

## My trike

# IAN YARROLL

*Balance problems prompted Ian to switch from a bike to a recumbent trike. Unlike most others, his will go on trains and planes as it folds*

**R**oad bikes, tourers, mountain bikes – I've ridden and owned many bikes over the years. But my current one isn't a bicycle at all: it's a recumbent trike. Two years ago I started developing balance problems, which made riding a two-wheeler hazardous.

I started to look at tricycles, initially without much enthusiasm. I was thinking of shopping trikes and road-bike-type trikes. Neither is very stable nor folds easily. Although I cycle most days, it's touring that I am really into. I needed a trike that could carry my usual touring kit and be easily transported by train or plane.

From online research and talking to trike dealers, I quickly came up with a shortlist of two: the ICE Adventure and the HP Velotechnik Gekko fx. Both are excellent trikes. They're superbly engineered, with precise steering and braking, and they fold well. Both manufacturers offer a wide range of options so you can configure your own trike.

I decided on the Gekko because of its neat and quick fold. You simply fold the seat onto the frame, pivot the back wheel between the front wheels, and a clip automatically holds everything in place. You then move the trike on its built-in trolley wheels. It takes less than a minute.

The Gekko is fun to ride – very stable, comfortable, corners like a go-kart, and very quick on the downhills. You have to accept that trikes are slow uphill. They make up for it in lots of other ways.

I've had trips to Portugal's Alentejo and the Scottish islands, ridden the Velo Francette in western France, and had various overnights around Wales. Although the Gekko is essentially a road trike, I've ridden on gravel trails, forestry tracks, and all sorts of cycleways without any problems. Some of the older cycleways can be a bit narrow but most of the newer ones seem to be designed to take cycle trailers, which are about the width of a trike. I've used trains, planes and ferries on these trips; I've just booked the trike as a non-folding bike.



**Top:** With a rack and low gears, Ian's trike is set up for touring  
**Below:** The Gekko fx 20 folds to 83x52x82cm in ten seconds

## Tech Spec IAN'S GEKKO FX

- **Model:** HP Velotechnik Gekko fx 20
- **Frame:** Aluminium
- **Wheels:** 20in all round, fitted with 2in Schwalbe Big Apple tyres, which provide some shock absorbency but still roll well.
- **Gearing:** 8-speed SRAM derailleur with a 3-speed Sturmey Archer hub gear. This has the advantage of only needing a single chainring at the front so there's no exposed front mech. Gear range 17-87in.
- **Brakes:** Avid BB7 mechanical disc brakes on both front wheels; V-brake on rear [parking brake only].
- **Steering & seating:** Standard HPV mesh seat.
- **Accessories:** Mudguards and pannier rack – only HPV ones will fit; flag and streamers; Bontrager Ion 200 daylight running lights; CatEye mirror.

Touring by trike is slower but it's a different experience. You see much more as you are looking upwards and outwards rather than down at the road. Somehow it seems a more immersive experience. Part of that is the very comfortable ride with a laid back riding position: no pressure on your hands or being hunched up over handle bars. You also spend a lot more time talking to people whenever you stop. There's a lot of curiosity about trikes!

Probably the most frequent question I'm asked is "Don't you feel vulnerable riding a trike?" Riding on fast main roads is sometimes not a good experience but then it isn't on a bike either. On smaller roads and lanes, almost without exception, I find that I'm given more space than I used to get on a bike. I have daytime lights and a high-vis flag with streamers, which definitely helps visibility. Mirrors are another essential.

One of the main things I've learned in the past two years is that there are many types of bikes and ways to cycle them. If what you're riding now doesn't suit you any more, just look at the alternatives that are out there! ●



### More Info

More details about the trike and touring can be found in my blog:

<https://www.ridethebike.co.uk/other-blogs/recumbent-trike-touring/>