

some riders, PBP is a only one part of a group-rates vacation; they will never be motivated to endure the pain the event can provide. It has also been pointed out by a number of veterans that some of the criticism of those who abandon comes from PBP veterans for whom a second medal is not worth the agony, and from highly successful ultra-marathon riders for whom PBP is not the great dream of their lives. This being so, the US abandonment rate will probably always be higher. Bill Reenstra notes that "in [most] cases, the riders made a conscious decision to quit the ride. While few would have stated it in these terms at the time, they simply decided that the current level of pain was not worth the rewards to be gained from completing the ride. American riders must realize that there is nothing wrong in making a decision to quit. If French riders were to do the Boston-Montreal-Boston I suspect that the percentages would be reversed." Another question asks how many of the US abandonments were impulsive, regretted, and therefore avoidable. But half the veterans polled cited bad attitudes as the primary cause of the abandonments.

15) What is the single most important factor regarding finishing PBP?

RESULTS: 68% mental preparation, 13% training, 10% steady riding.

COMMENTS: McLane: "There should be nothing anywhere in any quarter of your mind that will allow you to quit. Keep going!" Seebode: "You must dedicate the time required." Scott Dickson: "Setting mini-goals throughout the event such as making

it to the next control rather than thinking of the finish which may be a day and a half away. Set a finish time as a goal and a realistic schedule that will allow you to complete that goal."

Zabielski: "Training under all weather conditions, all types of terrain, and convincing yourself it could be done." Bertrand: "Being mentally prepared. You have to want to do it!" Brehler: "Desire."

Rose Costin: "Attitude! Believing in yourself. Expecting to do it."

Marshall: "Believing that everything I experienced was part of the winning process." Vogel: "Determination - either you have it or you don't."

Koshar: "Intention. If you intend to finish you will do your homework and you will finish."

Andy Schaefer: "Determination. It must be a true and honest goal and the individual must come to terms with him/her self about the difficulty of achieving it." This is the point made by Jock Wadley in Old Roads and New: "In an event of this length self-knowledge is of vital importance. We often hear the expression 'that man does not know his own strength.'

Between 6-10th September 1971 I saw many men who didn't know their own weaknesses until too late. I am glad that I knew mine in advance." Spiller: "Be absolutely determined that once you start riding, nothing is going to keep you from finishing. If, before you start, you see in your mind that you have finished then your mind has finished, half the battle is believing you can do it."

Doug Kirby: "Given good equipment, proper clothing, completion of the qualifiers - I recommend that you keep your head on, talk to people, and have fun." Lon Haldeman: "Training, and knowing your limits. From what I have seen, the Americans are very strong on the bike but can use all the

mental preparation they can get." Mike Dobies: "Be ready to deal with the unknown/unexpected, be flexible, have fun!" Nancy Raposo: "Pace yourself. Don't get caught in a faster pack that you can handle." Knight: "Confidence in yourself." Wolf: "The absolute, total sense of pride in having finished." Kite-Powell: "Mental attitude; must be robustly positive, to the point of being ridiculously cheerful even in the face of the worst conditions. Bad attitude is the surest ticket to dropping out." Tom Spantideas: "Respect the tradition of the event and prepare all you can. Put a smile on your face and respect the other riders and support people."

16) What is the single most important piece of advice you would give riders preparing for their first PBP?

COMMENTS: Mike Dobies: "Be prepared for a challenge - and the challenge is not riding 750 miles - it's being in a foreign country, strange conditions, bad weather, different food, being alone at night while riding 750 miles." Scott Dickson: "Expect the unexpected. France may be quaint, but everything you want to do will take longer because there are fewer consumer conveniences." Bruce McLane: "Treat it as the single most important accomplishment of your life. It is a most unique and profound feeling to ride across the finish knowing you did your best." Dick Seebode: "Cycle tour the whole route unsupported (with your gear). The hostels are great and well placed. I spent about \$12/day in 1987." Jack Brohal: "Do a lot of long - make that very long-rides." One rider notes that the best way to learn about PBP is to talk with

someone you know who has ridden the event. You should be able to compare your riding to your friend's, and begin to prepare yourself accordingly. Ask lots of questions. (Articles in the 1989 International Randonneurs Journal by Dickson, Haldeman, Konski, Brohal, Fisk, Hoyt, Falsetti, and Goldthwaite can serve this purpose and provide many clues as to how to ride PBP. Also, ACP's videos of the 1979, 1983, and 1987 PBPs show some of the conditions, difficulties, terrain, and riding to be expected in the event.) Patti Brehler: "Learn to be self-sufficient." Marty Wolf: "Ride as many hilly miles (and as many as four or five hilly 200+ mile rides) as you can prior to going to France. I've discovered that the more riding of this type you do, the more fun you'll have on PBP. I didn't have much fun in 1987, but I expect that as a result of better preparation for next year, that PBP 91 should actually be (at least partly) fun." Pete Penseyres: "Prepare well and take reliable equipment and clothing. Then decide you are going to finish - no matter what." James Beckman: "Be ready for hills and cold." John Torosian: "Prepare realistically. Set modest goals of time expectation. Prepare for the worst weather conditions. Be determined. Do not overtrain in the last two weeks. Be in Paris at least one week prior to the event. Have fun, it is the greatest experience of your cycling life." Jerry Koshar: "Ride many miles at your own pace so you don't burn out." Tom Nezovich: "Aim to finish late, but finish. Try to enjoy the experience. Meet as many of the other nationality cyclists as you can." David Fisk has pointed out that this is a great opportunity to ride with European cyclists; try not to get stuck

