

# WORCESTER & HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



JUNE 2017



## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Welcome to the June edition of the WHAM magazine, I personally can't wait for the next instalment of the Derek's Patagonia trip.

On the subject of bike journeys through fantastic countries I would like to thank Den Osbourne for sorting the routes out for his Roof of Wales day ride. Whilst the vista may not be as big the scenery was just as impressive and the roads fantastic – particularly over the military training grounds. Simply breathtaking! It was also fantastic to see such a great turnout at the OK Diner. I am only sorry that I could only join in for the first leg.

As the days get longer we now start to move into our summer season; May 31st's natter night included the first of our evening rides. For those who want to come along on future evening 'ride-ins' have a look at the [website](#) for the routes or if you can't make that then join us at the Falcon, in Bromyard, at about 8.15pm for a chat and a catch up.

Earlier on in the month I received the IAM Roadsmart Group Scorecard. This is a one page overview of how WHAM measures up to the regional average. In our region, I may add, has some considerable sized clubs. I was delighted to see that we currently have 21 Observers, versus the regional average of 17 and that in the last 12 months we have had 12 test passes and 5 First passes. This surpasses the average of 10.1 and 3.1 respectively – Fantastic! It certainly shows that we can punch above our weight and, most importantly, are providing the skills required to make more riders safer.

With many more events and rides planned over the next few months I hope to see you all and also hope that you enjoy the club as much as I do.

All the best.



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# Events



## **WHITNEY ON THE WYE TOLL BRIDGE**

The students of The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School will be taking over the toll bridge on:

**SUNDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017**  
**FROM**  
**09:00a.m to 17:00p.m**

**Serving teas, coffees, homemade cakes, sweets etc.**

Raising money for the schools charities which are:

Cancer Research  
PDSA &  
Strong Young Minds

(The Editor has it under good authority WHAM members will be made very welcome indeed and it is hoped we can plan a route to make this part of this Sunday's ride)



## **LATEST 'BIKER DOWN' COURSES**

(for content info contact [whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com))

Saturday 17th June - Peterchurch,  
Sunday 25th June - Telford,

All are 10am - 1pm and are free to attend. Places are very much in demand; to reserve a place contact [anna.higgins@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:anna.higgins@westmercia.pnn.police.uk)

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# 2017 - The Year of the Observer

2017 is Year of the Observer and IAM RoadSmart will be celebrating and focusing on developing our network of observers during the coming year with all sorts of new support, events and recognition.

This announcement also raises the possibility for more gratuitous captions to be added from yet more of the pictures from the recent WHAM Observers' training day. If you want to be part of WHAM's burgeoning Observer Team please see our very own Del Britton for info...



I LOVE sandwiches me! Smoked salmon, cheese 'n pickle, ham and mustard... And they laid that all on for me here

Right, first out and choose my own group. Chairman's prerogative me thinks....



# 2017 - The Year of the Observer



## Patagonia—a trip to the end of the World - Part 2

To remind you... We had arrived in Bariloche. Argentina's Chocolate town!

Before sampling the chocolate, there were the more pressing needs of a shower, a beer and the mandatory Argentine steaks. It's always an anxiety as to whether the huge reputation will lead to disappointment but, when in Argentina...



That evening we went to Alberto's Grill, a restaurant held in high regard for its steaks. Without exception, the Group all went for the steaks and the Malbec to wash away the dust of the day's riding. Like the local scenery, the steaks turned out to be a triumph too.



Turning up the wick a little, the next day's ride was a tour around the Argentine Lake District using largely gravel tracks. Mostly these tracks were only a thin gravel topping to a bed-rock base but just occasionally the

gravel tended to collect at the base of a hill and in an instant we were slip-sliding around in deep gravel. The landscapes were very big and sometimes the road would snake across flat plains where we could "make progress".



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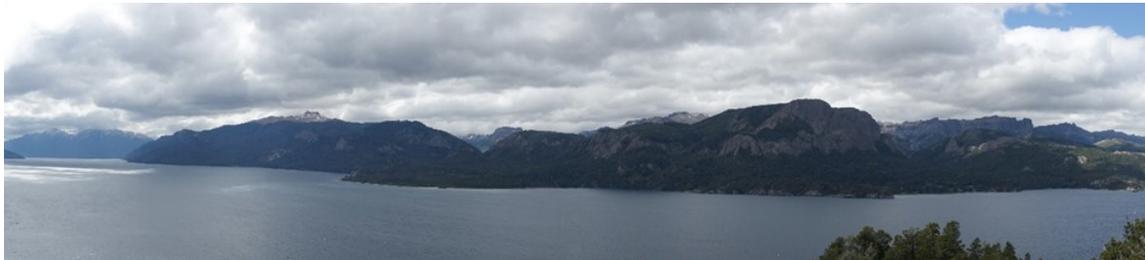


## Patagonia—a trip to the end of the World - Part 2

The third dimension kept us honest; the hollows accumulated those gravel traps to slither through, and, the crests were always accompanied by hairpins. Normally I'm a fan of hairpins but they did just lose a little of their appeal with a gravel surface.



