

Daily Blogg Part 12 started 1st January 2021 - [Click here to the Blogg Part 11](#)

Saturday 3rd December 2022

I have decided to close this version of the blogg as its run for near 2 years and is getting too close to maximum file size for the website. Future news will be posted in version 12A (I am very superstitious).

Wednesday 30th November 2022

Wow another month gone by and it's nearly Christmas so another year clocked up as well. Not a lot to report on the riding front, I rode the Meteor to the MZ meeting at Ham on 13th November and the GN250 to Westbrook Inn for a lunch time VMCC meeting. The GN250 is up for sale but after 2 weeks I have not had a single enquiry so it is now on SORN and mothballed until the spring. Does not owe me much and it will only appreciate in time so no great problem. Maybe its day will come again.

I guess the big news is that I have another bike a 1966 Honda CB77 in Meccano Set form as can be seen in the pictures below when it arrived on Tuesday.



The bike came from Trowbridge and was actually delivered. It was previously owned by a fellow member of the model engineering club I belong to in Westbury. We were talking over a coffee a few weeks ago and it turned out that he had owned this bike for about 20 years, used it for a while then totally stripped and restored most of it. It has sat in loft in bits for 10 years as he lost interest in bikes but only recently decided to sell it. I will be creating a separate blog on this project and hope to have it ready for the Bristol Bike Show in February 2023. At the moment I am slowly reassembling it to establish what might be missing, Engine not touched yet and needs top end replacing awaiting gaskets. This is how far I have got with the cycle parts.



Pleased with the way the wheels turned out, took me several goes to get the lacing correct. Still a long long way to go but no major snags so far, just a couple of specific nuts&bolts missing.

Tuesday 1st November 2022

For various reasons, I have done little with the bikes for while and only the Sloper has had much use – see the separate blogg. However, last weekend I decided to put the CB250RS back to its original configuration with disk front brake preparatory to selling it. Happily it all went back together fairly easily but sadly despite the rebuild of the front calliper, front brake is not much better than before I started. I think it probably needs the master cylinder servicing or better still replacing as new ones are surprisingly cheap from David Silver. Anyone I advertised it of the section's Facebook page and it sold within an hour to Matt Young who collected it tonight. He knows about the front brake but brought with him a friend who has owned a number of these bikes and neither were concerned. So down to 7 bikes now. The indian summer seems to have gone with the arrival of November so I doubt there will be much 2-wheel activity until the Spring.

There might be a new project though, I was talking to a member of the local model engineering club last Friday and he has a Honda CB77 in his loft which allegedly has been fully restored but needs putting back together. Bit tempted as I always admired these bikes when I was a teenager – a viewing is on the cards when circumstances permit.

Friday 24th September 2022

Riding my 1929 BSA Sloper I have not had any problems with numbness in the fingers or either hand even on rides that would have been more than long enough to provoke it on the GN250. There are two possible differences between the bikes that might account for this. The first is that it is a slow revving thumper and vibrations tend to be low frequency. The second and hopefully more significant are the very thick and soft grips on the handlebars. AS an experiment I have fitted a set of thick neoprene grips which fit over the GN250 grips. A first test on Thursday evening riding to Yatton Keynell suggested it helps as I experienced no finger problems but too early to say if it is a full solution.

I have also made a couple of modifications to the GN250 to make it easier to live with. A pad is now fitted to the top of the rear brake pedal to make it easier to reach and a pad under the side stand so it does not lean over so far. Both mods are very successful. Despite all this I don't feel entirely comfortable with the GN250 and it may well be moved on if I can find something I like better. Though right now bikes in this category seem few and far between.

Friday 16th September 2022

Well the Cornwall holiday is now behind us. We drove down on Friday 9th and sadly had to come home on Tuesday 13th as Mrs F was unwell. I had 2 days riding on the GN250 in company with a group of friends; around 100 miles each day. Overall the bike performed well with pretty much the same performance as the two Serows which were part of the group. Fuel consumption was excellent, averaging 97mpg on both days which compared well with the Serows. Sadly I still experienced numbness in thumbs and index fingers of both hands which at times made riding the bike difficult and painful. A partial solution was to ride without gloves which allowed me to flex them more easily to promote circulation, combined with using the heated grips. However, only a solution whilst the weather is warm and dry. I have had similar problems with some of my other bikes in the past and I need to try out one of the others to see if has simply got worse overall or just worse on this bike. If the latter then the GN250 may have to go, if the former I may have to seek medical attention and just hope they can do something about it.

Since we got back I have removed the front mudguard to clean up some minor rusting. I also replenished the underseal. Overall its in good condition but probably an after-market replacement rather than an original fitting. The toolbox I ordered arrived on Thursday and this has now been fitted. It's very small, really only big enough for the special plug spanner, an adjustable and a screwdriver. The rest of the toolkit will continue to live in the tank bag. On a ride to a VMCC wandering on Thursday I noticed a rattle which I have since traced to a loose baffle in the silence. Not serious but something I will want to attend to.



Monday 5th September 2022

I decided to have a go at repairing the calliper for the CB250RS today. Stripping it down to the bare components was easy enough and this enabled me to apply some heat to the seized bleed nipple. Alternating heat with penetrating oil finally got it moving and it came out cleanly - phew.

The problem with the operation of the brake is almost certainly the piston which was jammed in the bore. I finally got it free but it needs replacing so I have ordered a new one with seals. The actual body cleaned up ok and should be fine once the new piston and seals are fitted. Now it is cleaned up the old piston will move freely in the bore and returns far enough to be able to use a new set of pads I had in stock. Not sure if these were for the ETZ250 or the BMW but they do fit and I no longer have either of these bikes. Previously the piston would not return sufficiently to allow new pads to be used.

Still no trace of the special wire clip that holds the pad pins in place and it seems they are no longer available from Honda or as a pattern part. I have made a substitute from a piece of wire but I am not really very happy with it. Pondering on the issue overnight I came up with a better solution which is now translated into metal Basically it is a plate held by the screw that retains the pad cover which butts up to the end s of the pins. Picture probably says it

all. Reckon this will be a job Terry would be proud of: Just had an mail to say the calliper parts should be here on Wednesday (provided that is not one of the strike days being held by postal workers:



Saturday 3rd September 2022

The 16t sprocket arrived yesterday and my initial attempts to fit it were unsuccessful as I simply could not budge the nut holding it in place, not even with my impact driver or the air gun. Thinking about overnight I came up with a cunning plan which has worked. I used an old chain which I wrapped round the s/arm spindle, then looped it back to the gearbox sprocket and joined the two with a 6mm bolt between the rollers. I used a piece of lead pipe slit down the side to protect the paint and the now that the sprocket was firmly locked, the nut came undone fairly easily. Pretty straight forward after that though I was surprised how much I had to move the wheel to compensate for just one extra tooth on the gearbox sprocket. All back together and a test ride round the orchard showed no immediate problems so I took it for a 3 mile test ride. My route included the quiet roads through the village as well as bits of the bypass.

The bike is much better to ride, I would almost say transformed. First gear is now usable and 4th gear is perfect for 30mph urban running at 3000rpm. On the open road it pulls top gear easily even up the main road slopes and at 50mph it's about 400rpm lower than previously. May not sound much but it is a lot more relaxed and a I think a very worthwhile improvement.

I also took the opportunity to give the chain a soak and a really good clean. The amount of dirt that came off was amazing. That's most of the bucket list sorted; just need to find a solution to my number fingers. I rode the BSA Sloper the yesterday and my hands did not go numb at all. This has 1" bars and really fat soft grips. Maybe this is the way to go.

Thursday 1st September 2022

The GN250 was taxed this morning so I used it to visit Reg Eyre in Lockeridge. Came home the long way so did about 50 miles in total. The Airhawk seat was a great success making the riding position more comfortable. My fingers were still a bit number after a few miles so I experimented by riding without gloves. Initially that helped as the weather was warm it was not a problem other than the lack of protection should I come off. What did improve matters a lot was usage of the heated grips. I assume this helped the circulation in my hands. However, it looks very much as though I need to consult the doctor to see if there is any treatment that would help. The bike still feels undergeared to me and I am hoping the 16t gearbox sprocket I ordered a few days ago will arrive before we go to Cornwall. I also ordered a toolbox as this item is missing on my bike. Coming from China so goodness knows how long it will take, but it is very cheap.

When I got home the oil filters I ordered on Monday had arrived so one is now fitted to the bike and the oil level topped up. The old filter did not look too bad but better to be safe than sorry.