riding with people you could ride with in the States. (Ruben Marshall also did some interesting jersey trading in 87.) Regge Life: "Clean out your body, and be physically ready to go beyond your limits. Never give in to negative thoughts, be positive and see the finish with every stroke." Doug Kirby: "Plan both mentally and physically to complete PBP, then go and enjoy the scenery and the company." Lon Haldeman: "Don't be pampered; learn to ride all night alone with no services." Tom Spantideas: "Go to work when you train this year! And don't always look for easy

answers like 'I don't want to train with fenders on'." Hauke Kite-Powell: "You've got to want to do this ride. It's not physically all that difficult, but if you allow yourself to become discouraged or otherwise bummed out, if you allow yourself to play with the idea of quitting, then you're setting yourself up. Practice a positive attitude. Absolutely no complaining! If you feel frustrated with something, get it out of your system by transferring that energy into the pedals. With the right attitude and some basic training, you can't go wrong."

#### KAY RYSCHON WAS THE 1987 WOMEN'S CHAMPION HER COMMENTS ON RIDING PBP:

Kay will have ridden 10000 miles before PBP, a good part of that in RAAM, which she will again be racing in July. She recommends 400 miles per week. "Cross training is good, but I think it is important to spend as much time as possible on the bike." Kay may have been the first PBP champion ever to have **not** used a crew; she ate all of her food at the controls, and intends to do the same in 1991. On the use of stimulants: "No, I don't even drink coffee, but drink a lot of Coca-cola." Though she didn't sleep at all in 1987, to avoid drowsiness she drinks coke and eats chocolate. Kay relied entirely on battery powered lights, but had trouble when they went out, and recommends having a generator backup. She also always rides sew-up tires. Like many other riders, Kay plans to ride alone at her own pace and occasionally with groups, for companionship and to decrease the odds of getting lost. On the question of the high US abandonment rate: "I think many riders failed because they did not continue to train after qualifying for PBP. Others made one too many sight-seeing stops and missed the next control time window." Commenting on riding Paris-Brest-Paris: "Come to the event trained and confident about finishing. If you have qualified to ride PBP, be confident that you can finish PBP. PBP is a blast, and will give many memorable moments, and new friends from all over the world."

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## JOCK WADLEY AND PARIS-BREST-PARIS

Jock Wadley was a much-admired British cycling correspondent, whose books are now unfortunately out of print; copies of his works are highly regarded and sought after. One of the finest descriptions of Paris-Brest-Paris is Wadley's essay "Brestward Ho!" from his book Old Roads and New.

In another of his books, My Nineteenth Tour de France, Wadley covered the great race not from inside a press vehicle, but from the viewpoint of his Lejeune bicycle, which he rode throughout France that July of 1973, catching stage finishes when he could, or climbs, or the rush of the peloton through little villages. That book also deals in a leisurely way, with Wadley's life as a cyclist, including his participation in twenty four hour time trials, forty hour Flèches (or arrows - long one way rides to a set destination from several departure points in Britain or France), randonneur rides and brevets, and other types of bicycle rides, tests, and races. Writing of the 1973 Brevet de Randonneur des Alpes, a 245 km ride with 4500 metres of climbing and a twenty hour time limit, Wadley recalls leaving Grenoble at two AM in a heavy rain. Over one thousand riders are taking part, and they all face lightning, thunder, and cold rains along the steep climbs to the Col de la Croix de Fer and the Col de Galibier. Only half the starters finished, and Wadley was among them. Twelve women also completed the brevet. A torrent of water crosses the road, and many riders there abandon the brevet, and roll back down to Grenoble. Wadley imagines the article that

would appear in "Cycle Touring": "C.T.C. member J. B. Wadley was among the 1040 starters in the bi-annual Brevet de Randonneur des Alpes tourist trial held in July. Heavy rain caused flooding on the Col de la Croix de Fer where the road was cut by a transient stream. The more adventurous participants waded through, but the Englishman was among those who preferred returning to headquarters at Grenoble."

"No, can't have that," Wadley realizes. He fantasizes instead a telex: GRENOBLE FRANCE SUNDAY 20 JOHN WADLEY JOURNALIST KEW SURREY SWEEP OVER MOUNTAIN PRECIPICE WITH BICYCLE WHEN COMPETING 150 MILES CYCLE TOURING TRIAL FRENCH ALPS ATTEMPTING CROSS SECTION OF FLOODED CROIX DE FER PASS WADLEY BELIEVED 59 TODAY MORE FOLLOWS.

Wadley writes of the second Tour de France, in 1904, which had 88 riders including the 1903 winner Maurice Garin who was worried about only one man, the explosive Aucouturier, victor of the early season Paris-Roubaix for the second year in succession. Only a quarter of an hour after the flag dropped Aucouturier crashed in the dark. It was the first of a series of first-stage accidents which put him hours behind. Out in front Garin kept out of trouble, pedalling with last year's runner-up Pothier. Suddenly there was an attack... a common enough phrase even in those early days of cycle racing, but this was an attack with a difference. By four men, on four wheels. A rattling open touring car crowded the two cyclists off the comparatively smooth band alongside the

road and all but had them in the ditch. The three passengers shouted insults and threats: 'This is only a warning! If you go through St. Etienne you will be killed. Faure must win! You have been warned.' Crazy guys, thought Garin who went on to beat Pothier in the sprint at Lyon after their opening jaunt of 293 miles from Paris. Stage two of the 1904 Tour started after four rest days, at midnight from Lyon. The riders rattled over the vile cobbled road to St. Etienne where in accordance with the custom of the day, they jumped off their bikes, signed the control sheet, stuffed food into pockets or the front handlebar bags which served not only as provision store but tool bag and money box. A Tour de France rider had to be self-supporting."