The Lake district is a ski-area in the season. In the overcast light that day they were spectacular brooding vistas.



At altitude and with a little more sunlight; the light really brought out the blue and white of the Argentine flag.



## Patagonia—a trip to the end of the World - Part 2



The Lake District was a perfect “warm up” area. Entirely on gravel we were all able to become used to the bike sliding around on the loose and learned not to panic at the first twitch.

At our lunch stop, a tiny mountain restaurant, we met up with a Bolivian cyclist who asked where we we’re heading? One of our riders proudly reeled off our itinerary and was rather stopped in his tracks when the cyclist exclaimed “me too.” He had started 6 months ago on the

Caribbean coast of Venezuela and expected to take the best part of a year before he reached the end-of-the-world – hats off!



The Lakes rely on the many rivers supply-



ing water and so we were frequently crossing bridges; these ranged from well-engineered bridges to “bike cleaning opportunities”.

Having survived the Lakes we set off South on the famous Ruta 40, Argentina’s principal road in the Western foothills of the Andes bound for Esquel – another ski-resort. Unexpectedly we came across a large gathering of Gauchos, the south-American cowboys, celebrating their horse-riding culture in an annual gathering. We arrived just as the Police closed the road to allow the Gauchos to cross.

Led out by their standard-bearer this was clearly a family occasion, and a large family at that.



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## Patagonia—a trip to the end of the World - Part 2



After the real cowboys we made a small diversion to visit the hiding place of Butch Cassidy after his homeland became “too hot”. We arrived at the GPS designated spot and I’ll admit to a tinge of disappointment at what looked like little more than a dilapidated garden shed.

A chat with the locals revealed that we had to walk a kilometre to see the real hide-out – appropriate that it was still hidden I guess!



## Patagonia—a trip to the end of the World - Part 2

Our search revealed an authentic-looking log cabin old enough to have been around at Butch's time.



Decorated with skulls and animal skins it was a gruesome place. However the fact that Butch (and Sundance) both died 2,500 km North in Bolivia raises a question on authenticity. Later in the trip we discovered that Butch and Sundance are still helping the tourism economy of most of South America.

...to be continued.

Derek



au-

# Motorcycle Skills Day at Thruxton

IAM Roadsmart is hosting another Women's Motorcycle Skills Day following the tremendous success of last year's female-only event. The day will take place on 19 June and will cater to riders of all abilities. Meet other like-minded individuals, improve skills and most importantly - have some fun.

Subjects covered on the day will include:

- Vanishing points, entry, apex and exit points, how they vary from road to circuit, where to position for view, progress and safety together with braking
- Where to brake, when and how much to brake, how it feels in an emergency and finishing on accelerator (throttle) application to set the balance of the bike for controlled smooth cornering
- Gear selection
- How to use the accelerator/throttle to add stability to the bike when entering corners, blipping or constant accelerator techniques when changing down gears

Booking is by phone only – please call [0300 303 1134](tel:03003031134), places are £135 each.



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# FOR SALE

## For Sale: BMW F800 GS



2013 bike on 13 plate

Only 6000 miles

ABS

Heated grips

MRA Vario screen

LED indicators

Touratech handguards

Auxiliary LED lamps

Crash bars (small ding on left side)

Good tyres

Requires 6000 miles service

Bike available to view at any reasonable hour. Situated south of Evesham.

**£6,000**

Call Ken on 07966169910

# Positioning—For the thinking Rider

Accurate positioning as we all know allows us a better view of what's ahead. It's a key part within IPSGA and also forms a key part of a good riding plan. Whether its cornering, overtaking, filtering or just general open road riding the ability to see allows us to make smooth progress. So, positioning to see is very important, but also positioning to be *seen* is just as important.



Let me give you an example...

