

# Land's End – John O'Groats – Skaw by Electric Motorcycle



**John Chivers (left) and James Coates (right)**

## The Journey

On 18th August, 2017, two electric vehicle enthusiasts and owners, John Chivers and James Coates, will undertake a journey on two electric motorbikes from Land's End to John O'Groats, and then subsequently to Skaw, at the very top of the UK on the island of Unst, Shetland. Because, as John's Shetland-based brother commented, "Most people quit at John O'Groats".

As far as we're aware, this will be the first time such a journey has been undertaken on electric motorcycles.

The mainland part of the journey, from Land's End to John O'Groats, a distance of approximately 830 miles (1,335 km), is planned over four days, between Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August and Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August. On the Tuesday, a ferry will take both riders and bikes from Scrabster on the UK mainland to Stromness on Orkney. An overnight ferry will then take them from Kirkwall on Orkney to Lerwick on Shetland, from where they will ride to Skaw at the very top of Shetland.

## Background

The initial idea came out of a throwaway comment. When Tesla owner James asked John if he planned to attend the Orkney Electric Vehicle Show in May, 2017, John had to decline, as he had already planned a longer trip on a petrol motorbike around mainland Europe.

John followed this up with a (then seemingly) flippant comment about riding up to Orkney for the event next year on his Zero electric motorbike. That started him thinking along the lines of extending the journey to start from Land's End. Efforts to find people who had already undertaken the Land's

End to John O'Groats trip on an electric motorbike drew a blank and so the desire to undertake the journey sooner rather than later became a factor.

James subsequently asked whether John would be happy to be accompanied on the trip, ideally on another electric motorbike. As welcoming as John was to this idea, it posed a problem. Enter Streetbike of Halesowen.

## Supporters

Streetbike (<http://www.streetbike.co.uk/>) in Halesowen has been a trailblazer in the advocacy of electric motorcycles, alongside its range of conventional motorcycles. This trip would not have been possible without the support of Streetbike.

John bought his Zero DSR in June 2016 from Streetbike and appreciated their advocacy of what is inevitably the future. In the past, they have been accommodating to people who are similarly prepared to fly the flag for this emerging technology and have supported their customers throughout the early years in the development of these bikes.

Following discussions with Alex and Jason at Streetbike, the dealership stated that they were happy to support the trip by lending James the demo bike for the duration of the trip on what would be a 'first'.

While John is using his own Zero electric motorbike, it was clear that both would need a means of faster charging.

The normal charge time for the Zero (with a nominal 13 kWh battery) is 9 hours at 1.3 kW via a domestic socket. Official methods of improving the charge times without voiding the manufacturer's warranty are limited to Zero's Charge Tank or one or more of their off-board charging units.

Following further discussions, it became clear that the latter would be the sensible approach and that a couple of extra off-board chargers for each bike would increase charging rate from 1.3 kW to 3.3 kW per bike, and therefore reduce charging time to around 3 hours, making the trip far more viable a proposition.

A few phone calls between Alex at Streetbike and Zero in the Netherlands later, and the offer of borrowing the chargers was extended.

So, our thanks go to Alex and Jason and the people at Streetbike for their support, without which, the project would not have been possible, and to Zero themselves for lending us the offboard chargers.

## Charities

The trip will raise money for two charities: Warwickshire and Solihull Blood Bikes (<http://www.wsbb.org/>) and Tommy's (<https://www.tommys.org/>).

Warwickshire & Solihull Blood Bikes is a group of volunteers, and a member of the National Association of Blood Bikes, who offer a voluntary, out-of-hours service to the NHS by using motorbikes to move blood, plasma, tissue samples, documentation and other vital supplies between hospitals, hospices and supply centres.

Tommy's funds research into pregnancy problems and provides information to empower parents to have a healthy pregnancy. Today, Tommy's funds four maternal and foetal research centres across the UK.