Wadley had a special fondness for Paris-Brest-Paris, and he rode it himself in 1971. He recalls his friend, the bicycle mechanic and cafe owner Louis Debruycker, who rode the 1971 PBP in 58 hours - fifty hours on the bike at age 52. The 1966 PBP solo velo co-champions Macaudière and Demilly (44h21m) had the year before set a record on the Col de Grand Bois, an 8 mile 1800 foot climb, on their tandem, in 29m56s. Throughout the book, Wadley mentions friends in the European cycling press, former Tour de France professionals, and men with whom he has perhaps ridden only once or twice, who also possess the affection for PBP he had himself. "I chatted with thirty-two year old Herman de Munck over lunch. He was a cyclo-sportif who was far from being an unfrocked coureur. He had been good enough to move from the amateur to independent ranks and then ride as a professional with the Flandria team. But traveling all over Europe meant neglecting a

promising business built up at St. Niklaas, between Ghent and Antwerp, and he retired from road racing, to re-emerge in due course as a cyclo-sportif. Then I sought Sir Hubert Opperman, alias "Oppy," winner of the professional Paris-Brest-Paris forty years ago. I could only get a brief word with Oppy who had reporters' notebooks, cameras and microphones to deal with, but Lady Opperman told me that she and her husband were greatly enjoying the trip over from Malta where he is Australian ambassador." Wadley compares de Munck and Opperman: "Oppy won that 1931 PBP in 49h23m. He used a single 47x18 most of the way, switching the wheel round to the 16 tooth cog for the final sprint to Paris. de Munck used a triple chainwheel giving fifteen instant gears between 53x13 and 45x22. His time was 45h39m."

"Some people are said to be living on borrowed time," he writes. "I seem to live on borrowed bicycles. I had written an article for 'Cycling' relating my 1972 adventures on 13 different machines scrounged in various parts of Europe and North America. I had got off to a good 1973 start with an early March ride with my friend Jim Konski on one of his spare Peugeotts. We two gentlemen pedalled through Verona and had lunch in Rome. Sounds quite a trip. It was, but only 85 miles, out-and-home from Jim's house at Syracuse, New York State. A few days later I was riding a time-trial "10" a few miles west of Watergate itself, with nearly 100 enthusiasts from the Washington D.C. area. The C.I.D. bike I rode came straight from Mike Schwering's store in M Street, and presumably went straight back after a change of wheels."

# THE 1991 PARIS-BREST-PARIS ROUTE

LOCALITES	Número de route	KM PARTIEL	KM TOTAL
ST QUENTIN EN YVELINES			0
Bd des Chênes			
Ave. du Centre			
Ave. du 8 mai			
Rond-point des Saules		1	1
Rond-point des Sangliers		0,5	1,5
Carrefour D36	D36	2,5	4
Carrefour D36/D91	D91	0,5	4,5
Dampierre		9,5	14
Carrefour D91/N306		5,5	19,5
Rambouillet		10,5	30
Epernon		14	44
Maintenon	D26 <sup>1</sup>	9	53
Chêne Chenu	D26	21	74
Chateaufort en Thumerais	D928	7	81
Digny	D24	8	89
Senonches	D20/D8	10	99
Longny au Perche		24	123
MORTAGNE AU PERCHE	D931	18	141
Mamers	D311	24	165
Notre-Dame de Toutes Aides	D310	7,5	172,5
La Hutte		17	189,5
Fresnay sur Sarthe	D15/D119	6	195,5
VILLAINES LA JUHEL	D113	25,5	221
Javron	D13	10	231
Lassay	D33	13	244
Ambrières		11	255
Gorron		14	269
Le Loroux	D80		
FOUGERES		32	301
Route de Nantes		4	305
Chateau de Fougères	N12	3	308
Romagné	D18	5	313
St Hilaire des Landes	D20	6,5	319,5
Sens de Bretagne		14,5	334
Feins		8,5	342,5
Dingé		7	349,5
TINTENIAC		10,5	360
Bécherel	D220	8,5	368,5
Médréac		10	378,5
Quédillac		6,5	385
Carrefour D220/D166	D166	3,5	388,5
St Méen le Grand	N164/D66	5	393,5
Loscouët sur Meu		4	397,5
Illifaut	D66/D305	9	406,5
Ménéac		9	415,5
La Trinité Porhoët	D66	8,5	424
Plumieux	D14	3	427
La Chêze	D778	7	434
LOUDEAC	D41	10	444

LOCALITES	Número de route	KM PARTIEL	KM TOTAL
Treuvé		5,5	449
Grace-Uzel	D41/D7	4	453
St Hervé		5,5	458
Uzel	D76/D53	1,5	460
Merléac		4,5	464
La Porte aux Moines	D53/D757	4	468
Corlay	N790	10,5	478
St Nicolas du Péleu		8,5	486
Plounévez-Quintin	D49	6,5	492
St Lubin	D49/D23	7	499
Maël Carhaix	D23/D49	8,5	507
La Croix Neuve	D49/D166		
CARHAIX	D764	12	519
Poullaouen			
Huelgoat		21,5	540
Roc Trévezel		14	554
Sizun		15	569
Landerneau	D712	17	586
Carrefour D712/D233	D233	3	589
Carrefour D233/D67		9,5	598
Le Relecq-Kerhuon		1	600
Moulin Blanc		3,5	603
BREST PORT DE PLAISANCE		2,5	605

