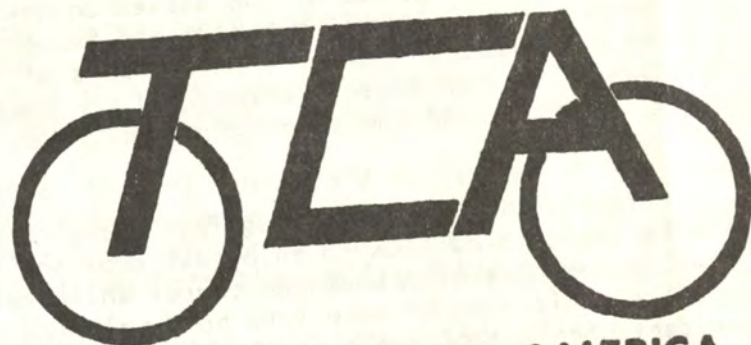


DOUBLETALK

BULLETIN OF THE

VOLUME 3, NO. 4
SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER
1979



TANDEM CLUB OF AMERICA

FROM THE STEERER'S VIEW
By Dwight Kitchens

Doubts anyone? Not sure you would see another issue? Well, we finally made it. There was a lot of anguish, some sleepless nights, a little frustration, and finally a trickle of articles. Then as the days went by, the postman began to bring first one, and then two letters a day from you, the TCA members. I can't describe the amount of satisfaction we felt when it was apparent that there were enough articles for one issue and a few left over for the next! And we also received promises from three TCA members to write articles for the Nov/Dec issue.

Now is not the time to get complacent -- the TCA membership has proved to be alive and well and ready to work to revitalize our club. Many thanks to you for the outstanding response to our appeal; now, let's get to work on the next year of DoubleTalk! Elsewhere in this issue is a list of a few subjects of interest for future articles -- it is by no means all-inclusive -- and I solicit your help in writing on these subjects or on any of interest to you.

This month there are no swaps to mention. If you have any items for sale, send in the information and we'll get it out to the membership.

We hope to get another issue out before Christmas -- it would make a nice present. In order to do so, we need your articles, questions, sale items, etc. before Thanksgiving. This way we have a slim chance of getting the results to the printer and out along with the Christmas rush. We hope to be hearing from all of you soon.

* * * * *

MARTHA'S VINEYARD FROM THE REAR SADDLE
By Betty Meader
Mobile, Alabama

I think Bob's reaction was one of mild shock when I said I could accompany him on a two-day camping trip to Martha's Vineyard. He had been planning it for a couple of months but I don't believe he really felt I would go.

We were packed and ready to go by 7:15 a.m. which was about 45 minutes later than planned, but there was plenty of time to pedal from my parents' house in Tiverton, Rhode Island, to the old seaport of New Bedford, Massachusetts, before the ferry departed for the Islands. During the ride we counted more than 60 cars in one gas line. Long gas lines were a common sight and we felt fortunate with our enviable choice of transportation.

continued

Martha's Vineyard (continued)

Arriving in New Bedford we passed Johnny Cake Hill where we would later bring the boys to see the Whaling Museum and Seamen's Bethel. Spread out before us was a harbor not much different from the days of the wooden whaling vessels. However, in place of wooden masts, canvas, and the smell of pitch was a forest of steel, radar antennas, and the stink of diesel. New Bedford remains as busy a fishing port as ever.

After laying the tandem against a row of what looked like surplus theater chairs, we settled back to enjoy our hour and a half ferry ride. Bob enjoyed playing the part of a seasoned tourer while carefully surveying the other bikers and their bicycles to make sure no "real" tourer was aboard. Bob's pride was evident when one of the passengers commented about the quality of the tandem.

At Vineyard Haven, amid the rush of people leaving the ferry and those waiting to get aboard, we managed to look as if we knew where we were going. We rode down the crowded main street past all the little shops and out to a quieter part of town. We were able to regain our composure at a roadside lemonade stand which Bob later remembered as being the best deal in town.

