

About

written by Marcus | 4 February, 2014

Travelling by tandem always prompts a reaction; sometimes curiosity, often amusement, occasionally confusion. One thing that you can be sure of though is that on every single outing, without exception, someone will consider themselves to be at the height of hilarity by shouting “She’s not pedalling on the back!”.



Breakfast for two in Croatia

The decision was made to buy our first tandem in 2010 shortly after spending very little time together during a week-long cycle tour of the Western Isles and Outer Hebrides on solo bikes. We had learnt a lot about two wheeled travel during that first tour: we loved the simplicity of carrying only what you need, the views from the tent each evening, the people we met along our journey and just being out in some spectacular

scenery for a week. There was an issue though – we rode at very different speeds.

Of course the underlying problem was the need to recalibrate Marcus's effort levels from 'go as fast you can' to 'enjoy the journey'. We later discovered 'touring speed' which is a pace that allows you to take in the little details of your surroundings and are what makes travelling by bike so unique.

But we still wanted to make sure that we were always within speaking distance and a tandem seemed like the perfect solution. Our first purchase was a Dawes Super Galaxy, still surviving from the 1980's and a testament to its hand built quality. That bike took us through most of Norway in 2011 and it was this trip that cemented our love of cycle touring and in particular touring by tandem.

The purchase of a second tandem complete with S&S couplings allows the bike to be split very quickly into two parts making it easier to squeeze it into a train carriage or even a lift to get to the 6th floor, extending the possibilities of where we could travel.

With our new steed, a very sturdy 2001 Thorn Discovery, we have now crossed Wales, taken part in the Paralympic Opening Ceremony, honeymooned in Croatia, Montenegro and Italy, ridden from Boston to New York and returned to Scotland to ride from the West Coast round to the North Coast and up to Orkney and Shetland.



The bike dressed up for the Paralympic opening ceremony 2012
But the tandem travel bug had bitten harder than a 2 week holiday would allow so we took the plunge and set off to embark on something much bigger. In August 2014 we left our jobs, home, friends and family and set off from Bristol to ride to New Zealand through over 30 different countries. The plan was flexible and organic so didn't quite take the shape that we first expected but eventually we returned home on 13th December 2016 with the Northern Hemisphere circumnavigated and with over 47,000km pedalled visiting 46 countries along the way.

Who Are We?



Our 'Hag Do' at the World Alternative Games in Llanwrtyd Wells.

We met through a shared love of rowing. Marcus was the unlikely cox while Kirsty was stroke of a City of Bristol Rowing Club four. Our eyes met across an over-rating cox-box.

Since then Marcus has laid down his oar in favour of several bikes, running shoes and wetsuits and competes in all manner of endurance races and events from long distance audax rides through to international triathlons.

Kirsty continues to be involved in the rowing club as treasurer, but is more often seen at audax cycling events than in a boat. Contrary to the comments received from passers by, she does pedal on the back and is in fact the powerhouse for the tandem.

We organise the very popular Las Vegas Institute of Sport Audax that starts just outside Bristol and takes riders on a

cake fueled adventure through countryside surrounding the city and way beyond.

We got married in September 2012.

Both of us have occupied desks at offices near Bristol, Kirsty as a software engineer and Marcus as a sustainable drainage engineer.