

Mike: I'll get the coffee on ready.

Rob: Thank you very much Mike. Mike Lucas.