



JAWA Motorcyclist

650 Classic Outfit

@ 26000K



I received the Jawa as a solo in November of 2006. It was always my intention to fit it with a sidecar and the most likely Velorex UK as supplied by David at F2. However there was a conventional tubular frame, it was very difficult to decide where attachments could be positioned on the bike. At length, in February of 2008, Velorex came up with the necessary kit for a left-hand sidecar and I lost no time in getting a sidecar and a big box of bits back home to Portishead. I had fitted or adjusted several sidecars before so I had no worries about tackling the job of getting it all together. Some of the fittings needed a bit of careful fettling but I was very pleased with the final result. Velorex provided a sub-frame to tie together several strong points on the bike. The attachments to the sidecar were widely spaced and very strong. David had an input to the UK spec for the sidecar. It has a stronger wheel axle and suspension unit than was used on my old "638" outfit, as well as stronger fittings.

The first ride out to test the set-up was like a dream. I couldn't have wished for a better result and nothing needed adjustment. I was reminded of the comment of Mutt Summers, test pilot at Vickers Supermarine, after testing the prototype Spitfire, "I don't want anything touched." The outfit doesn't have a steering damper and I'm happy with that. My background as an engineer in road vehicles and aircraft tells me that all three-wheeled vehicles (and many others) will need some damping to prevent oscillation of the steered wheel. The fact is there may be just enough present in the system without the need for an extra device, but if you need one you should fit one. Damping comes from the tyre contact patch, the friction in the head bearings, friction of electrical and other cables around the steering head and the resistance of the driver's arms. I find that if I pull away with only one hand on the 'bars it will provoke a wobble but it doesn't happen under normal conditions.

Everything in the garden was roses until August 2008. I was attending a weekend camp to celebrate the 50th year of the Federation of Sidecar Clubs. A couple of spokes in the front wheel broke, but I continued the trip home without further incident. I obtained some spares from David and replaced the broken spokes. In January 2009 two spokes were broken in the rear wheel. More spokes broke from time to time and were replaced until I decided that enough was enough. In July of 2010 I had all of the front and rear spokes replaced at Central Wheel Components in Coleshill. I don't think that the sidecar duty is too much for the wheels but I think I had a bad batch of spokes initially. Perhaps the tooling used in their manufacture was in need of repair.

One other premature failure occurred. The front brake disc developed a warp. I didn't believe that this really happened until it happened to mine. It gradually got worse until I measured 0.4 mm (.016 in) run-out with a DTI. About half this amount is quoted as a limit in some references. I obtained a factory replacement and everything is OK again. So now, having worked through a few problems, I think the outfit is in good shape for next year and I'm looking forward to some more long camping trips. The photo this time shows the outfit on the esplanade at Portishead and includes a bit more experimentation. I fitted an aluminium panel below the radiator as a dirt-catcher. This is very effective for all sorts of "residues". At the time of the picture I had the frame for the top-box fitted but this has been removed. I had removed the screen, but that went back on later. Don't worry about the displaced dirt seal on the right hand fork. I had been doing some maintenance and forgot to push it down. The latest addition, not shown here, is a mud flap fitted to the pannier frame at the rear. I had previously found that in wet weather road dirt was sprayed all over the mudguard, pillion seat and my back! With the mud flap in place this is eliminated, so that stays. That brings us up to date, with 26000 km and four years behind us. If anything dramatic happens I'll be in touch.

John Osborn.