You are out riding, it's early Sunday morning on a stretch of country road, in a national speed limit, no oncoming or following traffic. A set of farm buildings appear on your side of the road with multiple openings into the farm ahead. The road surface is in good order, no mud and as I said no oncoming or following traffic. So, do you maintain your speed and hold the progress you are making? After all, it is Sunday morning; OR, as a thinking rider do you reduce your speed, POSITION the bike more to the centre of the road with a view for what may happen? Both SPEED and POSITION are consequently altered to maintain your safety bubble.

With the quest for progress it's all too easy to accept "what we can see" as gospel but there is the "what we cannot see or may happen" that's just as important. So, by forward planning/positioning we can make 'safe smooth progress'.

Adopting the above allows us to be seen as well as keeping that safety bubble.

OR we can merely accept "what can be seen" and also accept the ensuing potential for hard braking, swift position changes and hopefully the tractor that's just popped out won't make contact!

I know which I would do....

To all our members keep that 'thinking rider' hat on.

All the best

Gary 'Chugger' Barnes.

# Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!

**Location – Poitiers, France**

**Venue - Sidecars-Hechard. Prop. Cedric Fabien**

**Date – 24 April 2017**

**Company – John and Derek**

**Weather – Wonderful**

**Flights – Ryanair (say no more).**

*"So, John, having seen Cedric's handiwork and his outfits, what do you think?"*

I was marvelling at the veritable mountain of chicken salad at 13.50 francs – er - euros - with the warm April sunshine feeling distinctly unusual so early in the year. Families, couples and universally happy people were enjoying the warmth too; eating, taking coffee and maybe something a little stronger at tables all down our side of the old town square.

Sensibly Derek was in the shade, more or less, facing an equally sumptuous dish of Thai prawn salad and waiting for my reply.

"Actually I'm angry!" I said. "We asked Cedric if he had plans we could acquire in some way and he said 'It's all in my head'."

In reality Cedric had just smiled, shaken and tapped his temple as he didn't speak much English. "I'm angry because all that expertise exists in artisans like Cedric and Jean-Louis of DJ Construction (see our 2015 trip) and it just doesn't seem to be available in the UK!"

"I can understand your frustration", said Derek.

'Frustration' was a better description of how I felt. But the city square of old Poitiers was a treat to gaze at during an excellent lunch. The architecture of the old city is beautiful, the entire area is pedestrianised, people are happy and the girls look.....well.....wonderfully French - they look so chic. Poitiers: centre ville. The luncheon spot is on the left. You-know-who hiding in the centre shadow.



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## Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!

Some month earlier I had been working through all the European, Japanese and Australian websites on sidecars. I was searching for a sports sidecar body that would fit on the UK side of a bike that looked attractive, by which I mean not classic, vintage, retro or 'heritage'. I hardly need point out that since the 2015 trip with Derek, I've googled every evening to see what's come up on flea bay (sad!)

Chatting with Ben up at Watsonian, I'd suggested there was a gap in their sidecar range (in my opinion). "You don't have a sports sidecar in your line up, isn't that a mistake?"

"No!" came the authoritative reply. "There's no market for them. We tried with the EZS range (from Holland - incidentally now being brought in by ThreeWheelsBetter). The market is 'heritage'. People want Triumphs with sidecars".

I backed off the mic.

The sportiest EZS sidecar



You see, ever since I sold my Hayabusa Charnwood Super Sport outfit in 2005 and bought the Fazer Thou to do RoSPA (mouthwash!) and join the nascent WHAM, I have wanted something even better on three wheels. Good though it was the 'Busa had leading link forks which were prone to the annoying wobble (tankslapper tendency) and that was with TWO steering dampers. One OE and one very pricey Ohlins.

# Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!

'Busa and Charnwood Super Sports – sold in 2005



What changed everything was the trip to DJ Day with Derek in April 2015 which introduced us to state-of-the-art European outfits. I had taken with me an initial design by son Pete (senior designer Tesla Inc.) produced to my brief for a simple, naked style sidecar with nosecone fairing. A key part of the brief was to have some riding 'engagement' by the passenger/rider - like racing outfits - just less extreme. And that is what some of the European outfits offer. Much better to be actively helping the outfit ride beautifully than sit in the chair, static and being terrified! Takes your mind off it!

Blades Design first sketch



## Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!