Fortified with lemonade and the good feeling you get when you stop at a six year old's 10¢ a drink stand, we returned to the main street. A quick visit to a few shops, lunch, ice cream and we were on our way towards West Tisbury to find the fire chief who had gone to college with Bob's father. Bob planned to pedal out to Gay Head Light in the late afternoon but first wished to locate Mr. Fisher and ask if we could camp overnight at Flat Point Farm. After two food stops at small bakeries we had read about while on the ferry and a visit to an old Indian graveyard, we came to the Farm's lane. After pushing the tandem through sand for about a mile, we were greeted with a friendly smile and granted permission to join the "group." It seems that the farm stays quite busy with campers during the summer.

We set up our "tent," at least that's what Bob called it, in a wooded area overlooking a field with the Atlantic beyond. With camp established, we rode to the harbor at Menemisha for a supper of scallops. It was difficult to look inconspicuous when most other restaurant patrons were wearing non-bicycling attire and not one of them was carrying a Bell helmet, but the food was plentiful and good and I managed to forget about our peculiarity.

The night was cool but Bob's goose down bag kept me warm while he seemed to survive with his old sleeping bag. After a cold breakfast and packing up the "tent," we said goodbye to the Fishers and pushed the loaded tandem back to the road for the fourth time.

A short distance down the road towards Edgartown Bob spotted one of the famous bike trails and decided to give it a try. It was pleasant with a few hills and shade. Sometimes it paralleled the road and at other times it seemed to go cross country. It ended abruptly and we took the main road into Edgartown. Tourist season was in full swing and after visiting a few shops, purchasing beach towels for the kids (Bob groaned a bit as we searched for a place to carry them on the bike) and eating lunch, we headed for Oak Bluffs. However, before we left Bob met Bill Warner from Boston riding his custom hand-cranked tricycle. There was an article about him in the August 1979 issue of Bicycling (page 52).

As we rode the bike trail to Oak Bluffs we dodged roller skaters, mopeds, and red faced people on rented bikes. We met Bill Warner about half way and slowed down a little, but not much. As we rode, Bob noted Bill's remarkable speed and control of the tricycle as he whipped around people almost as recklessly as we did.

continued

Martha's Vineyard (continued)

Upon reaching Oak Bluffs we toured the narrow bumpy street and marveled at what once had been a church campground with its supporting cottages complete with gingerbread wood work and thousands of roses in bloom. Oak Bluffs is also a ferry stop, so there were many bike and moped rentals available.

On the final leg of our circumferential tour of the island we stopped at a lobster hatchery and saw thousands of baby lobsters being readied for seeding in the New England waters. As the ferry was not due to arrive for a few minutes, Bob and I splurged and had a tropical delight at Mad Martha's Ice Cream Parlor.

The ride from New Bedford back to Tiverton seemed much longer than it had the day before. It was not hard to sleep that night after covering about 80 miles on the trip.

Bob has already planned our next trip during LAW'S centennial get-together in Newport, Rhode Island, next Memorial Day.

* * * * *

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR DOUBLETALK ARTICLES

- Tandem roof racks for compact cars
- Building a sidecar from new parts
- Breaking in a leather saddle
- Availability of specialized parts
- Tying and soldering rear wheels
- Gear controls for the stoker
- Why the stoker should/shouldn't have brake control
- Use of 650B rims
- Use of varying tooth chainrings to change steerer and stoker cadence
- Open or closed cable runs
- How to take hills; spinning or standing
- Design of a small wheeled trailer
- Carrying of camping equipment
- Product tests of new products (especially interested in HI-E monowheel trailer)
- Map attachment for steerer's back
- Gearing for tandems
- Easy freewheel removal
- Easy freewheel removal from Phil Wood hubs
- Use of varying crank lengths
- All rounder or Randonneur bars for the stoker?
- Rack preferences for tourists
- Specialized tools for the workshop
- Organizing a local rally
- Touring articles

The above is just a start of ideas for articles which anyone with some experience and information on the subjects could write. In order to insure the availability of the bulletin, we need your help. Sit down, jot down your thoughts, polish them a little, and send them on. You may not get a Nobel for literature, but at least you might stir the hearts of a fellow tandem team.