Sunday 28th August 2022

I did a circa 20 mile ride on the GN250 today, Firstly to Melksham to fill the tank. Then to Richard Edmunds new premises just outside Chippenham. He is a local auctioneer who specialises in Vehicles and motoring memorabilia. Bike went very well but a few things I will want to 'improve'. The first was the tickover which when warm was near 2k. Slowed this down when I got home to 1.2k as per book. Second was the seat height which feels a bit low. However, I have an Air Hawk seat looking for a good home and that is now fitted. Third thing was vibration through the handlebars. It is not noticeable in the ordinary sense but fingers on both hands started going numb on the way back. The bike has been fitted with Oxford heated grips and they are quite thin. Not sure yet what I can do about this though the fourth thing may help. The bike feels under geared even though it is pretty much the same as the CB250RS at 10mph per 1000revs.

Peter Aulman who has run a GN250 for 3 years mentioned that he had raised the gearing on his to lower the revs at cruising speed. He did this by fitting a rear sprocket with 2 teeth less. Looking at the options on-line it is also possible to get a gearbox sprocket with 1 extra tooth; this would achieve the same result but be quicker and easier to fit and cheaper. I need to check the bike to find out how it is currently geared before ordering. Just in case it is not currently standard which is supposed to be 15/41.

Saturday 27th August 2022

The GN250 came from a member of the Swindon(Moonraker) section of the VMCC, Keith Bates. I actually had test ride on it last Sunday as his house in Chiseldon was sort of on my way home from Cricklade. I liked the bike but as it was on eBay as an auction, all I could do was wait and see if my bid would be successful. Well it was though I got pushed hard by someone else who clearly wanted it as well and I paid more than I expected. Seems I am not the only one downsizing to smaller Japanese bikes. You can get bigger bikes with lower mileage and seemingly quite good condition for the same or less but for my age group they are now too heavy or will be fairly soon.

Well life with the new bike did not start well. Keith and I spent so much time nattering about various things that I forgot a couple of the things; the most significant being the keys. Easily fixed though as we met up in Devizes this morning. The only paperwork that came with the bike was the V5c and some old MoTs covering Keith's 4 years of ownership from June 2018. Current mileage is 13391 so it looks as though Keith only did about 2600 miles on the bike; but like me he has several. He was a bit vague about servicing and I suspect it has at most only had one oil/filter change in his ownership. The manual suggest oil/filter changes every 3000 miles, which with a capacity of only 1.3l seems too long to me. Certainly the oil I drained out was very black and smelt old. He did give me a spare filter but it was not the correct size so it will have to make do with just fresh oil for now. I have ordered a couple and will use one when they arrive. Running the engine it sounds smooth and quiet so hopefully it has not suffered any ill effects due to lack of oil changes. The chain also looked pretty dry to me so it was given a good dose of grease. The sprockets look of There did not seem to be much wear when I lifted the links, the teeth on the sprockets look ok and adjustment was fine so again I hope it will not any urgent attention.

It was MoT'd only last week so everything works as you might expect. Though it was tidy and fairly clean, I have given it some closer attention and it already looks better. For a 30yr old bike it is quite good really, no significant rust that I could see. Some time soon I will remove and underseal the chrome mudguards to inhibit any further corrosion. The front spokes are very clean and someone has painted them silver so happy with that. The rear spokes are not rusty but they are very dull and another future job will be to remove the wheel, give them a good clean then paint them silver as well. Lot cheaper than having the wheel rebuilt with s/s spokes. Both rims are excellent so no attention needed there.

One thing mentioned in the advert (though I did not notice it when I rode the bike) was the fact that the LH footrest was bent downwards. Now I know it is there of course I cannot live with it. So I took it off and after a degree of fiddling, I was able to devise a way to straighten it. The footrests are rubber mounted which must help with ride comfort (as are the handlebars I just noticed). The one thing I found difficult on the test ride was the rear brake which sits lower than my ankle likes. It is adjustable but was already at its highest point as it was touching the exhaust pipe. On inspection I found it was actually hitting the head of the

bolt that secures a chrome plate covering the pipe/silencer joint. Replacing this bolt allowed the pedal to rise a little and it certainly felt better when I sat on the bike. Acid test will be a road test due shortly. If all goes as well as I hope, this is the bike I will take to Cornwall.

The future of the 250RS is unclear. I was intending to sell it and I have someone who is interested in buying it but not in its present form. Basically he wants it as spares/repair to re-instate the disk brake setup. I really enjoyed riding it to club on Thursday evening and I am now wondering whether I should keep it as a backup. It's historic registered so tax/mot exempt, perfectly roadworthy and needs neither time nor money spent on it. The money it might fetch is hardly life changing especially if it went as spares/repair. All it needs a space to store it and perhaps make it a winter project to fix the disk front brake so it can be sold later at a realistic price. Certainly I will not do anything with it until after the Cornish holiday just in case it is needed. Indeed I may take both bikes as they are quite light.

Friday 26th August 2022

What a difference a day makes. Not previously mentioned in the blog (at least I don't think so) but I have been looking around for a while for something like the 250RS but with an electric starter and a more armchair riding position. I was swithering between the Honda CB250 Nighthawk and the Suzuki GN250. Both seemed to tick all the boxes and it was really a question of which one cropped up at the right price and within sensible travelling distance. In some ways I would have preferred the Nighthawk which so far as the engine is concerned is an enlarged (234cc) version of the CD200 Benly; a bike I always liked. However, the only ones on the market are high mileage, relatively expensive and at the other end of the country. Basically with the present high cost of diesel you need to budget circa £1 per mile for a courier and not a lot less if I used my own van.

Anyway I managed top bid on the Suzuki GN250 below and it was only 30 miles away so it is now in my garage and I will give more details tomorrow.



Saturday 20th August 2022

Last Saturday I did the Cotswold Signpost Trial riding the CB250RS. It was a b****r to start but once running, it re-started first kick every time. Just as well as we stopped a lot looking for the answers to the clues. The front brake on this bike has always been spongy and not confidence inspiring. I have in the past attempted to bleed the brake but the bleed nipple is very tight and I have always been afraid to try too hard in case it shears. Doing some research I discovered a possible solution – you can get hose banjo bolts that have a bleed nipple built in so I ordered one. While I was at it I ordered a new rear ty as the one currently fitted has numerous cracks in the sidewalls. It is probably ok for the sort of speeds I ride the RS but with the Cornwall holiday looming it seemed best to replace it.

The tyre arrived first and that was fitted on Wednesday. The Banjo arrived on Thursday and was fitted Friday morning. Initially it seemed like a good solution. I was able to change the brake fluid and seemingly get all the air out. The brake felt very firm at the handlebar lever with little if any sponginess so I was well pleased. However a road test proved the brake was actually far worse than before with only very modest stopping power, Certainly not safe to be ridden that way. I rechecked all my work and even removed refaced the pads but nothing helped. It seemed impossible to create enough pressure to make the pads grip firmly. Very odd as the lever was still firm, and there were no leaks. In the end I decided to go to plan B and fit a different wheel.

I have had this wheel for several years and it is a marriage of a Honda 8" twin leading shoe hub laced to an 18" MZ aluminium rim. It was intended to go into one of my MZs but is no longer needed for that task and I had toyed with the idea of fitting it to the RS as I thought it would look better than the disk. Initially I thought it would be difficult as it looked as though the RS wheel spindle was a larger diameter but in fact the design is almost identical to the MZ and I was able to use a standard MZ wheel spindle. All I needed to do was make up a spacer to help centralise the wheel in the forks and a torque arm which uses one of the calliper mounting holes on the fork leg. The fiddliest part was getting the old brake assembly off as it's a very snug fit behind the headlight and laying in the new brake cable. I was able to use a standard ETZ250 front brake lever which includes a mounting for a mirror. Lot of trial and error but eventually it all fell into place as you can see in the picture.





There was no tyre on the wheel when I located it so I have fitted a new Mitas H04 tyre with front wheel tread patten that I had in stock. This complements the new Mitas H06 on the rear. A teste run round the village was very satisfactory and the new brake is superb, far better than the old disk brake and if anything too powerful for such a light bike. One thing I was not able to do was connect up a speedo drive ; the gearboxes are different in style. In any case the original one is fitted on the left side of the wheel and the new wheel has the speedo drive on the right. My guess is even if I could connect them up the speedo would be driven the wrong way. A pragmatic solution was to hand; I borrowed the GPS speedo from the Sloper. It even has a permanent back light so is visible at night. Unlike normal bicycle speedos it does not require calibration if you move it from one bike to another. The only drawback is security as it simply twists off the clamp. Addendum: I also did an engine oil change as part of this service with odometer reading 49208; that of course is now 'frozen'. I will need to use the CYCPLUS GPS speedo to log mileage going forward. There is a trip function which resets each time the device is powered off plus an odometer. The latter is retained in memory. It can also be rest to zero or to a specific mileage. I have set it to 49208.