## The Riders

**John Chivers** has followed the development of electric vehicles into the mainstream in the last few years, closely following early adopters and proponents on social media (notably Robert Llewellyn and Bjørn Nyland), and after a certain amount of 'waiting for the right moment', took the plunge in 2014 by selling the family diesel car and buying a pre-owned Nissan LEAF, which remains the sole family car to this day.

In June of 2016, John, who is a volunteer observer for his local Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM Roadsmart) group, Coventry and Warwickshire Advanced Motorcyclists, decided that it would also be a good move to make the move to electric on two wheels, took the plunge and bought a 2016 Zero DSR ZF13 electric motorcycle. He has found that much of his riding, including most of his observer activities, can be undertaken on the Zero motorbike.

John produces occasional vlogs on his YouTube channel relating to the realities of driving the Nissan LEAF and riding the Zero electric motorbike. See <https://www.youtube.com/user/jtchivers>.

**James Coates** is also a long-standing advocate of electric vehicles. James, together with his wife, Kate, initially entered the EV world in 2013 with a Nissan LEAF and this was used as their only car for over two years, but last year took the jump into Tesla ownership. James has worked as a vehicle technician for over 20 years, working on internal combustion engine vehicles and electric vehicles in more recent years.

Additionally, both James and Kate have driven a wide range of electric vehicles and vlogged these experiences extensively on their YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/James0852>.

James and John met initially while charging their electric cars at a motorway service station. Living a few miles from each other, they both took the opportunity to meet up and drive/ride each other's respective electric vehicles.



John Chivers, Alex Hogg of Streetbike, and James Coates

## Itinerary

<b>Thursday, 17/08/2017</b>	Transport bikes down to Land's End.
<b>Friday, 18/08/2017</b>	Day 1 of ride to John O'Groats. Anticipate 2 charge stops of approximately 3 hours each at approximately 85 mile intervals. Finish Day 1 at around Ludlow. Charge overnight. Day 1 = Approximately 254 miles.
<b>Saturday, 19/08/2017</b>	Day 2 of ride to John O'Groats. Anticipate 1 charge stop of approximately 3 hours after approximately 85 miles. Finish Day 2 near or in Kendal. Charge overnight. Day 2 = Approximately 173 miles.
<b>Sunday, 20/08/2017</b>	Day 3 of ride to John O'Groats. Anticipate 1 charge stop of approximately 3 hours after approximately 85 miles. Finish Day 3 at around Crieff. Charge overnight. Day 3 = Approximately 168 miles.
<b>Monday, 21/08/2017</b>	Day 4 of ride to John O'Groats. Anticipate 2 charge stops of approximately 3 hours each at approximately 85 mile intervals. Finish Day 3 at John O'Groats. Charge overnight. Day 4 = Approximately 235 miles.
<b>Tuesday, 22/08/2017</b>	Ferry from Scrabster to Stromness (dep. 08:45, arr. 10:15) Meet up with Jonathan Porterfield of Eco Cars? Ferry from Kirkwall to Lerwick (dep. 23:45, arr. 07:30)
<b>Wednesday, 23/08/2017</b>	Lerwick to Skaw Visit Pure Energy. <a href="https://pureenergycentre.com/">https://pureenergycentre.com/</a> Skaw to Cunningsburgh. Stay with John's brother and family.
<b>Thursday, 24/08/2017</b>	Other visits on Shetland: Perhaps Sumburgh Head or Scalloway. Ferry from Lerwick to Aberdeen (dep. 19:00, arr. 07:00).
<b>Friday, 25/08/2017</b>	Transport bikes back from Aberdeen to home.

## Links/Contact Information

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/LEJOGSkawElectricMotorbike/>

Fundraising Page: <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/leskaw>

We can best be contacted either through the Facebook page above or by email:  
[leskaw@johnchivers.com](mailto:leskaw@johnchivers.com).

Route Outline (subject to change):

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=18o6W3m8KFCiISrV6\\_oV\\_KQY\\_t10&usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/open?id=18o6W3m8KFCiISrV6_oV_KQY_t10&usp=sharing)