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FORMAT FOR DOUBLETALK ARTICLES

Any and all literary efforts are welcome -- and any format will be received gladly. However, you will make the job of editing much easier if you can TYPE (DOUBLED-SPACED) your article. If you can't hack typing, we will take NEATLY hand-written manuscripts, or even cassette recordings! It may take a little longer to prepare your article if it's not typed, but it will be edited and published eventually.

* * * * *

A TOUR FOR NEXT YEAR!

By Grant Cotter
Redondo Beach, California

Having just completed a 1329 mile tour this past August which encompassed parts of Vancouver Island, Puget Sound, The Olympic Peninsula, Oregon Coast and into the California Redwoods as far as Garberville, the question arose, where to next summer? After an enjoyable tour in Canada in 1977, we decided we would re-turn there next summer to enjoy the people and the scenery. If you like bicycle touring, single or tandem, staying in motels, no camping, carry your own gear, no sags, mileages averaging 75 per day, a lot of hills and a lot of beauty, come ride with us. We will leave from Vancouver, British Columbia, early next August and tour then to Calgary. If you are interested send a \$1.00 for all details to: Grant Cotter, 709 Ave. B, Redondo Beach, CA 90277 or call eve. 213-540-4377.

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TANDEM CRASH!!!!

By Rudy & Kay Van Renterghem
Tucson, Arizona

Thursday, July 26, 1979, 6:00 A.M.:

Another nice and sunny Arizona morning! As usual during the summer months we are out riding our Assenmacher tandem early to beat the inevitable 100-degree-plus mid-day heat.

We had decided to ride an urban and hilly 22-mile loop this fine morning, and things are going so nicely we change our route a bit to add in a couple of extra scenic miles. Traffic is quite light with most of the autos heading south to places of employment in Tucson.

7:15 A.M., one-and-a-half miles from home:

As we near the end of our early ride the stoker signals our intended left turn at the next intersection. So far so good. We proceed into the "left turn only" lane and the captain scans his little rearview mirror for traffic at the rear; no traffic coming at us; none at the right of the crossroads. A red Chevy is at a full stop on the left of the intersection, the left turn indicator blinking away.

We are almost in front of the stopped car now. The driver swivels his head continued

Tandem Crash (continued)

from left to right checking for traffic.

We are now directly in front of the automobile and start into our left turn. Somehow we are invisible! The driver, not seeing us, steps on the gas and makes his left turn!

Impact between car and tandem is unavoidable. The captain desperately swings the tandem toward the right and attempts to accelerate to minimize the impact. The stoker still has her arm extended, indicating a left turn. Both captain and stoker scream at the top of their lungs trying to get the driver's attention, but to no avail.

With a sickening thud the car hits the bike and in turn both riders and tandem hit the blacktop.

Looking back we can still see it happening, as if in a slow motion replay.

The main impact is just behind the captain's saddle. The left side of the stoker's handlebar crumples . . . luckily the stoker's left arm is still extended for the turn signal. With the extended arm, the stoker attempts to keep the Chevy's hood at bay, but not having a bionic appendage, she does not succeed in her valiant effort.

The back wheel and carrier crumple, the left rear lateral sustains damage, and somehow the stoker's left leg is in just the right position to avoid being crushed between the car and the bike frame.

As the tandem goes down the left side of the front wheel becomes distorted and one of the cantilever brake bosses gives out under the strain. Pedals, chain-rings, derailleurs, toeclips, rear stem and other assorted components all sustain damage.

The impact throws the stoker backward off the saddle and her buttocks hit the pavement first, then rolling on her back and hitting her head on the blacktop. Fortunately her helmet absorbs some of the shock to the head, preventing a possible concussion.

Simultaneously, the captain pitches forward over the handlebars, and not having enough momentum, is unable to flip and roll to absorb the shock of the fall.

Pandemonium! Amid the noise of the crash and the tandem captain's yelling at the youthful driver, the stoker lies motionless on the road.

The captain hobbles up to the stoker and helps her to her feet. Together they make it to the side of the road. The captain then retrieves the tandem from further harm and starts taking account of the tandem team's physical damages.

Within minutes, a thoughtful passing motorist volunteers to call an ambulance and the police.

Paramedics, police, and an ambulance arrive in quick succession. All perform their jobs with great professionalism.