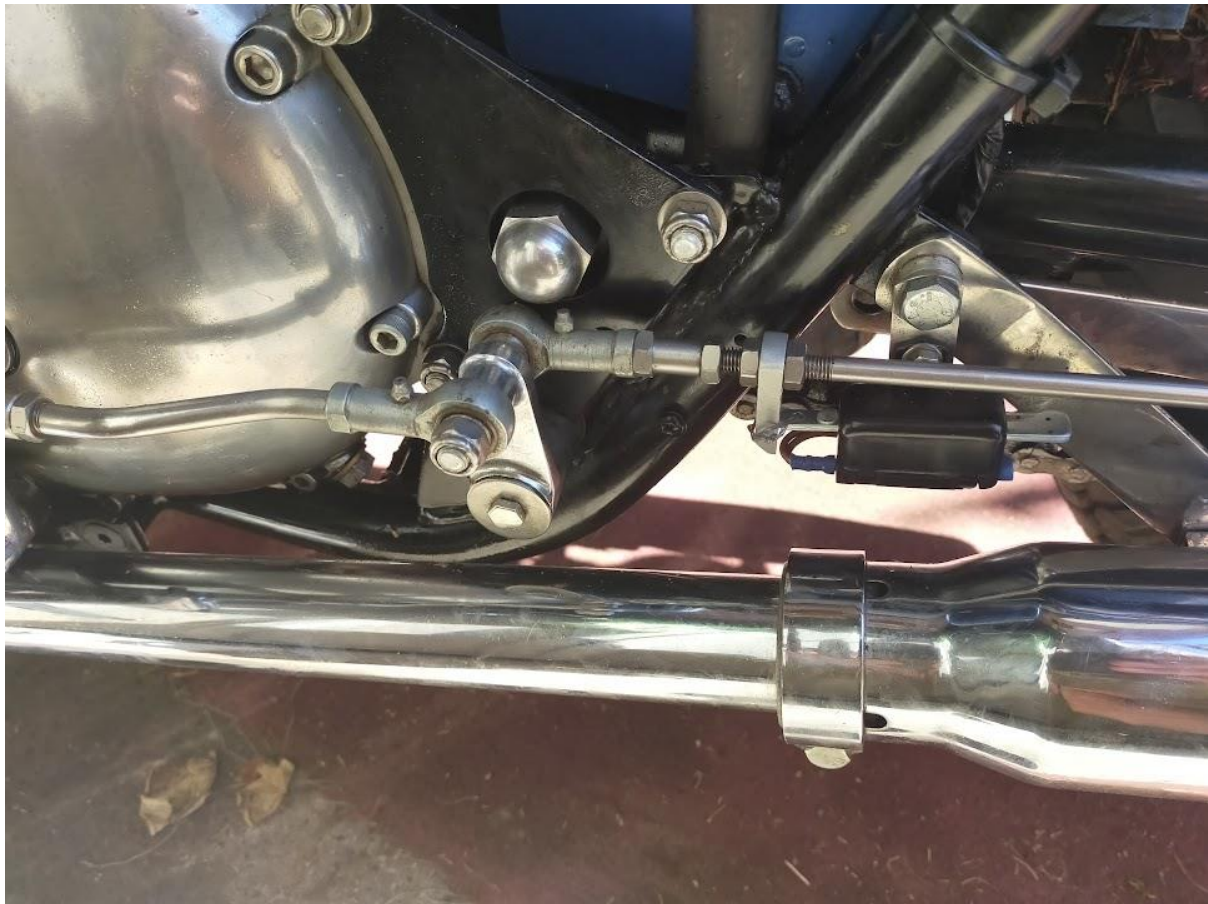
There are still two other minor issues. I need to improve the connection to the MZ brake light switch and for cosmetic reasons, make a cover for the speedo drive on the hub. All in all a very satisfactory modification to the bike.

I may even have identified why the bike has been hard to start from cold. I had been working on the premise that the choke was not working properly, but in fact the opposite may be true. Today I just turned the petrol on it started first kick without any choke at all. So possibly I have been flooding it during the long spate of hot weather. We shall see.

Thursday 11th August 2022

The TR6R stoplight switch arrived yesterday but I was out all day taking the caravan to Bournemouth for the family to enjoy a few days camping at a dog show. Pretty hectic day, as usual not everything worked straight away. We had to run the fridge on gas as there was no electrical hookup. Not used it that way before and no one told me it would be needed so of course initially it did not work. However, I think it was just a case of letting the gas fill the pipe and after a few false attempts it did start. Great relief as a 30 degree heat wave is not the time to be without a fridge. Then the water pump refused to work. Finally traced to dodgy O rings which we managed a temporary work round. I had hope it would be a quick session, just getting the awing up and leaving the rest to Richard but it was 3:30 before I finally got away. Now chilling out.

Anyway before it got too hot I fitted the TR6R stoplight switch; picture below. It must have been the same type as all the necessary bracketry was in place so fiddly but not difficult though I did have to change the connectors. I also slackened the rear chain a tad while I was at it. Now has the $\frac{3}{4}$ " play which I was assured it needed. The engine started first kick and everything now works. I rode it round the orchard but that was all. Too hot to get kitted up for a full road test.



Tuesday 9th August 2022

I did the Somerset Signpost Trial on Sunday using the CB250RS partnered by Kevin Phillips. Between us we managed to find all the controls though an occasional bit of back tracking was needed. We also fitted in a brief visit to a model railway exhibition we came across in the middle of nowhere. The event is only spoilt by Phil Ham's insistence on setting devilishly hard highway code questions. Results not yet received but not expecting to do very well and it's embarrassing as I really should know this stuff. Good day out though and his wife makes an excellent fruit cake. The sad thing is he only got 8 entrants for the trial though he did get about 20 for the associated social run.

With Bill's help I have located what seems to be the correct stoplight switch for the custom triumph and it's on order. I did have one response to the advert but it was only to tell me that the rear chain was too tight. Richard and I checked it today and it seems fine to us so we have left it alone.

Today someone came to look at the AJS K12 and it is now on its way back to Northampton in his van. Bit sad to see it go but it gave me a good introduction to Vintage motorcycling and would always have taken second place to the Sloper if I had kept it. He paid in cash so I had to get to the bank to pay it in this afternoon. Did not want that much money lying around the house overnight.

Saturday 6th August 2022

I have now sorted the oil pressure warning light issue on the Custom Triumph but it was rather a challenge. The manual shows the pressure switch alongside the oil pressure relief valve but as you can see in the picture, this bike has some sort of oil connector fitted there, not a switch. Tracing the oil line I found it connected to a spin-off external oil filter unit bolted low down to the main seat tube. Very difficult to get at and impossible to take any meaningful pictures.



I went on line but failed to find anything about such a device and I still have no idea if it is a standard fitting from a later model or an aftermarket kit. However poking around I noticed there were a couple of wires in the same area. One was red and bolted to the filter casing. Since this is a +ve earth bike I think it reasonable to assume this was an earth wire. The other was green with a stripe of I think brown which is usually a -ve power line.

Further poking around in a very cramped and mucky environment identified what seemed to be a switch screwed into the far side of the filter body with a lucar connector. So I plugged the cable onto the connector and when I switched on the ignition the low

pressure warning light came on. Even better, it went off and stayed off while the engine was running. I now felt safe to take the bike for a test ride so after checking the tyres and the oil level, I did my usual route. This is about 4 miles, mostly on the ring road. Cannot say it was the best ride of my life, the motor obviously has a lot of grunt though I was surprised how well those miniscule silencers worked as it was not embarrassing to ride. More vibration than I was expecting and the rear end springing is a tad hard for my taste as is the handlebar shape and placement so I did not go above 50mph. Two things still need attention. I still need to find a suitable rear brake stoplight switch and it ought to have an oil and filter change. Actually 3 things; the wire to the oil pressure switch came off again so this is clearly a long standing issue. Back on for now whilst I try to figure out a way to hold it in place. But

overall very satisfactory and I have put an advert in Car&Classic to see if there is any interest.

Friday 5th August 2022

Pleased to say today was a big improvement on yesterday. The Supa5 went onto the bench Powerdynamo system the spark is such high intensity you usually cannot see it in daylight. Even in the workshop it was hard to see, but it was there or so I thought. Next job was to lower the engine to make it easier to remove the carb. First thing I noticed was the rubber insert on the cold start device had dropped out of its cup. This would not have helped but I don't know if that was the main problem. Next thing I noticed was marks and scratches at the top of the needle, almost like it had corroded. Again I don't think this was the reason for it not starting but I found a better one in another carb so it has been replaced. The pilot jet was not actually blocked but I fancy it was slightly obstructed so I gave it a good clean and gave it and the pilot airways in the body a good blast with the airline. Last thing was to give the fuel cutoff valve a good clean as it was not dropping cleanly. That was about it. Put the carb back together and back on the bike expecting it to start easily.

