

## Charlotte's Tandems by Alex Reeves

Ed: Published in WestVet Spring 2013

My elder daughter, Charlotte, now aged 15, has severe learning difficulties and Autism. She is non-verbal and finding things to keep her busy and active is difficult. We have found that cycling on a tandem is perfect. She can wave her hands around and make her loud repetitive noises, as much as she likes, without getting me too annoyed. We are able to have regular rides as a family and go on longer rides with organised groups, such as the Tandem Club. We also take the tandem on holiday with us and use it to explore new places. She would be unable to ride her own bike, as she has no road sense and doesn't know how to use the brakes. Since she loves riding the tandem so much, we decided to get more tandems to lend out.

Ed: Here are some pics:



We started acquiring tandems in 2010, became a charity in April 2011 and then a Registered Charity in 2012. We now own 50 tandems and 9 Trailer Bikes, which are located all around the UK. We believe that we have the largest fleet of tandems in the UK. Here are some examples of our many borrowers.

Adam, from Cheshire, would not ride his own bike, so his Mum, Sam, borrowed a tandem from us. After riding it for a while, he suddenly gained enough confidence to ride his own bike.

Sukham, from Daventry, had a stroke when he was 7 and his right side is still very weak and had never been able to ride a bike. He and his Fiancée, Kate, can now go on bikes rides together on the tandem they borrowed from us.

Amanda, from Royal Wooton Bassett, was a keen cyclist before she started to suffer from CRPS. She is now able to cycle on a tandem and plans to do LEJoG and become a Paralympian.

Tandem riding does not work out for all, but with our tandems being available to borrow for no charge, it's worth a try, isn't it? For many of our borrowers, it is the first time that their family has been able to ride together.

We now have a range of tandems spread around the UK that are available to hire for free. Full details, including lots of feedback from our borrowers, can be found on the Charlotte's Tandems website, [www.CharlottesTandems.weebly.com](http://www.CharlottesTandems.weebly.com), or on the Charlotte's Tandems Facebook page.

If you know someone who is disabled or a family that has a disabled child and would like to try a Tandem for FREE - GET IN TOUCH and try it.

Best Wishes

Alex Reeves

Charlotte's Tandems

[www.charlottestandems.weebly.com/](http://www.charlottestandems.weebly.com/)

Click on these words for links to the Charlotte's Tandems [Facebook group](#), the [Borrower's Form](#), [Gift Aid Form](#) and Advice on [Tandem Transport](#) and [Riding](#).  
Skype and Facetime available on request.

[Registered Charity 1148053](#)