The red Chevy driver admits to police he did not see the tandem. The paramedics remove the stoker's wedding band with a pair of cutters from her rapidly swelling left hand. Experts check for broken bones and ascertain we should be checked out -- x-rayed just to make sure.

continued

Tandem Crash (continued)

The police find no real damage to the car and when they look over our now sadly crumpled tandem, find it incredible that damage could run into the hundreds of dollars to repair 'just a bicycle.' However, they do their duty, and do it well, and take down our statements.

After a very bumpy ambulance ride to the local hospital, more questions have to be answered. Our bruises and aches and pains are all dutifully listed; x-rays determine no broken bones; first aid and bandages are in order and we are sent home with the advice from the good doctor to take three days off from work to recuperate and to take prescribed pain pills to ease our suffering.

Thus ended the morning that had started out peacefully and almost landed our names in the obituary column.

The following days were spent nursing our wounds, rehashing the events of that fateful day, making numerous calls in regards to insurance coverage and making arrangements to get our tandem put back in riding condition.

September 7, 1979:

Finally, our tandem is ready! Andy Gilmour, a Tucson custom frame builder and fellow tandem enthusiast, did an excellent job on getting our twicer back in shape!

The usual delays in getting the components are soon forgotten and we are glad to be in the saddle again.

Our little run-in with that motor vehicle cost the driver's insurance \$1616 -- which they were glad to pay since their client was the one who received a citation from the police for failing to yield the right of way.

The cost breakdown of the accident was as follows:

Medical (ambulance, emergency room, x-rays, chiropractor): \$640

Tandem: frame repair, new components, paint job: \$691

Loss of wages: \$210

Miscellaneous: \$75

In retrospect we were lucky . . . very lucky. Although the driver was in the wrong and we tandemers were legally right, we could have been dead right.

We're looking forward to putting on many more miles together on our good-as-new tandem.

* * * * *

AN INTERESTING LEGAL QUESTION

by Paul Hill

Omaha, Nebraska

The Michigan Supreme Court has recently decided a novel question: is the negligence of the front rider imputed to the stoker? Are the two engaged in a joint enterprise?

continued

An Interesting Legal Question (continued)

The case arose in 1972. Lester & Wanda Massey, husband and wife, bought a tandem and they promptly set out riding against traffic. They approached an intersection where the defendant, Scriptor, in a pickup, was stopped at a stop sign. Scriptor started up to make a right turn and did not look the "wrong" way, and struck the tandem at slow speed. Both riders alleged injury, and sued Scriptor. The jury found no cause of action, and the Masseys appealed. The Court of Appeals found that both riders could exert power and both could brake, while only the front rider could steer. The court stated: "Both Mr. and Mrs. Massey acknowledged that each had an equal voice in the use of the vehicle and there was general agreement as to how it was to be used. We, therefore, hold that the trial court did not err in instructing the jury that the operators and riders of a tandem bicycle were engaged in a joint enterprise." The effect of this is to impute any negligence of the driver to the second rider.

The Supreme Court did not agree, reversed the decision and ordered a new trial. The Court of Appeals had relied as precedent on a case involving two people on a motor scooter, one steering and one braking; however, the Supreme Court did not find the cases similar. "Although the second person on a tandem can pedal...the second rider has no control over the steering and only limited braking power...The key question, whether Mrs. Massey had sufficient control over the tandem to be negligent in her own right, is a question of fact for the jury. A jury could find that Mr. Massey was contributorily negligent, or that Mrs. Massey was contributorily negligent, or that both plaintiffs were contributorily negligent, or that neither was. Under these unprecedented facts, the trier of fact (jury) at the new trial should consider the negligence, if any, of each of the plaintiffs, and should not be instructed that the negligence of one rider is imputed to the other, thereby barring recovery."

Most of us would agree that the Supreme Court made the right decision. I admire the plaintiffs and their lawyers for pursuing the question through two appeals.

References: Massey v. Scriptor, 236 N.W. 2d 142 (1975)
Massey v. Scriptor, 258 N.W. 2d 44 (1977)

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Don't be negligent by riding against traffic. We all ride vehicles and must obey the law, to include riding with traffic.