On the way to Annecy we stopped at Dedome Sidecars in Langres. I had found their Zero sidecar on the web and it seemed my prayers were about to be answered. It looked the business. Very close to my original concept and would transpose to the left hand UK side. BUT when sitting in it the reality was an overwhelming sense of vulnerability and there was no room for my 'engagement' criterion (not to dwell on the Facebook joker - we know who you are! - who wondered why I was sitting in a Stannah chair lift : -))

Dedome Zero sidecar - 2015



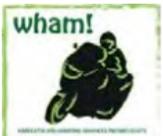
If you were tenacious enough to read the earlier Two Nutters on a Mission submissions, then you'll know Derek and I had some very 'interesting' experiences on the DJ Day meet of sidecar owners. Speaking for myself, I found riding in the orange Triumph Speed Triple really good fun but I won't bang on about that event as it was covered in earlier newsletters.

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## Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!

Speed Triple with DJ sidecar and hub-centric steering



Ok, Jean-Claude was (unknown to me) diabetic, which explains why he took things pretty gently on the way up the mountain and indeed on the way back down, with Derek in the chair, he wisely stopped for a rest. (At lunch he'd taken out his diary, consulted his schedule and while we were resisting a biere blonde, calmly...even nonchalantly... J-C whipped out a syringe and jabbed his forearm). Quizzically I looked across at Derek knowing he was riding chair back with him. I can't honestly remember if Derek even saw the syringe. Maybe he was totally engaged with the utterly questionable and campylobacta promising bright pink sausage on his plate...

So there you have it. Lovely outfits, all made in France or Germany and all with right handed sidecars with shapes that don't transpose to the UK left hand side. And most with formidable hub-centric steering that simply looks and performs so much better than teles or leading links.

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# Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!

Let me at this point paste a clip from MCN 28 April 2017.

That's 2017- not 1817 - not 1917 - it's **2017!!**

## How a sidecar will change your riding

Mention [sidecars](#) in conversation and most eyes immediately glaze over. Sidecars are the preserve of old boys, are impractical and boring – or so they say. I would have agreed myself, but after spending just two days with an outfit I'm now saving up to buy my own... Here's why you should too.

For the last 50 years [three-wheelers](#) have been dismissed as uncool, but it wasn't always that way. In 1951 less than 10% of British households owned cars while no fewer than 150,000 outfits whizzed along our roads. But as cars became more affordable sidecar sales rolled off a cliff, deemed obsolete and out of tune with a modernising society.

Well, we reckon it's time for a comeback because sidecars had lots going for them 65 years ago and still do today. They are cool, rugged, supremely practical – and take far more skill to operate than you might imagine. But once you've got the knack of it they transform into incredibly capable and versatile machines. You can take your family touring around Europe, tear up the countryside with one wheel in the air, have the best time of your life with your mates, race on and off-road, become a dirt track warrior and even go on a global adventure with a trusty outfit. Isn't it time you considered one?

And here is something from a truly skilled solo rider: Chris Walker.

*After racing motorcycles for over 20 years, British Superbike star Chris Walker has added an extra wheel to his career.*

*MCN interview extract:*

### **What was the biggest difference that you had to master?**

The huge unknown to me was having a passenger on the side and how important their job is. The outfit either steers or doesn't steer, and stops or doesn't stop, depending on how good your passenger is. The job they do is way more involved than I'd ever realised - passengers affect your lap times to an incredible extent.



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## Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!



### Is it actually more fun to race a sidecar?

It's definitely more of a wild ride! For me, riding a solo is the norm but nothing about riding a sidecar feels normal yet – spinning it, sliding it, having your passenger slap you on the back when you've had a moment. There's a lot of fun to be had in a sidecar, for sure.

### Have you ever had a go in the chair?

I went round Mallory park with Mick Boddice once and absolutely crapped myself. Sidecar passengers should all be knighted – they're a special breed!

### Are you a sidecar convert now?

Absolutely. I'm looking at getting a Royal Enfield outfit for the road. I need to start taking my daughter to school in one because she feels like she's missing out! But I don't call my racing outfit a sidecar – I call it the time machine because, in changing from superbikes to sidecars, I've gone from being the oldest on the grid to one of the youngest on the grid, so I reckon I've got another 20-year career ahead of me!

