

2019 PBP – a short snippet from George Row.

Paris-Brest-Paris is just a piece of cake. No it's not, it's up to 90 hours of concentrated effort.

The weather for 2019 PBP was near perfect, cool evenings and moderate fine days. Depending on start times some had more problems with head winds on the first day but fortunately it was only a slight inconvenience for us on the tandem.

On any Audax ride it is important to stay focused on the next control and ultimately the finish. On PBP this is extremely difficult. The country side and towns, big or small, all with a magnificent church and fascinating narrow streets would make this an ideal two week tourist ride. Added to this, all along the route local families set up hospitality tents giving away water, cakes crepes and all manner of tempting things. We enjoyed stopping at some but had to remain focused. The fantastic boulangerie/patisseries were also a time trap to be enjoyed in moderation.

The new start at Rambouillet was much better than previous events but we could not remember the first night being so hilly. Loudeac (440k) is the popular first sleep stop. It divides the ride into three almost equal stages, but to avoid this busy control and make the remainder of the ride more relaxed our aim was to ride straight to Cahaix (520k) for the first rest. With so many bikes passing or being passed it was like an adrenaline rush and kept us motivated to comfortably do the distance.

Brest is mentally important being the half way point but it best remembered by all randonneurs for the amazing bridge over the harbour. It is not just a bridge, it's a work of art.

Due to a miscalculation of some control closing times it was only with some extreme effort that we stayed in time and still managed enough sleep in the early hours of the morning when it is difficult to concentrate. The kilometres just kept rolling by.

Did I mention the enthusiasm and hospitality of the French? That was enough in itself to make the ride worth while.

Tandem #F029. Dave Minter (pilot), George Row (stoker).