* * * * *

"TANDEMS BREAK SPOKES"

by Charles E. and Norma C. Chandler
Cockeysville, Maryland

I can't stand to see those words anymore! It's not the tandem nor the riders; it's not the occasional bump or rut you hit either. It is the attempt to use equipment on a tandem that is designed for singles that causes that hackneyed phrase to surface in most conversations associated with tandems. It appears to me that our quest for ultra-light equipment has left us with a void in our common sense. Let me share with you our experience with wheel design.

As a team, my wife and I are still learning to ride the tandem and consequently take to the bumpy backroads more than we would like. I'm certain that if our solution works for us, it will work for you and we can strike that phrase "tandems break spokes" from our conversation.

continued

"Tandems Break Spokes" (continued)

Our Gitane tandem came as a kit and we were fortunate enough to deal with a shop that let us pick and choose the equipment that made up the kit. The wheel parts supplied by Gitane were 15 gauge plain spokes, Mavic rims, a rather plain vanilla hub for the front and the Atom internal brake hub for the rear. These components would have worked reasonably well, I suppose, but this being our first tandem wheel set, I wanted to do it a little better. I had built only two wheels previously so I re-read the "how to do it" section of Glenn's Complete Bicycle Book to prepare myself for what my son calls "order out of chaos."

The shop owner suggested that I talk to Hoyer Breedlove of Joppa, Md., who had solved his breakage problem with what the shop owner called "a bear of a wheel." After a couple of calls to Hoyer, we came up with our solution.

We used 14-15-14 butted spokes with a Campy quick-release large flange on the front and 12 gauge plain with the Atom hub on the rear. The rims were Weinmann A-129's and lacing was 3X on the front and 4X on the rear. The back wheel truly is a real bear for strength and we haven't had one single spoke problem nor do we expect any!

* * * * *

Editorial Comment: Like most tandemists, David Strip has some strong opinions. Sometimes it appears there are as many "right" opinions as there are tandemists. DoubleTalk will attempt to present all sides of an issue for the TCA membership.

COMMENTS/REPLY TO "OUR FIRST TANDEM" by Phil Fisher, DoubleTalk Vol. 3, No. 3

By David Strip
Albuquerque, New Mexico

I am surprised that a machine designer would purchase a tandem with a lady-back frame. Most experienced cyclists recommend a diamond frame for anyone buying a single bike, male or female. The choice of a double diamond frame on a tandem is strongly recommended considering the greater stresses involved.

As to Lesson #1, tandems do not have tire troubles. Wheel problems, yes, but not tire troubles. Our Paramount was delivered with the standard Record hub/Super Champion rim combination, mounted with a 1 1/4" Schwinn Super Record tire. The tire had plenty of tread left when the bead was destroyed by misaligned cantilever brakes, which were the by-product of several episodes with broken spokes around the 2,000 mile point. We currently ride Specialized Bicycle imports (SBI) 1 1/4" specialized touring tires which are still quite useable after over 1,000 miles. Thus tires are not the culprit. On the other hand, I believe you will get no argument that 36 spokes are just not enough for a tandem. Our original rear wheel lasted only 2,000 miles or so, or less than one year. Starting last March we broke 8 spokes in a six-week period, riding mostly on Sundays. We are a relatively light team, at just over 300 pounds all up, so the short wheel life is all the more surprising. We have replaced the wheel with a Phil 48 spoke/Super Champion 1 1/4" combination, and have had no problems in over 2,000 miles, including the Sandia Crest Race, a 30-mile race, which finished with a 5,000-foot climb concentrated in the last 12 miles. (Incidentally, my stoker for that event weighed in at 185, so the rear wheel was obviously subjected to considerable stress.) Thus Lesson #1 should be "Get a better wheel with more spokes before you worry about the tires." (Incidentally, the new Paramounts have Phil 48 spoke wheels front and rear as standard items.)

continued

Comments/Reply (continued)

Lesson #2. No argument here, except maybe to ask, Why the surprise? Center-pull brakes, as far as I've been able to tell, have no place on a tandem. At a minimum, cantilever brakes are a necessity. We have not had any problems with Mafac cantilevers and Mathauser pads, although the pads do tend to glaze. Riding down from Sandia Crest, my wife and I experienced no brake problems despite the fact the whole trip was brakes-on in order to make the turns. I admit, however, that I harbored some doubts as to the stopping distance had it been necessary to make a "panic stop."