LOCALITES	Número de route	KM PARTIEL	KM TOTAL
BREST PORT DE PLAISANCE			605
Roc Trévezel		51,5	656
CARHAIX		30,5	686
LOUDEAC		78	764
TINTENIAC		84	848
FOUGERES		59	907
VILLAINES LA JUHEL		80	987
MORTAGNE AU PERCHE		80	1067
Chateaufort en Thumerais	D26	60	1127
NOGENT LE ROI	D983	25	1152
Condé s/Vesdre		15	1167
Gambais	D112	4	1171
Gambaiseuil		5	1176
Montfort l'Amaury	D13	7	1183
Cheval Mort		4	1187
Bazoches s/Guyonne			
Les Mousseaux		4	1191
Jouars	D23	1	1192
Ergal			
ELANCOURT	D36	6	1198
TRAPPES		3	1201
Carrefour Ave. Pas du Lac		3	1204
Ave. du Pas du Lac			
Ave. du Centre		2	1206
Ave. du 8 mai		1	1207
G. "DROITS DE L'HOMME"		1	1208



1987 Paris-Brest-Paris Champions Marsha Casselman with Scott Dickson just behind her. Michel (far left) and JoJo (far right).



1987 Back row: Jean-Claude Masse' (left), Robert Lepertel (second from left) and Jim Konski (third from left).

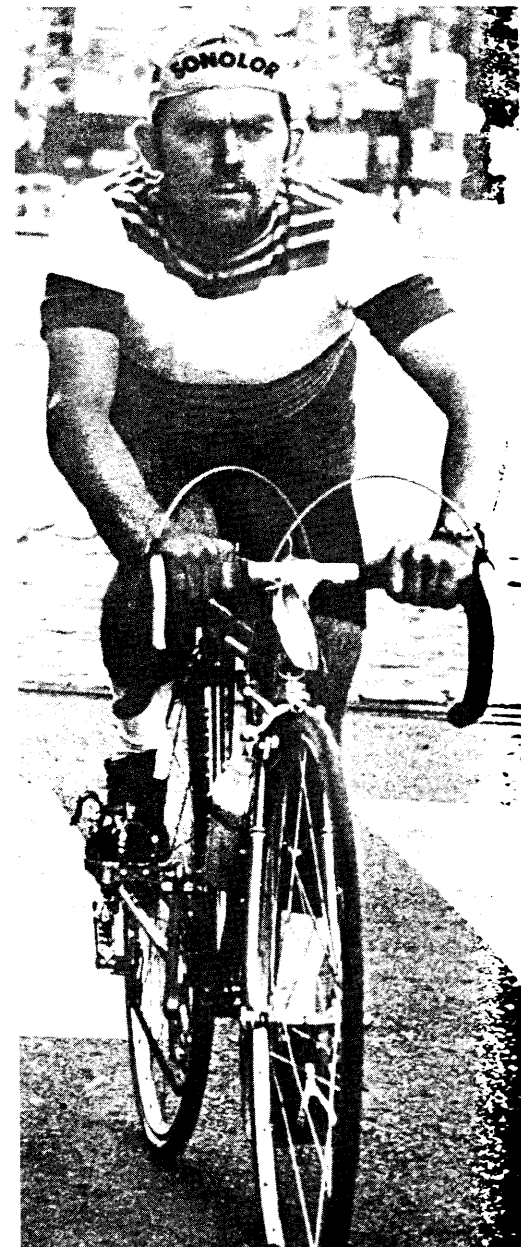
1987 Front row: (left to right) Bob Breedlove, Lon Haldeman, Kay Ryschon, Patti Brehler, Lou Hotton, and Scott Dickson.



Charlotte von der  
Hude near Gorron.



