

## Day 1

We were all up reasonably early this morning after a good night on the razzle in Nantes. Most of us sloped off to bed at 2.30am after consuming a few bottles of wine and plenty beers following our meal in a Moroccan restaurant. Roy and Denis weren't too impressed with couscous and suggested that sawdust would have tasted better.

It's been a beautiful day here in the Loire Valley. Very hot - must have been well over 30 degrees. On the first stage of the cycle ride things didn't go exactly to plan. Firstly, Jim advised us that the ride was nearer 40 than 30 miles, that didn't go down too well after the heavy session the night before. The train journey involving two trains went smoothly though and we soon found the bike shop in Saumur. The hybrid bikes were pretty good though most of us had problems fitting our rucksacks on the panniers and several ended up carrying their rucksack on their backs, was hard work in the blazing sunshine.

The cycle ride was generally flat with just the occasional incline that wasn't too daunting. The Hares - Denis, Roy and the two Alan's - fired ahead in the second half of the ride. The rest - the Tortoises - plodded along steadily behind. We had split up after lunch around 3.30 pm and didn't meet again until around 7.15pm in the centre of Angers. The Hares came towards the hotel from one direction after circling Angers and the Tortoises from another after following a very kind and rather nice looking French lady who guided us in her car.

Both groups had tales of woe to relate. Both had got lost at the same point on the ride. We also encountered some difficult obstacles on route and had to improvise to get past them. See the photographs attached. I've also included a team photo taken en route. Hope the link works. We were all pretty tired this evening so no late night for most of us. Jim has just dropped off next to me and is snoring so I'd better make a move myself.