Prelude to Lesson #3. I strongly feel bicycles have no place on the sidewalk, at any time, in any place. Sidewalks are for pedestrians, and there is no surer way to alienate them than to ride on the sidewalk, especially at the speeds a tandem achieves on the slightest downhill. Despite the car-worshipping culture prevalent here in the Southwest, we have found that a motorist is generally unwilling to run over a cyclist directly in front of him. This suggests a relatively simple solution: take to the center of your lane (as you are entitled to in most states) and make the cars pass you by using the adjacent lane. (Editorial Note: This suggestion may be illegal in some states.) Riding close to the curb is an invitation to disaster.

In a final response to Fisher's closing comments, I would suggest to someone purchasing a tandem to discuss the matter with someone who has tandemed for a while to discover beforehand the problems common to tandems, rather than rediscovering them, and certainly consult a more experienced tandemist before you "burn the paint."

* * * * *

COMMENT ON FRONT DRIVE IN TECHNICAL CORNER
By David Strip

Along with most riders I know, I can see no reason for front drive on a tandem. The cross-chain problem is not a problem for any one I know. My Paramount has a triple chainring and five-speed cluster, and is fully capable of reaching all fifteen gears, although I rarely use the extreme combinations, as there is no good reason to. Today I rode a friend's tandem set up with quad chainrings and a five-speed cluster. Even with chainrings ranging from 60T to 26T, all gears were reachable and 18 were eminently useable. As to having seen a 60-speed tandem, I've seen a 90-speed single bike: 3 chainrings 6-speed cluster, mounted on a 5-speed rear hub. Clearly you don't need a tandem frame to do silly things with your drive train.

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Phil Fisher's article also generated these comments.

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THOUGHTS ON TANDEM

by Grant Cotter
Redondo Beach, California

1. An answer to Phil Fisher's statement that 27" x 1 1/4" wheels are underdesigned for touring tandems. As people who tandem over 8,000 miles per year on LeTour tires, Super Champion 48 X5 rims on Phil hubs with Phil discs, I don't agree with his statement. We have gone over 10,000 miles without spoke breakage; tour frequently; had 4 flats in 3,300 miles in August and September of 1977; and fully loaded. We, the Taylor and Panniers weigh 475 lbs. so don't be scared into 650B tires -- experiment and be your own judge.

continued

Thoughts On Tandems (continued)

2. Disadvantages of Front Drives? None!
 - a. Have had our Taylor set up this way over 3 years. Perfect.
 - b. Chain and chainring wear is minimal. We change chains every year, approximately 7 - 8,000 miles and could go longer.
 - c. Phil bottom brackets are perfect; axle length is no problem.
 - d. All parts are available; I use Shimano Titleist Front; VT6 Luxe in the rear, cheapest and best available.
 - e. Have never touched stoker's crank arm, so it must be set up properly.
3. We have always used, since they have been available, Phil Wood Hubs with Phil Wood Discs. The drawback from our point of view is the fact that the dishing of the front wheel makes them prone to "potato chip" at very inopportune times. We have had it happen 5 times and have decided to give up front discs for now. The best step would be a 120 MM front fork so a disc could be used without dishing. Ray's Bike Shop in Torrance, California, hopes to be selling soon a Gemini Tandem with such a fork available.

* * * * *

QUESTION ME AN ANSWER!

Stan Sweeney, a bike shop service manager, has volunteered to write a question and answer column and is now open for business! He believes the sometimes cantankerous tandem has its own peculiar problems which might be addressed in this column. Why not pedal down to the Post Office and drop Stan a line at 19 Abbot St., Marblehead, MA 01945.

PARTS PROBLEMS?

Why not ask for the part you need, but can't find, in the TCA Bulletin? Just jot the Editor a letter with a complete description of what is needed and we'll mention it in the Bulletin. Eventually, we might be able to suggest specific sources for many parts which are commonly required. At least we can be a clearinghouse for all of you who need items such as the oversize headset of Jack Taylor's tandems, Maxicar hubs, Excelto hubs, etc.