Dave Berning



Herman de Munck





**Harriet Fell  
Paris-Brest-Paris  
1975**



**Bernard, Claude,  
and  
Harriet Fell.**

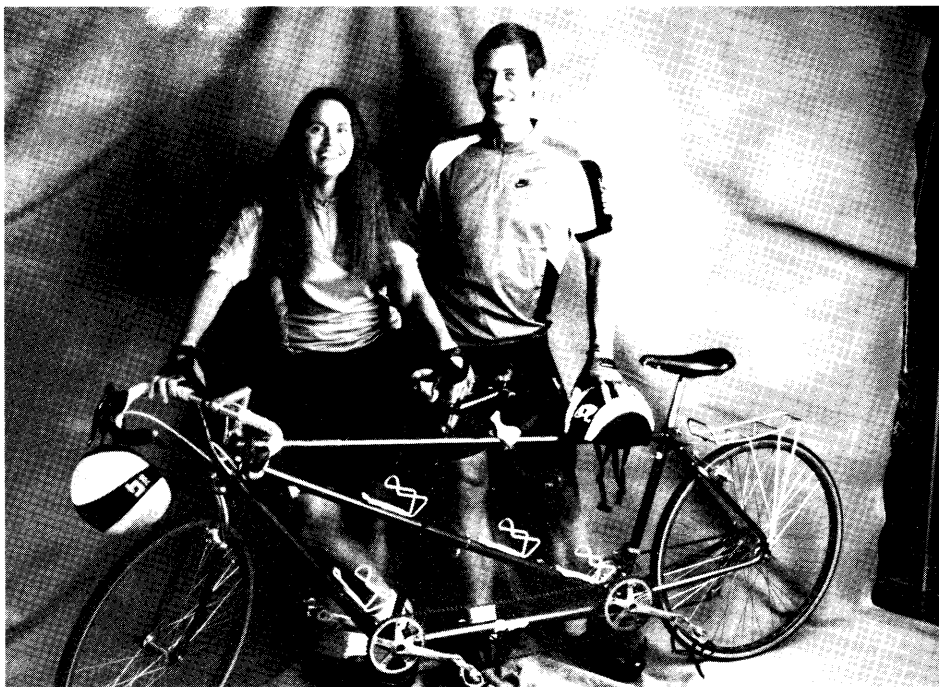


**Ken Zabielski  
at  
Rueil Malmaison.**

**Lou Hotton**

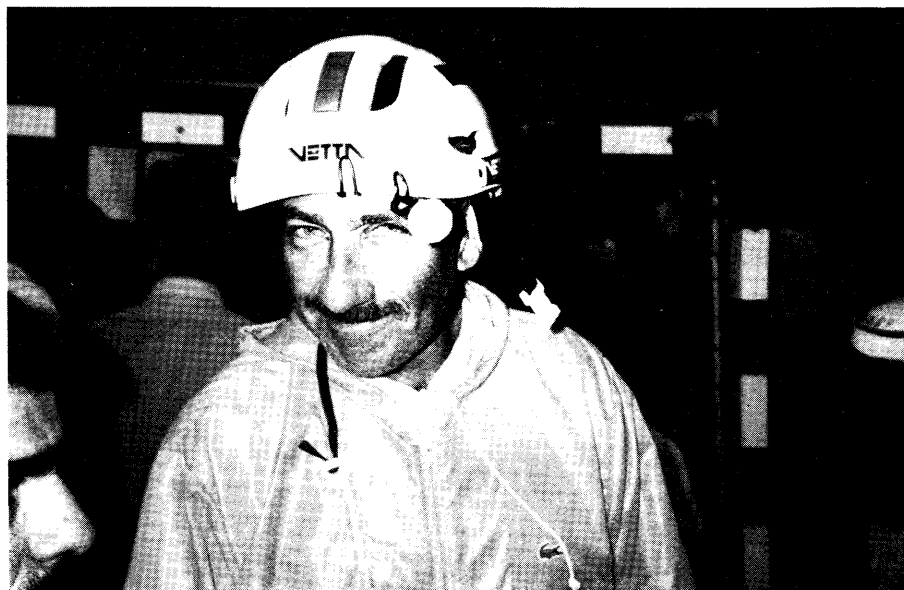


**Mike Dobles  
and  
Lou Hotton**

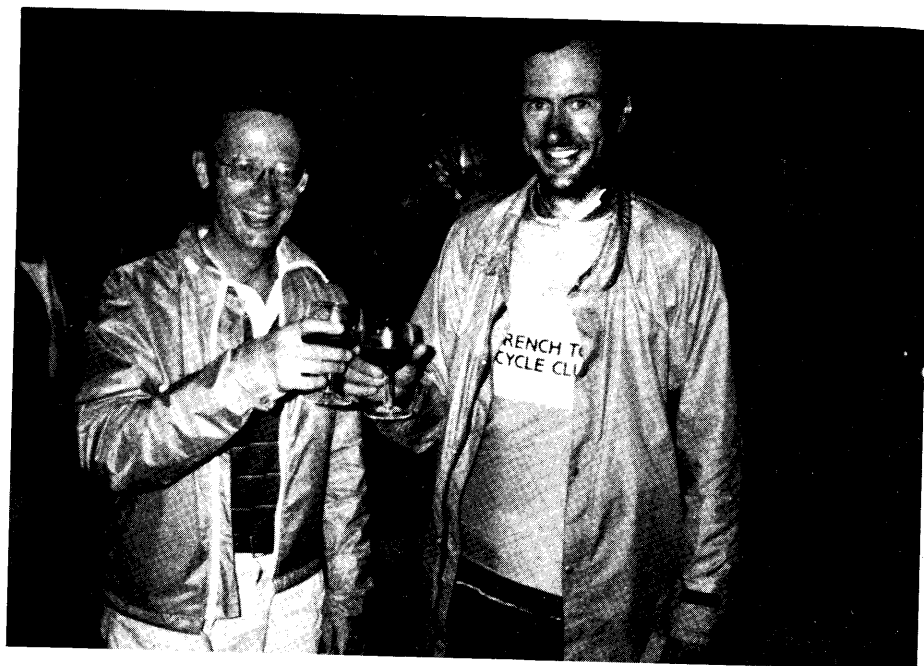


**Sue Notorangelo  
and  
Lon Haldeman**

**A Tandem  
at the  
Finish of  
PBP 1987**



**Ruben Marshall  
at the  
Finish  
PBP 1987**



Ken Zabielski  
and  
George Ammerman



Kay Ryschon  
and  
Steve Bauman



The Pink  
Leopards  
Patti Brehler  
and  
Lou Hotton



Scott Dickson at the Finish of PBP 1987 44:01



Phil McCray arrives at 87:15



Patti Brehler  
and  
Lou Hotton  
near Carhaix



Marty Wolf

Kay Ryschon



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## RIDING PARIS-BREST-PARIS

by Charles Lamb

Charles Lamb has a unique viewpoint of PBP and long-distance cycling. As a veteran of PBP 1987 and as the founder and director of Boston-Montreal-Boston, first run in 1988, he has seen races both as a rider and as an administrator. Following are some of his thoughts on various aspects of training for and riding PBP.