Not a chance, it was still as dead as a dodo. Then I remembered that yesterday I had tried another plug I found on the shelf in the garage. So I refitted the bike's original plug and it started first kick, even though this plug has been in the bike for years. On a 4 mile test ride the bike ran well and seems much less prone to lurching on the overrun. So one down and one to go.

I got Richard to help me with the Honda as it is difficult to see the spark plug whilst kicking it over. Much to my surprise and relief there was a healthy spark. Put the plug back in and after 4-5 kicks the bike fired though it needed a couple more kicks before it would keep running though still a bit hesitant. Eventually it cleared and seemed to be running normally so I took it for a test ride (same route as the MZ). It ran perfectly and I could stop and restart it easily. Total mystery as to the cause but I am hoping it was not indicative of anything serious and plan to use the bike on Sunday. It is now loaded on the van and I just hope it was not a bad decision.

Fixing the two bikes took most of the morning so it was after lunch before I could have a more detailed look at the Custom Triumph I collected yesterday. The one thing I had done was to put the battery on charge as it was only showing 8v. Pleased to see that it was now fully charged according to the Optimate. That will please Bill as he thought the battery would be dead and had authorised me to buy a new one. There is no manual with the bike and it was unclear what the various positions on the ignition switch were for. Nothing much seemed to happen whatever I did apart from the brake light and the horn. Due to the customisation, this bike has been modified in terms of wiring layout and switches compared to a standard TR6 but I did expect that at least some of the warning lights would come on. I had downloaded a wiring diagram for a 1972 Oil in Frame (OIF) Triumph and comparing this to what I could see on the bike helped a lot and established that mostly it was fairly

standard, just that some of the switches and other electrical components were located elsewhere. Certainly most of the wiring colours seemed to agree with the diagram which was a relief.

Eventually I found we had a spark at the plugs a working horn, headlights with a main beam warning light, parking light, a rear light, a headlight flasher and a stop light (but only operated by the front brake). What we did not have was a rear brake light (no switch), indicators or the low oil pressure warning light which also serves to remind you the ignition is turned on. The next step was to remove the tank since it hides the bulk of the wiring. The tank is non standard and may well be from a Harley. Regardless the frame has been modified to suit and it took a few minutes to work out how to get it off. Just as well it was nearly empty as there is a balance tube between the two sides which runs under the top frame tube. The only spares book I was able to find is the 73-75 models but fortunately there do seem to be many similarities 1972 model; indeed some parts, like the disk brake, may well be from the later models.

With the tank off I was able to trace the connections to the LH switch which controls indicators, headlights and horn. This enabled me to identify the indicator wires and establish that I had duff bulbs on one side but the major problem was the indicator switch itself. With great trepidation I dismantled the handlebar unit and extracted the indicator switch itself. I don't think it's meant to be a service item but I was able to clean up the contacts and eventually get the switch working, along with the warning light. Even better, I managed to reassemble the handlebar unit and it is now back on the bike. This switch is an aftermarket item presumably fitted as part of the customisation. The switch wires are to a totally different colour coding to the bike but they have been neatly joined and in many ways are an improvement on the original.

So quite a successful start to the recommissioning with no major problems identified so far but still a long way to go.

Thursday 4th August 2022

Bit of a day. It started off ok as I took the van up to Cricklade to see Bill & Lynn Little and brought back with me the 1973 Customised Triumph TR6R to recommission. More about this later. Today was in the calendar as Bill's Run but obviously he is in no position to plan or lead anything. Instead Tim James took charge and organised a run that terminated at the White Lion in Cricklade. Conveniently next door to Bill & Lynns house. They were able to join us for lunch and provided tea in their garden afterwards. One reason for collecting the bike today was the presence of helpers to load it up and my son Richard at home to help me unload; it's a heavy beast. That part of the plan worked fine.

Then things turned to worms. I had intended to load the CB250RS onto the van ready for the Somerset Signpost Trial on Sunday. I checked it over and did the tyres but when I tried to start it I got nothing. As far as I could tell there was no spark and my fear was I had

disturbed something when I fitted the handlebar risers. No problem, I would take the Supa5 instead as it's in the same WRRTC class. However, it would not start either though this time I was pretty sure it was fuel related. After faffing about for a while I decided it simply was not my day and gave up. Maybe thing will get better tomorrow.



Monday 1st August 2022

Struggling to remember what I have done since 22nd July. I rode the Meteor on Brian Newbury's Mendip Run on the 24th. Pleasant ride but we were running a bit behind schedule so when we got to the top of Burrington Combe I skipped lunch (which was at Chew Magna) and rode straight home via Chilcompton. I had planned to take the MAC but the motor seemed a bit noisy to me when I rode it the previous day so I decided against.

On Wednesday I did ride it to the model engineering club and got Chris Wiggins (who is a Velo Guru) to listen to the engine. I thought it might be the main bearings on the way out but he thought they were ok and that the noise was coming from the timing chest. Possibly worn cam followers. I rode it to Yatton Keynell on Thursday evening and it went ok, once you get top side of 50mph you cannot hear the engine because of wind and exhaust noise. So perhaps that is the answer. I might have a look inside the timing cover over the winter.

On Saturday the West Wilts Section had a stand at the Calne Bike Meet. Quite a pleasant day but it was mostly Harleys and other exotica, not many older bikes. I did see an old

Indian I really fancied but failed to get a picture as I was trying to eat a bacon bap at the same time. The TS125 can be seen in the picture of our stand below.



Friday 22nd July 2022

I rode the Meteor to Hayballs in Salisbury on Thursday morning for its service and borrowed one of the new Enfield Scram's for a test ride and to get me to the lunch meet at the Fox & Goose, Combe Bissett. The Scram is a road optimised version of the Himalayan and seems to me to be a much improved bike. The engine is smoother and quieter and the gearbox no longer clunks in the lower gears when in traffic. Only downside was the shape of the seat which is a one piece saddle and felt to me as though it was sloping forward. No doubt a pad would sort that. Overall quite impressed and if they had been around in 2019 I might well have bought one instead of the Himalayan.



In the meantime I am more than happy with my Meteor; especially as it returned 109mpg on the first full tank. It does however share the same irritating feature as the Himalayan by going onto reserve when there is still a gallon or more in the tank. Something I shall have to get used to.

Monday 18th July 2022.

We have been experiencing record temperatures for about a week with the peak due on Monday and Tuesday. You can only work outside for short periods and even then only in the early-mid morning and in the evening, so not much serious work is getting done. I have spent a lot of time on the lounge under the trees snoozing and thinking – what's not to like.

There was a Velocette assembly at the Microlite centre on Sunday arranged I believe by the Thames Valley section. I rode over on the MAC, but went the long way via Bromham, Heddington and Blackdown to get to Cherhill. I don't fancy the long blast down the A361 from Devizes. Just as well as it turns out the road was closed anyway – presumably due to an accident. I came back via West Kennet and the A361 was still closed at Beckhampton roundabout at 1pm. Pleasant morning's ride and I met a few old friends.

Work continues on the BSA Sloper and I will post a link to its diary in due course. However, this activity required me to move some of the bikes in the garage and I found the Supa5 had a flat rear tyre. This must have happened on the Herford event as I have not used it since. Guess I was lucky to get round. Immediate fix was to put in the spare wheel – the one that

got punctured on last year's Hereford event! I investigated the puncture this morning while it was still cool. Very odd as the hole in the tube was on the inside of the tube where it touches the well of the rim. There were no protruding spoke heads, the rim tape was perfect and there was no foreign body evident - bizarre. Anyway I fitted a new tube and all is well for now.

While looking for a replacement tube I decided to check all the spare tubes, I have a box full in assorted sizes, some new but most previously repaired and passed as safe to use at the time. A few had started to perish so were scrapped but the others blew up and stayed up so they are now properly labelled and put away. A useful job even if some of the tubes are in sizes for which I do not currently have motorcycles that need them. Ah well, you never know.

Thursday the Meteor goes in for its first service so I will then be able to use it regularly again. At present the mileage is 278 so the trip to Salisbury will take it nicely to the 300 target.

Friday 15th July 2022

Quite a busy week. The K12 is currently fitted with a bicycle speedo, one of loads I have bought over the years and which work fine for a while then just seem to pack up. There are wireless versions but even these utilise a magnet on the front wheel to activate the sensor and trigger the display. Sooner or later the sender unit stops working and another dead speedo goes into a box kept especially for such items, rarely if ever to surface again. Their accuracy is of course dependant on how well you calibrate them for your wheel size. Hopefully none of this will be a problem in the future as I have just received a speedo which uses satellite/GPS technology. No wires and no sender unit to calibrate which also means you can use it on any bike. The mount is very simple and held with a couple of O rings so easy to move, or you can buy spare mounts as the unit I bought uses a Garmin standard mounting. I tried it out today on the CB250RS and it works fine but did show that the Honda speedo over reads by about 4mph at 50.