* * * * *

Continuing the vein started in DoubleTalk Vol. 3, No. 3, here's another approach to transporting a tandem across the Pond.

IRELAND ON A TANDEM

by Randy Swart
Arlington, Virginia

Barbara and I just returned from a three-week trip to Ireland with our tandem. We learned a lot about traveling by air with the bike.

Going over we packed the tandem in a solo bike box obtained beforehand from Eastern Airlines. The box was reinforced on the bottom with a square of plywood at each end and a 2x2 wood strip down the middle. This went inside the box, while 4 small wheels were screwed to the plywood through the box, allowing it to be rolled. One additional stiffener was added at each end from top to bottom.

continued

Ireland On A Tandem (continued)

We also reinforced the hand holds and taped corners and seams. The objective was to add some strength without adding too much weight, and to keep the reinforcing inside so that baggage handlers would not realize the box had been beefed up. The tandem went inside, after removing wheels, fenders & racks, cranks and front handlebars. We lowered tire pressure for the flight to about 40 pounds. Assembly and disassembly took about one hour on each end.

We flew on National Airlines to New York to connect with our charter flight, paying \$12 extra for the bike. The box arrived in New York through the regular baggage chute (ouch). The box was crinkled here and there, and the quick release (QR) skewers had punched through the side. The only damage was one bent QR skewer, which I quickly straightened, removing both skewers for the continuation of the trip. The Pam Am charter flight to Shannon added some more crinkles to the cardboard, but no damage to the contents, and we happily cycled off from the airport to our first lodging nearby. We had left the bike box in one corner of the airport which was supposed to be for such things, with a plaintive note telling potential molesters that the box was specially fitted out for our tandem and was the only box we could use to get the bike back home in one piece. Shannon has no checking facilities for boxes or for suitcases, so we took the one suitcase we had brought for the plane trip to our nearby Bed and Breakfast, where the host gladly agreed to keep it until our return.

Ireland is a great place to cycle. We found the roads good, traffic light, grades gentle, and motorists unbelievably cautious about passing. Our only close call was with a car which carried a round GB sticker--a British tourist! Irish dogs watched us go by like civilized beasts without even a bark in most cases, another phenomenon we found hard to adjust to. Winds can be fierce and it generally rains at least some every day, but we found our new Gore-tex jackets ideal for the climate, and used trains to avoid up-wind pulls. The trains are great--you just roll your bike on the baggage car and take a seat until reaching your destination, where you roll it off again. Train coverage leaves something to be desired, however, and Irish busses will not take bicycles. In all, we had a good trip.

On returning to Shannon we found that some accursed person had taken our box! I, in turn, took someone else's box, and even found a bit of bracing rattling around on the bottom of the pile. We put everything possible in the suitcase, including the cranks, front fender & rack, rear bars, front seat, lock and tools. This made the bike much lighter, since we then had only the stripped frame and the two wheels in the box, and actually worked out quite well. I could easily carry the box, so rollers were not really needed, and the only really fragile items inside were the rear fender & rack unit, and the wheels. We nursed this "new formula" box through a Boston stop and Customs, a New York connection, and a bus/taxi ride home. We arrived home with no damage, and decided the suitcase/light box combination was probably better than the original heavy box with rollers.

We got home with no visible damage, so both methods of packing seemed to be successful. But we agreed we would have to think again about taking the twicer on another plane. Watching the baggage manglers in New York, Boston and even Ireland we were not surprised about reports of damage we had heard from other cyclists (mostly wheels or racks). We were very lucky not to travel in rain, since much airport baggage handling is done outdoors, and our flimsy cardboard box would have disintegrated. If we do take the tandem airborne again, we will certainly make sure that the flight is a direct non-stop, which will cut down considerably on both the opportunities for damage, and the wear and tear on the box and our nerves.

continued

Ireland On a Tandem (continued)

Anyone who would like a copy of our packing list can write and send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the following address: Randy & Barbara Swart, 4649 S. 2nd Street, Arlington, VA 22204. We can also recommend a couple of good Bed and Breakfasts, including one in Dublin owned by a former tandem racer.

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DOUBLE TALK

TANDEM CLUB OF AMERICA

DOUBLE TALK

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