The 600s are not adequate indications of what PBP is like. This is why I have pushed so hard for the 1000km one year qualification rule. Newcomers should do a 500 or 600 mile ride before going to PBP. Oldcomers should too unless they're really ready for it. PBP shocked me and a lot of people because of the terrain. The distance, saddle sores, etc. I could handle because I had gone to Capron for their 1000km beforehand. I was mentally ready for it all. I suggest that people do a real shakedown ride of 800 to 1000km in July before they go, especially if they have never done one that distance before. It should be under real conditions in that they should use the bike they plan on taking to Paris, with fenders, and all the equipment they think they might need to carry with them. I simply don't feel that 600s are good enough training, even if you do them two years in a row. A 1000km is essential.

A common mistake is riding with someone throughout the ride. There are plenty of people to ride with, English speaking and non. You shouldn't wait for other people with whom to leave the checkpoints. You won't be alone with 4000 people in the ride. My partner and I each lost ten hours by waiting around for each other. The same was true

for many people in BMB, especially those at the back. DON'T WAIT FOR YOUR BUDDIES AT A CHECKPOINT, NO MATTER HOW GOOD A FRIEND THEY ARE OR WHAT FAVORS THEY'VE DONE FOR YOU! Chances are, you'll see them again further down the road. Don't plan ahead to ride with one individual unless you have ridden with them before for a lot of miles and know their capabilities and style.

Also, don't share a crew with someone unless you know for sure that they will ride the same pace as you -- all the time. It is very difficult for the crew to keep track of two riders who are not riding together and it can lead to disaster for both riders and crew. It is hard enough for a crew to beat the rider to the next checkpoint and get set up when they are not allowed to follow the same route as the rider, and they are on unfamiliar roads. If you must use a crew, know who they are and how they will work. Make sure that both you and they know what their duties are going to be. My experience with BMB shows that the dropout rate for people with crews is higher than for those without. It is just too easy to quit when you have a crew car sitting there and it is cold and raining. I recommend no crew, or limited crew use. Also, a crew is not really in the spirit of the event.

## PARIS-BREST-PARIS

Have good equipment that has been shaken down. Be prepared to be self-sufficient and expect no mechanical support. Be well-trained and expect hills, head-winds, and cold rain. Get through checkpoints quickly and efficiently. Make a mental plan of what you need to do at a checkpoint before you get there. Execute that plan when you do get there. Figure out how long it should take to execute that plan before you get there. Monitor your progress constantly so that you know if you are on schedule or not. Make a schedule that will get you to checkpoints well ahead of time, and monitor your progress. Do not do this: look at the card, determine the closing time of the next checkpoint, and then plan to get to that checkpoint at the closing time. I saw this happen constantly during BMB. People would arrive at a checkpoint; they'd sit around not knowing what to do; they'd eat something, slowly; they'd diddle around some more; then they'd look at the card and say "Oh, the next checkpoint closes at xx:xx. I can get there by then." Then they'd diddle around some more. 50% would make it to the checkpoint by then, and 50% would not. 50% of those who made it wouldn't make it to the next one. IT IS NOT REALISTIC TO TRY TO MAKE IT TO ALL THE CHECKPOINTS RIGHT BEFORE CLOSING TIME. This is a plan that is doomed to failure. You need a plan that says "Where am I going to be at the end of each day?" and then figure out how you're going to execute that plan. That plan should have plenty of slack for problems that arise (mechanical or otherwise). If you don't allow for that slack, you will surely need it and you'll be beaten.

It is amazing to watch the difference between the front riders

and the back riders on BMB. The front ones know exactly what they are going to do when they stop. They get off their bike and they do it. They know what they need to eat. They set a schedule for themselves in terms of how long they're going to stay at a checkpoint and they stick to it. The ones at the back are completely different. They sit around, they act confused, they fall asleep. They drag around. Completely different. This is not to say that all the riders in the back are complete losers -- many of them finish. But the attrition generally comes from the back.

You should use this planning methodology throughout your qualifying brevets. If you say "Oh, I have 40 hours to finish this 600km, that's easy," then you are going to fail. You can too easily use up that 40 hours on unforeseen problems and then you're left with nothing. You must have a different plan which says where you're going to be at the end of each day. For the 600km, I'll finish 225 miles the first day, get a few hours of sleep, depart at 3 AM, and NO LATER, and then I have 150 miles to go in xx hours. That puts no pressure on you to perform in the first day and less on the second day. You are going to deteriorate, so you want your easiest days to be the later ones, not the first ones. The schedule in PBP will to some degree enforce that, but not always.

You have to have some clue about how fast you can ride a certain distance and then measure your progress against that benchmark. In the 600km example above, if you say that you'll finish 225 miles by the end of the first day, you have to make it to the 100 mile



mark in (say) 6.5 hours. Then you'll be able to take a break for a half hour and do the next 60 miles in 4 hours.

Keep your brevet card dry and don't mutilate it. The French love their rules, and having a trashed out brevet card is not a good idea. Make sure that you have a good protector for it. If they can't read the brevet card, you won't finish officially. It is incredible to see how many people on my brevets ignore this. The difference is that I forgive them.

Take the checkpoint times very seriously. They will disqualify you for being a minute late. Likewise, take the rules seriously.

Be reasonable to all officials and staff for the entire event. As an event organizer, I cannot tell you how annoying it is to see people get annoyed with staff. During BMB I had people yelling at staff people who had very little to do with the problem at hand. Keep in mind that both you and the staff will be tired during the event and tempers will be short. The staff

are volunteers. The organizers have put endless hours into making the event run smoothly. I thought they did an outstanding job in 1987, and expect that it will be even better in 1991.