On Thursday I drove to Cricklade to return the Triumph TRW to Bill Little and to collect the 1929 BSA Sloper which is next on the re-commissioning list. Bill is slowly getting weaker but was in good form and we had a long chat about various things some of which will crop up later. On the way back I diverted to Tetbury to drop off the trophy I won at last 'Cotswold Signpost Trial'; along with my entry for this year's trial due in early August. For various reasons, I intend to keep a separate blog on the recommissioning of the Sloper but here is a picture taken this morning.

It's quite a handsome beast but pictures often flatter and there are a number of cosmetic issues not readily apparent plus of course its mechanical condition is totally unknown. It was last run about 4-5 years ago when Bill used it on the Moonraker Trial. Not for long as it

nipped up on him at Broad Hinton. When it cooled down he rode it back to Oak Farm and it has not run since.



A bike with a lot of history as it was previously owned by another VCC friend, Peter Taylor from Calne who used it extensively, including at least one E2E I am told. According to the factory records it was shipped to Sleightolmes shop in Trowbridge on 5th September 1929. It still bears its original Wiltshire registration and does not seem to have left the county. Sadly Sleightolmes closed many years ago but my parent house was just down the road and I spent a lot of time as a teenager in the early 1960s drooling over their bikes; none of which I could afford.

Monday 11th July 2022

Well the TS125 completed the Cotswold Road Trial successfully. Did not miss a beat all day and was really the ideal bike for such an event as it was quite content to run at 30mph or less in top gear making it a very relaxed ride. I cannot claim the navigator performed quite so well as I got a bit confused on the first section and probably lost a lot of time. I think I navigated and maintained close a 24ph average for the rest of the event. However, all speculation until the results arrive which will to be a few days as time trials are complicated things to score. **Addendum:** I did lose a lot of points on the first section due to my navigation error. However, I still managed a second place in class and the bike won the post 75 Concours Trophy. Whilst I enjoyed the event overall, I do have a further reservation

about time trials and that is the safety aspect in modern traffic conditions. The 24mph average can be hard to maintain on many of the lanes which form much of the route for such events but equally it is far too slow for modern traffic conditions on A & B roads which have to be used from time to time. This is something I may come back to after pondering it further.

One useful thing at the Cotswold was a chance to study Richard Williams 1928 500cc Sloper. His is a single port engine and has Acetylene lighting but is otherwise virtually identical. He passed on some useful info which will help later. **Addendum 2:** Richards bike it transpires is a 1928 model, Bills bike is a 1929 model with a new for that year frame though most of the rest is identical. One major difference is the saddle mounting which was to cause me some grief for a while.



The above is Richards bike, the one below is Bill's Bike



I noticed a couple of things about the TS125 which was on its first longish run – about 80 miles in total I am told. The seat is thinly padded and quite firm so my bottom was complaining by the end. I have had a number of the smaller MZs over the years and never noticed this before – must be an age thing. Anyway, easily solved as I have an airhawk cushion which I will use next time I take it out. The second thing was the front brake which needed a lot of pressure to work effectively. This has been addressed by replacing the wheel and brake plate with another I had in stock. This one was fitted to my Supa5 before I replaced it with the Honda front wheel. It was always an excellent brake having been fitted with oversize brake linings that had been turned down to be an exact fit for the drum. After fitting, a test showed a much more progressive brake.

The TRW has now been loaded in the van ready to take back to Cricklade on Thursday. Just as well I did it today as another issue arose. The mudguard support bracket I fitted had moved the mudguard to a more central position instead of rubbing against the fork. That was the purpose of the repair but the collateral damage was the bolt on the front mudguard stay catching on the tyre at certain points. The bolt were far too long but easily fixed by turning it round so the head was inside. I did the other front stay as well just to be sure.

Wednesday 6th July 2022

The Cotswold weekend and Flat Tank touring holiday are in progress as we speak with the Cotswold Road Trial due next Sunday 10th July. I had originally decided to give it a miss for

various reasons, but belatedly changed my mind and sent the entry form of last Friday. The format has reverted to full blown time trial format though I am not sure why. Not my favourite type of event and due to the need for an ACU permit and Insurance cover plus MSA route approval, they are very expensive to organise with high entry fees. Also it's not the most attractive or interesting part of Gloucestershire in my view, being run mostly on low lying land alongside the Severn. However, I decided it was an ideal event to try out the TS125 so it was refuelled and loaded into the van this afternoon ready for Sunday.

There has been no interest whatsoever in the TRW so I have provisionally arranged with Bill and Lynn to return it and bring another bike back for recommissioning. The will probably be the 1929 Twin Port BSA Sloper, a 500cc ohv model. Predictably Bill has no paperwork for the bike apart from a V5 so I have started collecting documentation and checking out it's provenance. Quite looking forward to getting my hands on it.

Sunday 3rd July 2022

On Thursday we had a section coffee morning at the AV8 café on Kemble airfield followed by a ride to the Waggon & Horses at Beckhampton for lunch. I was busy on domestic duties earlier in the day so went direct to the pub for lunch via a somewhat convoluted country lane route. This offering some more appropriate roads for running in the Meteor. Pleasant time at the pub but it rained heavily while we were eating and continued like this all the way home so my lovely new bike now needs a good clean.

Today there was nothing in our local VMCC calendar so I rode down to Gillingham to take part in a Dorset section event. I wanted an excuse to ride the Velo MAC and to see how they organise their events. I was impressed that most people actually took a route card and navigated their own way round. The route card was a little unusual as instead of distances between instructions there were expressions like 'AAW' or 'AALW' standing for 'After a While' and 'After Long While' respectively. Bit disconcerting but in practise it worked very well. We were also supposed to count how many pubs could be seen on the route. Must admit I forgot about this until I was more than halfway round so had to guess – no idea what the right answer was or if anyone got it right. We did all get a complementary choc ice at the end though. The route was about 40 miles and finished at lunch time. With the ride to and from the event I clocked about 85 miles and the bike went really well. A most enjoyable day.

Tuesday 28th June 2022

I heard from Lynn that Rod Hann had visited Cricklade on Friday and bought the Rickman Triumph so that is one less I need to re-commission. There has been no further interest in the TRW. However, I discovered that the VMCC Library holds the Triumph factory records covering the period when TRW's were in production and they confirmed that the TRW was despatched to the Candian Army in 1956. The engine was from a circa 1959 bike and originally despatched to the Royal Signals (date unknown) then despatched to Elite

Motorcycles in Tooting in 1964. This makes it highly unlikely that this bike was ever a genuine Royal Signals display team bike. More likely it was created later as a lookalike for a museum or collector. How the frame came back from Canada and got married to the later engine is anyone's guess. I doubt we will ever know. I have modified the advert to reflect this information as I don't want any comeback if and when it gets sold.

I met up with Richard Williams at Ross on Sunday and it turns out he has Yamaha Serow for sale. We talked about it and he sent me some pictures. It is quite tidy and a 1991 model so VMCC eligible. I was tempted, but there are a few issues with the bike and on reflection I decided it was not for me. If I did buy a Serow it is very likely that I would sell the CB250RS as they would basically duplicate each other in my stable with the Serow having the slight advantage of the off-road capability if I was brave enough to try again. However, I do like the CB250RS and it is really only the lean forward riding position that makes me think of getting rid of it. It came up to the workshop and I tried ways to improve the riding position. Realistically the only thing you can alter is the handlebars but there are limitations unless you are prepared to change the control cables, hydraulics and wiring loom. After some experimenting I was able to raise the bars about 2" using some risers I bought originally for the Himalayan. I did have another set of risers that would have both lifted and brought the bars back by about the same amount but there simply was not enough slack in the various cables. Anyway the results are shown in the picture below. A road test indicated all was well but how much they improve things on a longer run is yet to be established.



While the bike was in the workshop I decided to change the rear tyre. This was new and fitted as part of last winter's makeover. However, the correct size tyre is a 3.50" x 18" and but my new tyre was a 3.60 x 18". A good match on the face of it but in reality the 3.60 is a low profile tyre equivalent in width to a 3.25" conventional tyre. Though it gave no problems in use it always looked very skinny and spoilt the lines of the bike. I found an older but sound 3.50" tyre in stock with plenty of tread and this is now fitted. Makes the bike look better even if it has no practical benefit. If I do get a Serow and move the CB250RS on it will make it easier to sell.

