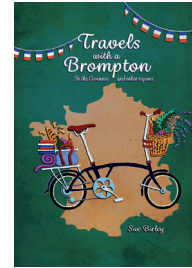


Leaving Vaduz, en
route to Sedrun



Europe

Upriver to the Alps

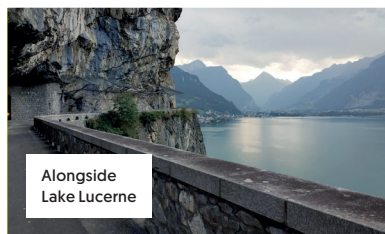
*The Rhine Cycle Route is downhill all the way – unless like **Andy Taylor** you do it in reverse, which is why he travelled light*

As a solo cyclist in the 1990s, I had been a keen long-distance, lightweight tourist, taking trips around Europe and further afield. After getting married, my wife and I purchased a tandem. It was during our many trips to the Netherlands over the last 25 years that I developed a desire to cycle up the River Rhine.

At around 855 miles it's beyond what would be enjoyable for one of us, however. So when it was suggested that I go on my own, I took that as an open invitation to start planning, first purchasing The Rhine Cycle Route by Mike Wells. Following EuroVelo 15, the route starts in the Swiss Alps and then follows quiet roads and cycle paths, weaving through six countries and two UNESCO World Heritage sites down to the sea at the Hook of Holland. I decided to do it in reverse for an 'uphill' route with a mountain top finish.

Windmills in the Netherlands gave way to fertile floodplains interspersed with huge petrochemical sites in Germany, before the river cut through rolling hills with castles, churches and riverside villages in Switzerland. There were brief excursions into France, Austria and Lichtenstein.

The quality of the cycle paths was very good, ranging from smooth tarmac to block paving, cobbles and some gravel surfaces, all navigated



Alongside
Lake Lucerne

successfully on a Cannondale CAAD5 road bike fitted with Schwalbe Marathon Plus tyres. Travelling light, I used a combination of fame bags, a small rucksack and a handlebar 'wrap' made from surplus pond liner (which should be, and was, waterproof).

After 900 miles in 10 days, I arrived at the summit of the Oberalp Pass at 2,046m. I savoured the moment before descending to Zurich for a flight home; a free bike box was provided by Swiss Air.

A full account of the ride can be found at: Andystravels6.wordpress.com.



The Rhône-
Rhine canal

France

Travels with Bromptons

***Sue and David Birley** have spent decades visiting France with folding bikes*

FOR 30 YEARS my husband David and I have taken annual Brompton trips to France. Our first real encounter with the problem of taking full-sized bikes on trains was in 1980. We put them on a train from Venice to Tours and waited a day and a half for them to arrive.

So when in 1993 we read about the Brompton, we bought one each. We've travelled with ease by train from our home station, using taxis, the tube, Eurostar, TGVs and other French trains. Our vintage Bromptons might be slower than our touring bikes but we simply aim to go less far. Our trips have not been without problems and adventures, which are chronicled in my book, 'Travels with a Brompton in the Cévennes and other regions'.

The title alludes to RL Stevenson's 'Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes'. On one of our early holidays we crossed the path he'd taken in Florac. In July 2022 we returned to the Cévennes and the pleasant town of Le Monastier-sur-Gazeille, where the author bought his donkey, Modestine, and they started their journey.

We also visited Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, location of the book 'Village of Secrets' by Caroline Moorhead. Courageous French people in this historically Protestant region hid Jewish children from the Nazis. They were helped by the area's isolation and heavy winter snow which kept out unwelcome visitors. We were glad of the altitude as it was 40°C on the plains, and at 3,000-5,000 feet we were quite comfortable. ▶

