

We had breakfast outside the hotel this morning on another day of glorious sunshine. After breakfast we had a walk around Angers close to the hotel. It has lovely tree lined boulevards, a Bastille and a beautiful fountain - the perfect twin town for our beloved Wigan.

A big day ahead for us, as we only had to travel around a mere 45 miles, in blazing sunshine. The Hares decided to stick with the Tortoises as we travelled along steadily with a full complement of 12 cyclists. Not too far out of Angers we encountered a tough hill, not particularly steep but steep enough, with quite a long climb. We sailed down the other side but the group had been split with the quicker climbers carrying on whilst a slightly larger group pulled up at the foot of the hill for a water stop. It was at this point that Ray set off smartly to follow a group of cyclists. Just one problem, it wasn't our group. There followed a period of uncertainty as our two groups combined to try to establish where Ray was. We managed to locate our missing buddy on the mobile phone and he reported that he was some way away from us but was confident he could find his way back to the route.

We were contemplating taking an early lunch and decided to stop at the village of Savennieres to have a drink and a bite to eat to allow Ray to catch up. Unfortunately, we couldn't find a restaurant but we had a lively chat with two lovely tourist guides and took a couple of photos for the album. The girls advised us that there were a few restaurants at Behuard a couple of kilometres away. A small advanced party set off to check out Behuard but after a few hundred metres, who should come cycling off a side track none other than Bonnie Tyler. Well it was Ray really who also was lost in France. We quickly cycled back to the village where Ray was met with unbridled joy by his beloved Joyce. We decided then to take on drinks and a snack before cycling on for lunch. The usual suspects who shall remain unnamed drank beer while the goodie two shoes had soft drinks.

We continued to cycle through beautiful and largely flat countryside. The route signage is excellent and the country roads and tracks had very little traffic allowing the group to cycle side-by-side admiring the views and having a good natter. After a few miles the two Alans could contain themselves no longer and decided to ride ahead to the next agreed stop at Montjean sur Loire. The rest of the group sailed along stopping from time to time to take on water. It was at one of these stops by the river that Phil 2 suggested that we should have a river dance. That didn't go down too well given that most of us were feeling the heat. However, the alternative suggestion of a conga seemed to fit the bill, the rendition just happened to be filmed by our cameraman Pemphil, see the video link! We caught up with the two Alans for a pleasant lunch in a small but friendly cafe at Montjean sur Loire. The two Alan's then shot off ahead while the rest of the group progressed steadily towards the small town of Ancenis. At the next stop at St Florentine Le Vieil the main group had drinks on a balcony overlooking the river. A young girl provided background music as she practised opera nearby. Two attractive young French girls asked Ray to photograph them on their bicycles. Ray reported that one had asked him if he was George Clooney and after he answered no she had said that she thought not!

The group arrived in Ancenis soon after 6pm and arranged to meet at 7.30pm for a drink in our local Le Bar across from the hotel. After a couple of drinks we headed off for a meal at a restaurant Joyce had found on Trip Advisor. We enjoyed an excellent meal and Denis said he wasn't too disappointed that they didn't have petit pois mushy on the menu. After the usual problem pulling together the money to pay the bill Tony chucked in a few Euros to make up the missing balance.

Then it was back to Le Bar for another late session. Ray, Joyce and Alan 2 decided to hit the sack soon after 11pm leaving the rest of us to sink a few more beers and get down to the nitty gritty. The contents of the discussion remain classified under the Cycling Club Official Secrets Act. The bar owner, who had seen his weekly profits double in one night, closed the bar around 1.15pm and kicked us out - in a very pleasant French way, of course.

Everyone headed straight to their rooms. Roy and Denis had a slight problem however as between them they couldn't remember their room number, no surprises there! Fortunately a touch of inspired guesswork, not sure who by enabled them to locate their room and were soon tucked up in bed, or should that be beds!

Hear endeth Day 2.

Conga Video Link (not for the faint hearted)

<https://www.btcloud.bt.com/?shareObject=e8269106-be53-ce88-ce6c-98ded3c29dae>

Link to all photos

<https://www.btcloud.bt.com/?shareObject=92bd560a-410f-9843-918c-5d23ae40be47>