Sunday 26th June 2022

The Hereford on the Edge (HOTE) event went very well on Sunday. I took the Supa5 to Ross in the van. The idea being to lay the ghost of 2021 by using the same bike. Bit nervous when we rode down Cefn Road which is where I got the puncture last year and I could see why, there are loads of potholes many partly filled with gravel and who knows what else especially round the farm entrances. Anyway we did 22 controls in 165 miles finishing around 1645. It was a gold medal standard for both Kevin and myself. In fact we stopped twice for well over 30 minutes each time even though the regs only required one 30 minute stop so we could have been back even earlier. As it was there were only perhaps 10 bikes in the car park, all much bigger than our steeds. Kevin rode his Serow which was probably the ideal bike on some of the roads. The Olchan Valley was particularly bad and I suspect worse than some of the optional green lanes provided by the event. Despite a very pessimistic weather forecast we only saw rain for a few minutes – in the Olchan Valley predictably enough. Otherwise it was dry and sunny but though the wind was very strong all day. At one point I thought the bike had a rear wheel puncture as it was wandering all over the road but it was just a combination of the strong wind and a poor road surface. A jolly good event.

Saturday 25th June 2022

One offer on the TRW but it was well below Bill's minimum price so we had a good chat but that was about all. No other interest and to be honest I am not expecting a rush. One useful development, I made contact with a previous owner of the Rickman Triumph which is also in Bill's disposal list. He is very interested and planning to view the bike (which is still in Cricklade) shortly.

Today I took the yellow TS125 for an MoT which it passed ok. It is already taxed so can be used any time. It's a cracking little bike and buzzes along at 50-55 quite happily. While it was out I fitted an Optimate charging cable to make it easier to keep the battery topped up. Though so far it has not needed any charging despite being left for months. One useful feature on the bike is the odometer which shows 10ths mile. Not seen this on previous MZs TS models. It would have been useful on the HOTE event tomorrow but the Supa5 is already loaded. Something to bear in mind for future events though.

Wednesday 22nd June 22

Spent a bit more time on the TW today and took some pictures ready to advertise it. Main improvement was to fit an ignition cutout. Sidevalve twins don't seem to include a decompressor so stopping the engine was a bit brutal when I finished a test ride. It has so much low down torque that it is hard to just stall it. I could not find suitable button switch so used a dipswitch/horn switch for now. In my view it looks a bit better in my picture than Bill's original promotional picture. Anyway Bill wants to stick with his price so it's now on Car&Classic for £6750 or sensible offers. Not anticipating a rush to buy so the bike has been moved to the garden shed for now.



I did find the picture below on the internet of the White Helmets display team in action in 1962. Resolution poor because it was extracted from a Youtube video clip. There is clearly a bike in the line-up which looks uncannily like this bike and I think it is probably the one used for the pyramid trick. Not convinced it's the same bike though as the front pad looks different.



Monday 20th June 2022

Tomorrow is the longest day, how quickly time passes these days. Busy weekend helping the WWSME operate its portable track at the Wessex Steam Fair. Not a lot of customers as the weather was wet and cold after a blistering hot Friday. Still we raised some money for club funds. More about this on the railway blogg.

Today has been quite hectic. I spent the morning working on the TRW and it is now running and looking quite tidy. Waiting to hear from Bill how he wants me to proceed. He had originally set a value of £6750 on the bike but having done some research, including talking to John Harding, I fancy this is too optimistic. We shall see.

In the afternoon, there was a flurry of activity over the Himalayan and it finally went this evening. Bit sad in the end as I was beginning to like the idea of keeping it. Back down to 7 bikes again.

Friday 17th June 2022

I have just got back from Cricklade having been up to see Bill & Lynn Little. Lynn had kindly sent me a list of the bikes Bill wants to sell with indicative prices so I was able to do a bit of research first. All of these bikes are leftovers from his days as a classic bike dealer and he failed to sell them when he closed the business about 5 years ago. Most are a bit special in one way or another limiting their appeal and in truth probably owe Bill more than is achievable in today's market. Before I went I had more or less decided that I would make the 1929 BSA Sloper my next recommissioning. However, Bill had packed the bikes in like sardines and on my own it was difficult to get access. After a couple of hours of heaving bikes around so that I could see the selected bikes, I changed my mind. What I came home with was the 1952 Triumph TRW pictured below. Not sure why as it will be a nightmare to sell but it just tugged my heart strings. The bike has no provenance so whether it is a genuine White Helmets display bike or a clone is unclear – somehow I doubt it. However, now down to me to get it running and find a new home for it.



Wednesday 15th June 2022

Guess what I have been up to today; just got home with my new baby. I decided to keep the Himalayan for the moment having MoT'd it yesterday. So now the proud owner of two Royal Enfields – but for how long?



Monday 13th Jun 2022

The Supa5 has been running on very old (and I mean very old) fuel since I put it back on the road in April. When I mothballed it I filled the tank to the brim but mainly with petrol drained from the other 2-strokes. It has run perfectly well on this but the smell is awful so time to do something about it. The last run in Wales used quite a lot but I reckoned I could do a trip to Silton for the Wessex meeting to just about empty the tank. Wrong I got there and back without even going onto reserve so in the end I had to drain of the last 1/2gallon or so. I then left the tank in the sunshine to dry out completely and most of the smell finally went away. While the tank was off, I stripped and cleaned the carb. Like all the other MZs the needle had a green coating which I scrubbed off. I also stripped and cleaned the fuel needle jet. Twice recently it has stuck closed if left for a while and then floods when you try to free it up. Running the engine seems to sort it out and it will then work perfectly for the rest of the day. In fact there was nothing obviously wrong with it so I am not sure if I have fixed the problem or not. Need to buy a couple of gallons of fresh fuel before I can test it. The surging and knocking on then overrun is also worse than I remember. Hopefully cleaning the carb will improve this situation.

The Supa5 will next be used in anger on the HOTE event on 26th June – circa 180 miles and hopefully no punctures this time.

Wednesday 8th June 2022

I have been at the Metropole in Llandrindod Wells since last Thursday participating in the West Wilts Section touring holiday. More details and pictures of the actual event later but I rode on 5 days and covered near 600 miles mostly on the Honda CB250RS with the MZ Supa5 given an airing today. Both bikes performed faultlessly.

As with last year my routes were mainly organised to include all 32 of the CWMPAS event locations and as many of the VMCC NWP Locations as were in reasonable striking distance.

Looking forward to getting home and a rest from riding. The picture is of the Arch on the road from Devils Bridge across the Elan Valley.



Rather than clutter the blogg with the detail of the holiday, you can download the information here: [..\West Wiltshire Section VMCC Touring Holidays.pdf](#)

Sunday 29th May 2022



The K12 parked at the Cerne Giant viewpoint during the Run today. We compete the 40 mile route successfully though I did have to give a helpful push up one very steep hill. Very enjoyable event and nice to see so many of the older bikes on show.

Wednesday 25th May 2022

Where does the time go. Following on from the previous post, I did ride the MAC to Silton and it went very well. I did run onto reserve on the Frome bypass but that was my faults no the bikes. However, when I got back I did check the plug and it looked a bit rich but not bad enough to warrant immediate attention.

I also rode the Supa5 to Ham on the Sunday which was not without incident. It stopped after ½ mile. Plenty of sparks but the plug was bone dry. I presume it was a stuck float needle as after I tapped the body of the carb a couple of times with a spanner, fuel started leaking out as though it was flooding. Tapping the carb again stopped the flooding and reluctantly the bike started but finally cleared itself and ran normally. I made it to Ham and back without further incident.

The Weymouth week went very well. I used the MAC on the Sunday, in somewhat damp conditions and it ran perfectly. I found afterwards was that it had blown a fuse so no electrics. This happened a while back and I had diagnosed a short inside the headlight at the time. Subsequent investigation established that it was the dipswitch causing the problem so as a temporary fix I cable tied the switch so that it was permanently in the dipped headlight position and no further problems during the week. I also had a problem with the kickstart

which would not fully disengage and caused a buzzing noise. Not sure if this is something new or that I just had not noticed the noise before; sorted with a bungee for now. The plug was still very black so something else to be looked at

The rest of the week I used the CB250RS which typical of a Honda gave no problems at all. We came home on the Friday as I needed time to prepare for the WHT on the Sunday, pity as we missed the visit to Rod & Carol Hanns house to look at his lovely collection of bikes and a smashing lunch

The WHT itself went very well. We had a record 52 entries and wall to wall sunshine all day so everyone enjoyed themselves. Busy on Monday working out the results and sorting the accounts, still a few thing to do. Now need to get the AJS K12 ready for the Giants Run on 29th and to get the MAC into the workshop. I need to look at the kickstart, The dipswitch and the rich mixture. I will probably drop the needle one notch and since I need to remove the tank to get at the car, I will do the tappets which are a bit noisy. Always something with these old bikes.

