



(Left and below) Poppy the dog travels in a Hundefahrradkorb ('bike dog basket'), bought in Germany for about 45 Euros. 'It can be fitted and removed in less than a minute,' Helen says. 'When I'm out riding, Poppy shifts about a fair bit, turning round in the basket to look at the scenery.'



HELEN HANCOX'S TRIKE

HELEN DOES ALL HER TOURING AND UTILITY CYCLING ON HER RECUMBENT TRIKE AS IT DOESN'T PUT PRESSURE ON HER ARMS – ONE OF WHICH IS PART TITANIUM

I chose a recumbent tricycle because of a disability I have. My left arm has a titanium replacement humerus and elbow, and it's painful and potentially damaging to lean heavily on it, which I find I have to do on a normal bike. With the under-seat steering on the ICE Sprint, my arms are relaxed by my sides and the trike is comfortable to ride all day long.

This is the second ICE trike that I have owned since taking up cycling five years ago. I chose bar-end shifters as I ride without gloves and it's hard to use grip-shifts in the wet; an Alfine-11 rear hub (I'm not good with rear derailleur gears); and a SON dynohub for hassle-free lighting. Otherwise the trike is fairly standard, with rear suspension only and 20-inch wheels all round.

Due to my disability, the only other cycle I own is my older trike, a Trice Q, which has done 26,000 miles. That one has been lent to various friends who had short term injuries (a broken hand, a broken wrist, a back/neck problem), and so I rarely ride it.

I've done 16,000 miles on my Sprint 20RS in two years. I set myself an annual mileage target (typically 8,000) to ensure that I keep riding and don't get too fat! I don't do particularly long rides, rarely more than 70 miles in any one day, but reach this target by trying to do 24 miles every

day. With a recumbent trike you can ride in the snow, rain and ice – and I do. If the snow is more than a few centimetres deep, there are traction issues with the rear wheel, but I always feel safe and you can do some

“I never have any aches, pains or niggles when riding my trike”

fantastic skids and doughnuts with single-sided braking.

As well as my daily rides, I do regular cycle tours, usually alone and unsupported and almost always in Germany. I've done several longer tours (Berlin to London; the Mosel river; the Main river; the Rhine from Bodensee/Constance) and several fixed-base holidays with the trike. I write up my tours, and some of my day rides, on my blog, auntiehelen.co.uk.

I never have any aches, pains or niggles when riding my trike, don't suffer from saddle soreness at all, always find it comfortable, and I enjoy chatting to other people about it too. Riding a recumbent, and especially a trike, gets you lots of attention from passers-by. I quite enjoy this, and find also that cars seem to give me more room on the road and behave with

more courtesy. Disadvantages are storage (we needed to get a large new shed when I got the second trike), inconveniences with rail travel in the UK, and more insects in the face when riding near to the ground in the early evening.

I live in a reasonably flat part of the world, which suits a recumbent rather better than hills. But my hill climbing is improving and the downhill are great fun – I got up to 48.5mph going down a hill in Germany last year. ☺

TECH SPEC

Helen Hancox's recumbent trike

Bike model: ICE Sprint 20RS

Frame: Steel and aluminium

Wheels: 3x20 inch. Front offside wheel has SON dynohub XS-M

Gearing: triple chainring at the front (170 Firex cranks, X7), Alfine-11 hub gear at rear with 22T sprocket. 33 speed, 15-130 inches

Brakes: Avid BB7 mechanical disks at the front; V-brake parking brake on the rear wheel

Steering and seating: ICE's under-seat steering system, mesh seat with pocket

Accessories: Luggage rack, front chainring guard, flags on flagpole, B&M IQ Cyo front lamp – and, occasionally, dog basket (with dog inside) on the luggage rack.