Words: Stuart Baker / Photos: Jamie Morris

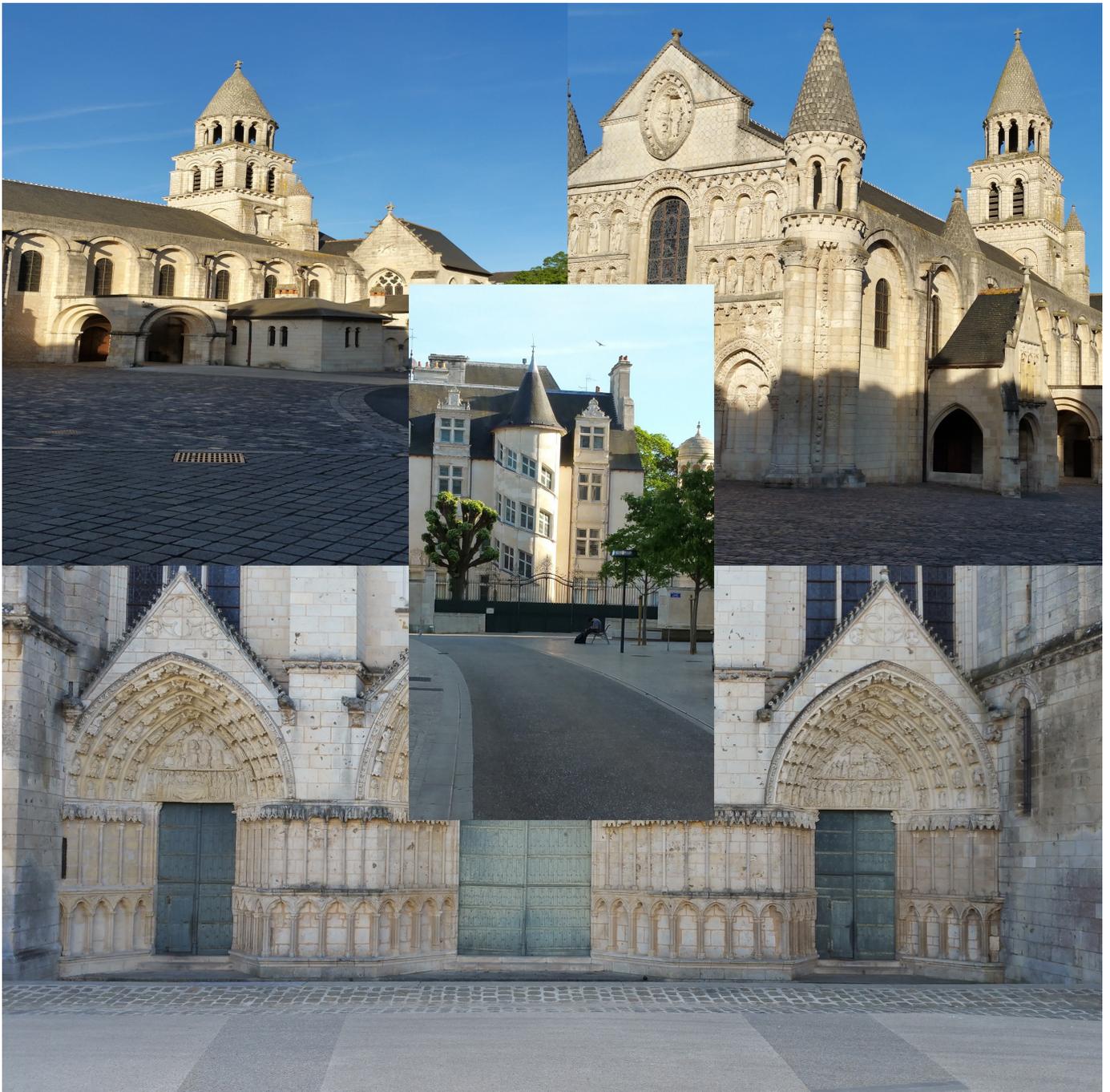
So what is a frustrated sidecar nutter to do?

Well, Cedric can supply a sidecar body that looks tidy and modern and can be fitted on left hand side. Maybe that's the way to go?

## Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!

The Frenchman kindly drove us back to Poitiers in his Fiat. Derek and I spent the rest of the morning exploring the very lovely and occasionally quirky architecture of old Poitiers before taking in that little salad luncheon.

Poitiers Old Town – some amazing architecture



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wham!



# Two Nutters... Getting Closer to a Result!

And then Derek said *“If you are going to do this thing, John, you’d be wise to get on with it”.*

*“Piss or get off the pot?”* says I.

*“Well, putting it like that – yes,”* says Derek

*“Oh! You mean before I’m too old!!”*

*“Hmm, ahem....”*

Comfortably replete, we taxied back to the Airport and Ryanair’d it back home to cold and rain. I’m thinking hard. The project feels imminent!

## TO BE CONTINUED

Is it to be a une caisse francaise? (French sidecar body)

What about a donor bike?

Stumbling on a UK fabricator extraordinaire

John *does* the business!

Decisions! Decisions!

Assembling the build team

Keeping awful quiet about the budget