Saturday 7th May 2022

Quite a lot of activity last weekend. MZ Rider and the VMCC Journal both came out on the 29th April, though my copy of the latter did not arrive until 4th May. Several people interested in both bikes and the TS125 Sport went to Bristol with MX club member Rod Western on the Tuesday. On Wednesday David Shephard from Maidstone viewed the Falcon, took it for a test ride and paid a substantial deposit. Collection to be arranged when he gets back from holiday. In the interim I also sold Bill Little's Supa5 for him. So a busy time.

This enabled me to get my Supa5 out of mothballs and I plan to ride it to Ham tomorrow for the MZRC meeting. Just given the CB250RS an oil change (48285) ready for the Weymouth Week. We are driving down there next Friday with the caravan. I am taking two bikes, the Honda and the MAC. The latter for the Weymouth Run itself on Sunday and the former for the rides later in the week. This assumes that the MAC goes well on Monday when I plan to take it to Silton for the Wessex V&V meeting.

Sunday 24th April 2022

There was not a lot of interest in the BMW over Easter, couple of enquiries and one viewing but despite agonising for a long time he never got to the making an offer. However, I refreshed the advert of Friday and this time we had a viewing on Saturday afternoon and the bike is now in its new home in Solihull. The buyer rode it back and I had an email from him confirming safe arrival and how pleased he was with it. I had no doubts about the trip but its always nice to hear there were no problems. Just the TS125 Sport and the F-B to go and we will be down to a more manageable number. Hopefully the magazines they are advertised in will appear next weekend. Last picture of the R60 – sad.



Easter Sunday 16th April 2022

Conscious that I have been somewhat idle and not updated the blog for some time. No real excuse, just idleness so I am now struggling to remember any progress or noteworthy events stretching back 3 weeks. This will be a bit disjointed and not necessarily in calendar order. The TS125 Sport and the F-B Falcon are both still in the garage and awaiting adverts to appear in MR Rider and the VMCC journal respectively. That will not be until the beginning of May. In the intervening period, I have ridden the BMW R60 on a couple of runs, mostly recently last Thursday when we did the sections Memorial run amounting to 115 miles. Absolutely nothing wrong with it, but I have concluded that I don't really enjoy the bike the way I hoped. Having done two VMCC road trials and some local runs on my Honda CB250RS recently I find this much more satisfying. Light and agile and plenty of performance for my needs. I also now have the MZ Supa5 back on the road as it was registered historic on 1st April, plus of course the Himalayan if I want to do any gentle off road stuff. So after a lot of agonising, the R60 is now advertised on Car&Classic along with all the BMW spares and special tools. As with the other bikes no real interest as yet. I am hoping the warm weather we are enjoying over Easter will produce a result, if not it will go on eBay later in the week.

As mentioned, I did the Cheaddar Trial on 3rd April and the Felix-Burke on 10th April both on the 250RS. The Cheddar is organised as a road safety run with a set route entirely on paved roads. There are secret checks where your riding is observed, typically at RH turns. Two twist this year, firstly they included a special test at Mutton Lane in Wedmore. This apparently used to feature in some long past sporting trial. You are supposed to make a hill start and ride the wrong way round a green triangle at the top involving a 270 degree turn. Unfortunately, they did not mention the existence of this test on the route card and when I got there it was chaos with a big group who had been riding together all milling around. If there was anyone marshalling, they were not in evidence so I just followed Dave Boon through but had to dab at the top because the exit was blocked by a couple apparently watching what was going on. Only afterward did I find out it was a special test. If I had cleaned it I would have won the Post War class instead of coming third— ah well it was a good day anyway.

The Felix-Burke is a scatter navigation event in the Cotswolds and one of my favourites. They give you a choice of 16 locations only 12 of which are to be used. Eight of them have green lanes associated and you can choose to do these for 3 bonus marks, or answer questions with a potential for 4 marks. Needless to say I did all the green lanes though I did manage to get 3 questions correct at the other three locations, the 12th id the finish and no questions. Great day out in warm sunny weather and only the last green lane at Winstone was troublesome. Not overly difficult but it did involved a 25 yard long trench at least 6 inches deep. The bike and me were both plastered in muddy water and it took most of Monday morning to clean things up. Just got the results - beaten by one mark in the Post war class by Keith Johnson.

Last Wednesday I rode the MAC to the 3 Magpies for a meeting with Keith and the landlady to confirm arrangements for the WHT. The bike went really well on the way out and even better on the way home until the last 100yds. My road has a series of traffic calming features which are a bit tedious especially on a rigid bike. I decided to ride them feet up and managed the first three in fine style. At the fourth I went into a big wobble as the left footrest snapped. Not a pleasant experience and I more I think about it the more I realise I was lucky not to fall off big time. Investigations later revealed that the footrest had been previously welded up but not too well.

Monday 28th March 2022

The TS125 Sport advert on Car&Classic only attracted two responses neither of which were serious. On Friday I pulled the advert and have booked the bike for an MoT, the earliest date I could get was Thursday 31st March. Unsure whether to re-advertise locally or simply submit an advert to MZ rider and wait until May to see if it sells within the club.

I also dragged the Francis-Barnett Falcon out of its shed and gave it a good clean. It is now advertised on Car&Classic in place of the TS125 and sadly has so far received even less interest. Don't know if I am asking too much or the market is simply flat. If it does not sell by

31st March I will submit an advert to the VMCC Journal and mothball the bike until May. To be honest it would not break my heart if neither sold, I will just have to figure out a way of storing more bikes securely.



The Honda CB250RS was also dragged out of its cave and checked over. It was given a makeover during the autumn and all it needed was the tyres blowing back to pressure. I did try to bleed the front brake as it was a bit spongy but I could not undo the bleed nipple and gave up before I broke something. As a compromise, I siphoned out as much as possible of the old fluid and topped it up with fresh. I also tried a trick that used to work on the MZs. Cable tie the brake lever so that the brake is applied hard and leave it for a few hours. This does sometimes squeeze the air bubbles up to the master cylinder where they can escape and thus firm things up. Don't think it made much difference to the Honda sadly. I did consider fitting the 8" Honda TLS wheel I have in stock. The only obvious issue is the speedo drive and this needs more investigation. I plan to ride the Honda to Honey Street on Thursday as a test run before using it on the Cheddar Trial next Sunday.

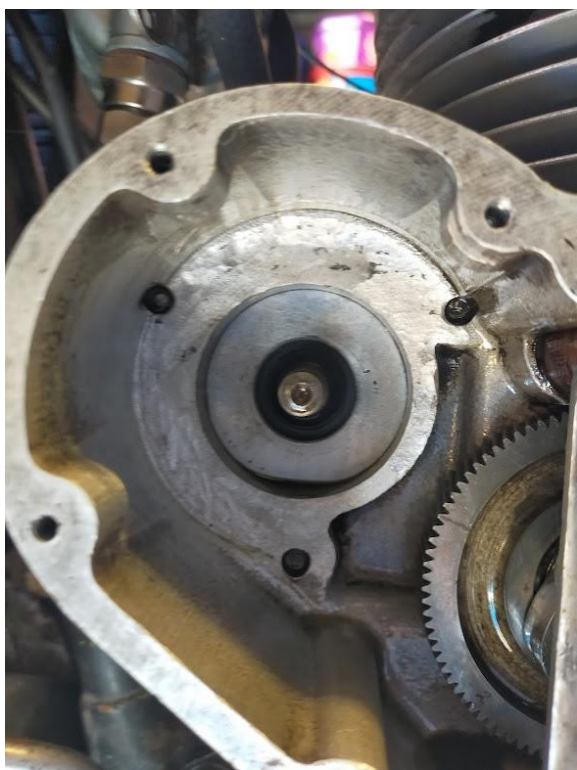
Yesterday and today (Sunday & Monday) I was out on the Himalayan checking out the locations for the 2022 WHT. I did 186 miles to visit 31 controls in total, 120 yesterday and 66 today. This included 10 Green lanes though I bottled out of two of them without reaching the actual checkpoint. One because I had picked the wrong way in found it full of very deep and wide water filled potholes. On my own I felt it too risky to man and machine to proceed. Keith did say in the guidance notes to approach from the West but I went in from the North

as that fitted my route planning better. Next time I will listen to his advice. The other GL required opening and closing gates and frankly it was too much of a hassle so I aborted that one as well. Still 8 out of 10 (plus two attempts) was creditable for a 78yr old I thought. In fairness, I did complete Westwoods near Lockeridge which is probably the GL I most dislike. Its steep, lots of pot holes and lots of loose gravel patches; plus you have to go up and back. Three years ago I fell off my Kawasaki on this lane and broke a couple of ribs so my dislike is understandable in my view. To prove it, this is the picture I took at the Westwoods location.

