

## Becoming Mrs Armitage.

I have lately been thinking far too much about all the possible modifications I have made or could make to my GS and have come to the conclusion that I am in danger of becoming Mrs Armitage.

For those of you who do not have small children and do not know who Mrs Armitage is, she is a wonderfully whimsical character created by Quentin Blake (probably most famous for his illustrations of Roald Dahl's books). Most relevant to my thesis is his work entitled 'Mrs Armitage on Wheels' which tells the tale of Mrs Armitage and her bicycle. I do not have the book to hand or complete recall of all that happens but the basics are this - the book starts with Mrs Armitage happily cycling along, accompanied by her dog. She soon realises that things would be better if she had somewhere for the dog to sit so she adds a seat for the dog onto the back of the bike. She then thinks it would be a good idea to have somewhere to carry a picnic hamper and something to drink. After her chain comes off she decides it is necessary to carry a toolbox, but she finds her hands have got dirty so feels the need to add a bowl of hot water and a towel. This goes on until the bike is so weighed down that she can hardly cycle it so she has the wonderful idea of adding a sail. She speeds along until the sadly inevitable happens and the whole contraption crashes and ends up in pieces. And Mrs Armitage, well she emerges from the wreckage with her new best idea - a pair of roller skates!

Ring any bells? How many of us can admit to having started by adding a few 'necessary' extras to our bikes and maybe gone further than we had intended or is maybe, even, sensible? However good our initial intentions, it is so easy to be led into strange and unnecessary paths after spending too much time with the Touratech/ Wunderlich/ HD/ M&P catalogue, depending on your flavour of bike.

To simplify my argument I am going to consider these modifications as falling into one of three categories - personalising; performance; and practicality.

Owning a bike is for many people a very The greatest crimes against taste tend to come from personalising your bike and often involves coloured anodised bolts and iridescent screens