On this note, do not be an ugly American. Do not be a sore loser if you drop out. If you do drop out, they're not going to give you a ride back to Paris. Tell them you dropped and be done with it. You must tell them that you dropped out. Don't just leave the ride. Find your own way home. These people have 4000 riders to deal with, so don't expect any special treatment for yourself. Also, you had better not expect them to know any English. Are you expected to know French over here? No. Don't expect them to know English over there. If you're not going to learn the slightest amount of French, and you're not going to even make an attempt, you deserve what you get from them. A limited vocabulary will go a long way. Be patient. Don't just start blorting out English at them -- they're likely to not respond well to that.

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"As for the word audax, don't try looking it up in your dictionary. Even a cycling glossary may not be of any help. Although the Audax Club Parisien and Audax United Kingdom groups include audax in their names, randonneur rides, strictly speaking, are not Audax events. These are organized by the Union des Audax Français, which insists that its members adhere to an unchanging 22.5 kmh pace that is kept in check by a ride leader. But technicalities aside, the Latin audax has a double meaning that few randonneurs would find inappropriate. According to Cassel's English-Latin Dictionary, audax means "bold" in both a positive and negative sense. The positive meaning is daring and outrageous. The bad: audacious, rash or foolhardy. Every randonneur event - with its mixture of sleepless, ghostly night riding, scenic vistas, uncertain and troublesome swings in weather, companionship, and tediousness, skillful cycling and exhausted plodding - seems to combine a bit of both sides of the word's meaning."

--- Ian Austen in "Winning"

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## PARIS-BREST-PARIS 1987

by Kay Ryschon

It's almost here again! Four years ago I couldn't imagine what I would even be doing in 1991. Now the 100th celebration of Paris-Brest-Paris is rapidly approaching.

I didn't decide to ride PBP 1987 until May of that year. I was basically planning on competing in USCF events. I had done the qualifying rides in Kansas City, just to see what it felt like to ride more than a hundred miles. Steve Krueger, the event coordinator in Kansas City, had told us that if we could fit a trip to France into our schedule, we would never be sorry. He was definitely right! PBP is an adventure and experience to remember for a lifetime.

I flew to France with the approximately 200 other Americans who competed in '87. We all sat in one section of the Air France flight, which consolidated all of our nervous excitement and anticipation. We had several meetings, movies, and lots of food during our flight. I especially had fun visiting with the people around me who had done PBP in '83, trying to get an idea of what to expect.

Upon landing in Paris and dropping our luggage off at the FIAPAD, we set out immediately to do some sight-seeing. The next several days were spent sight-seeing, with a little bike setting-up mixed in (lights and bells seemed to have everyone's attention). We even had time to ride the first forty miles of the PBP route one day, and have lunch in a garden at a small town restaurant. Everyone was friendly and impressed

that we had travelled from the US to ride in PBP. By this time, all of the Americans had built a certain camaraderie, due to purpose and goals. The days were sunny and the expectations high.

The day had finally come. At 2:00 AM, I awoke with my seven other roommates (I was in an eight person room at the FIAPAD), and joined them and the other 4:00 AM starters for breakfast. The day looked to be drizzly and overcast, something I thought would disappear along with daylight. After breakfast and seeing my friends off, I went back to my room to wait, as I was not scheduled to start until 10:00 AM. While I relaxed and contemplated riding into the French unknown, I set up time goals at each checkpoint based on estimates of how fast I thought I would be riding.

By 8:00 AM, the day began to clear. The starting area was filled with probably a thousand jittery cyclists, standing elbow to elbow, wheel to wheel, speaking nervously and anxiously to their neighbors, predominantly in French. At 10:00 AM, a myriad of colorful jerseys poured through the two gates we had stood behind. We rode through the crowded streets of Paris behind our police escorts, our adrenaline raised even further from spectator cheers and shouts of encouragement. At the edge of town the flag dropped, and we were off. It had begun to rain again, and slick highways and nervous energy caused many crashes. I just held my line (and my breath) as the pack I was in headed for the first checkpoint.

At the first checkpoint in Bellême, hundreds of wet, hurried cyclists descended upon the seated officials waiting to sign and stamp our route cards. I was happy just to be inside, out of the cold and rain, as I hadn't packed my rain gear that morning. Outside under canopies, I visited with some friends from Kansas, who had been involved in crashes early that morning, and due to equipment damage were not going to be able to continue. After finishing some hot soup and French bread, Claude, a friend from Kansas, gave me his raincoat for the rest of the trip, as it looked like it was going to rain off and on the rest of the day. Without his coat, I would not have gotten much further, as I had already gotten quite chilled.

That first day is pretty much a blur. I ended up riding pretty much by myself, as no one else was riding my pace. The course was well marked, but it always took me a bit upon reaching a contrôle to find the building or tent which housed the officials. At one point that first day, I rode with a French club. I didn't know French, so we didn't talk much, but they were very friendly. Another woman (French) was also in their group. She was the only other woman I had seen at this point.

By dusk I was on my own again. I had already passed some of my friends who had started at 4:00 AM, and the huge packs had disappeared to one or two cyclists here or there. By nightfall though, I found myself riding with a Swedish cyclist and a couple of young guys from England. We were right behind a group of five or six French cyclists, of which the same French woman I had seen earlier was a part. I assumed that she and I

must be leading the other women at this point.

By breakfast time (5:00 AM), I had caught up to my friend from Cleveland, who had started the day before at 4:00 AM. He was just waking up from a nap at the Loudéac contrôle. So after eating a big breakfast, Bill, his friend, and myself, continued on to Brest. This second day the sun actually came out a bit, but the strong headwinds as we neared the coast were making many cyclists start to question their desire to continue. I was more in awe of the "hills" we encountered. Veterans had told me there was one hill as you neared the coast that was so bad that local residents waited in cars on its shoulders to cheer you to the top. I do remember people cheering along one very long climb to the top of a plateau on which were located several communication towers. However, as I remember, this was only the beginning of several even steeper climbs to come. One thing you do have to remember is that the local French people never stopped cheering or inspiring you to continue. Even throughout the night, lights would be on in the French homes, and they would invite you in for hot coffee. The French have so much excitement and enthusiasm for this event, your whole body would tingle as you rode through a town, as they would be shouting and waving from the windows and doors of their homes and sidewalks and streets. More than once I also got an encouraging friendly word from locals not in the race, as they pedaled their bicycle along side me.

The contrôle in Brest was located at a marina. Bill and I had had a personal escort cycle with us from the edge of Brest to

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the contrôle. This Frenchman spoke very good English, and told us about his daughter who was studying in the US. At the contrôle the riders were certainly a spectacle as many locals gathered with their cameras. I'm sure we were quite the sight, after riding through the rain, and going with little or no sleep. The atmosphere was lively and many people were being interviewed. Here we were given a free meal, and after a massage I was back on the road again.

Since the course is out-and-back, I could now see the riders coming in behind me. At Brest, I had seen two other women. Were the three of us in the lead, or had they started at a different time than myself? The trip back was proving to be much faster, with the wind now at my back.

By nightfall, I had run into my Swedish and English friends from the night before. The checkpoints were desolate on the way back to Paris, and a grand reception was accompanied with instant food service and official attention. It continued to drizzle on and off again through the second night, which definitely helped to keep me awake. The most beautiful sight of the trip was the castle at the Fougères contrôle. Only the French towns which were contrôle stations would leave lights on at night, but this town had outdone all of the rest. They had a huge castle surrounded by a water-filled moat, entirely lit up by white lights. It was a breath-taking sight in the dark misty fog.

After eating at the Fougères contrôle, our little group had split up to sleep. I was contemplating sleep, when Pete Penseyres walked into the checkpoint and said

"Good job, you're the first woman. What an adrenaline rush! Sleep was impossible. I was so excited I was afraid I would miss the arrows pointing the way back to Paris. This adrenaline rush lasted the better part of the day. However, by midafternoon probably 75 miles from Paris, I bonked. Fortunately, I was not far from a small town. But my dilemma had only just begun. The mother and daughter running the small restaurant/store I stopped at didn't speak any English, and I was down to French pennies. After a lot of sign language, a couple of phone calls, and much confusion, I was able to buy some chocolate bars and a Coca-cola with my VISA card. I finished off the sixth chocolate bar and pop I had bought, while relaxing on our route's grassy shoulder. Small groups of cyclists continued to pass me as they pedaled back to Paris. The afternoon sky was the bluest it had been since PBP had started, the sun bright; it was just a great day to ride your bike.

My energy level was still high as I wheeled into the last checkpoint at Nogent le Roi. It seemed almost too desolate. Seconds after I arrived, people began to appear from nowhere, and there was a bustle of activity and clapping. Confused and surprised, I learned that I was the first woman back through the checkpoint, and in first! The Frenchman in charge of the checkpoint grabbed me and escorted me to the room where race officials were seated. He was rambling on very excitedly. Suddenly, he asked me a question. There was a silence, I could only shrug my shoulders and say "I'm not French." The whole room burst out with laughing, and the embarrassed Frenchman with a smile could only say "She's not French!"

The warm welcome continued, as people at the checkpoint ran off to fill my water bottle, and get me ready for the last leg of the journey.

I had only fifty miles to go, but I was beginning to get worried. I realized daylight was slipping fast, and my batteries were getting weak. I had not been able to find the size of batteries I needed either. That's when another American saved the day for me. He said to stick on his wheel, and he would get us to Paris. He took off at a pace twice that of what I had done the last couple of hours, but I was not about to be left out in the cold and rain, alone in the dark. (Yes, it had begun to rain again.) The cold and rain and thought of finishing had filled me with new energy, and in no time we had caught a large group of Frenchmen. We no longer had a need to watch for arrows in the dark, as these men knew exactly where they were going. The best memory of the night was when a police motorcycle pulled up to escort us through Paris to the finish line. He nodded and smiled at me, with a look like "where have you been,

we've been waiting for you." (IBM was one of the event sponsors, and IBM PCs were used at each checkpoint so they could trace the riders. So they probably had been expecting me.) And they were ready for me at the finish; fortunately, so were some of my new American friends. After an interview, pictures, and being presented with a huge bouquet of flowers, my friends whisked me off (in a car) to get something to eat and then back to the FIAPAD to sleep.

I have so many memories of PBP '87, but I don't have the time to try to put them all on paper. My success in PBP '87 was the result of much help from many different individuals. To these special people, I say a very big THANK YOU! I am really looking forward to this year's PBP, and seeing the friends I met four years ago, as well as meeting new friends. PBP is one of those totally unique experiences that is hard to put into words. It's foreign quality makes it more of a challenge, but also makes that challenge more appealing. One thing for sure, it's an experience you will never forget.

### The 1991 PBP Centennial Journal

The next edition of the Journal of the International Randonneurs will be published after the 1991 Centennial Paris-Brest-Paris. In addition to the U.S. results, we expect to be able to print Jock Wadley's "Brestward Ho!" about the 1971 PBP. The Journal will again include riders' recollections and photographs of the event. Every rider is encouraged to contribute his or her documentation of PBP. We would especially like to have as many photographs as possible of PBP riders. Material can be sent to the International Randonneurs national office: attn. Journal editors.