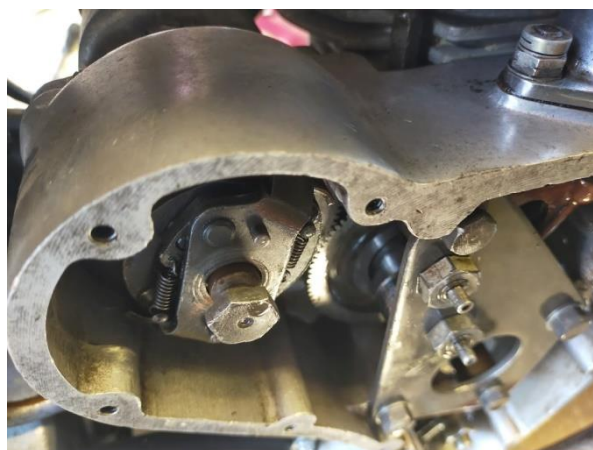


Sunday 20th March 2022

On Saturday investigation continued into the sticking ATD. In the end I decided to remove the Lucas magneto from the bike and check the whole assembly. Annoyingly everything then worked perfectly, no jamming of the ATD however much I tightened it onto the shaft. It looks very much therefore that the jamming is caused by the unit binding within the crankcase. The picture below shows what might be some rubbing marks, but there is nothing obvious on the ATD itself. Jury still out on that one.



I did try fitting the Lucas ATD that came with the bike but it just would not fit properly as you can see in the next picture. The central bolt should tighten down almost to the body of the ATD.



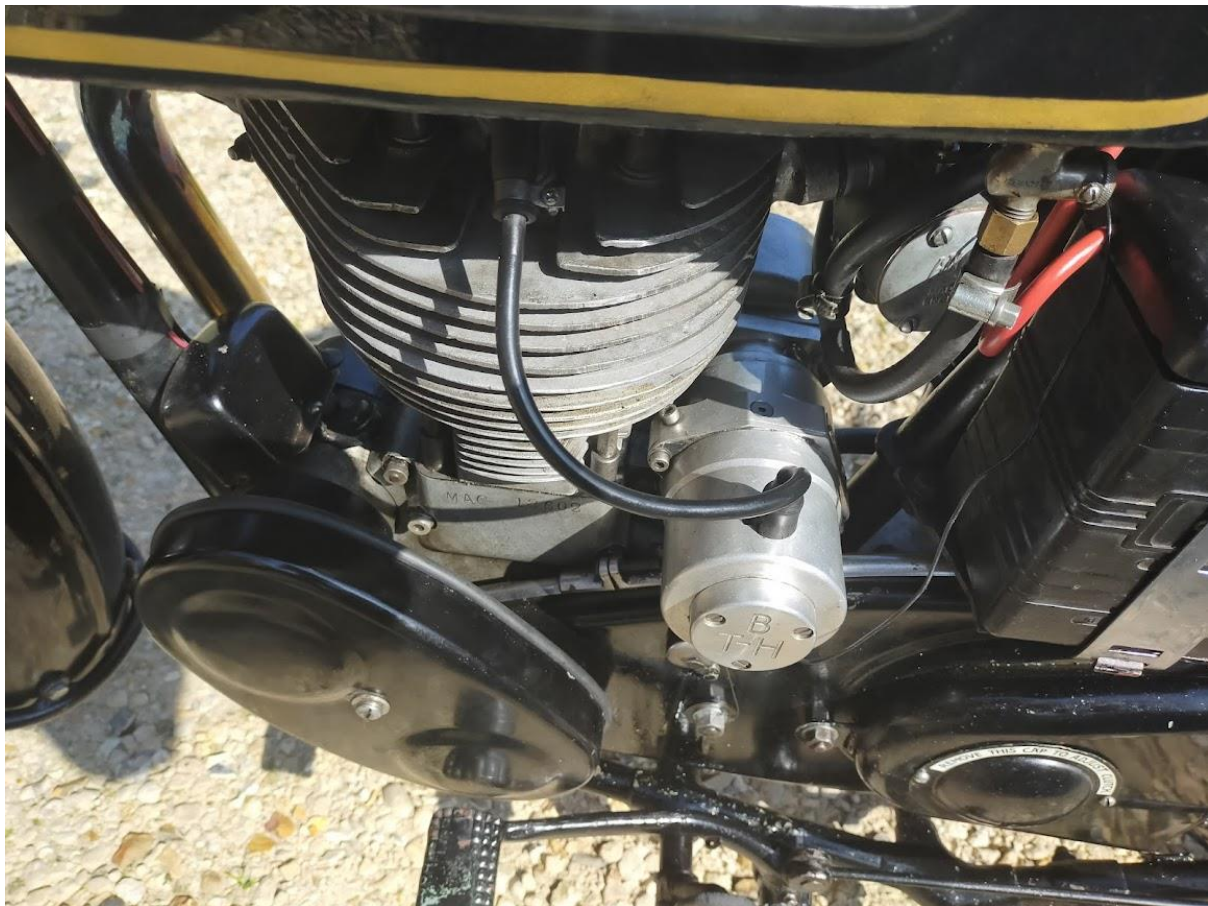
The good news was that when I refitted the original parts (points plate and HT pickup) the magneto functioned perfectly. I suspected it might as the mag had been rebuilt by Paul Lydford back in 2018 and I have a lot of faith in his work.

This left me in a quandary. No point in refitting the Lucas magneto, even though it was clearly servicable until I had a working ATD. No easy or obvious way to fix either of the ones I currently had. However, I did have in stock a modern BTH electronic magneto with its own fixed steel pinion. So it was a no brainer really. It should be an easy job but putting the nuts back on the fixing studs is a nightmare. In the process I lost all 3 original nuts and 4 washers somewhere around the engine and had to make new ones. Eventually I managed to get two of the nuts in place and tightened down, the third was left for later. However two were enough for me to complete the assembly and to be able to start the engine, or rather attempt to start the engine. It did go eventually but was clearly not happy. Tickover was poor and it was reluctant to rev. I decided to pack up for the day at that point.

Later in the evening I downloaded the fitting instructions for the BTH magneto, better late than never and the problem immediately became obvious. I had it fixed in my mind that the magneto was timed at TDC with the unit providing the advance curve. In fact it is the opposite. The unit is timed at the engine's full advance position (36° for a MAC) and the unit retards the ignition for starting and low engine speeds. This is where the fun began because unlike the mechanical ATDs this unit has not built in extractor. So I had to make one which took me a couple of hours. I doubt I will ever need it again but at least I now have one in the toolkit. With the pinion off, setting the correct timing was very quick. You set the engine to the correct advance, turn the magneto until a rod can be inserted to lock it to optimum

position, the fit and tighten the pinion. Very handily the previous owner had painted the timing marks on the dynamo pulley. The rod stops the magneto and the engine moving which is always a problem with the mechanical ATDS. With the timing cover back in place I was able to try the engine. What a difference. Starting is as good as with the Thorspark coil ignition and only needs choke no tickling. The tickover good and got even better when I reversed what I had done yesterday to compensate for the incorrect timing.

On the road the bike was far more lively and pulled top gear easily. Previous runs had tended to support the PO's opinion that the bike was overgeared. In fact it was severely down on power, almost certainly due to incorrect ignition timing. The hunting at low speeds and light throttle settings has also gone as has the tendency to die when put onto the side stand. Not the prettiest unit as you can see in the picture but it has transformed the bike and it now pulls top gear up my test hill with ease and throttle in hand.



As you may also see in the picture I have now removed the wiring, switch and coil associated with the Thorspark unit. They are put away safely just in case, but for now I am happy to have sparks that do not depend on a battery and a Miller dynamo to charge it.



Friday 18th March 2022

On the MAC front I think we are close to diagnosing the cause of the tickover problem. I did check the plug and a

picture is below. A little rich but not a cause of immediate concern. So I removed the timing cover and took a photograph of the ATD unit which I sent to Wayne C. Though a quick glance suggests it is a BTH unit, in fact it is a special high quality item manufactured by a company called Manser a few years ago. The pinion is aluminium rather than fibre is one obvious clue. Wayne apparently bought a batch of them and supplied one to the MAC's previous owner. The first thing I noticed was that the unit did not seem to have any spring loading to return to the retarded position. It just stayed wherever you moved it. It turns out that some of the units were later diagnosed as tending to jam when tightened. Clearly mine has that fault so the timing is something of a lottery and is almost certainly responsible for both the variable tickover and the hunting at slow speeds on light throttle. Not sure that it explains the fact that the engine dies when on the side stand though but one step at a time. What I don't yet know is how to cure the problem. Wayne is doing some checking and will get back to me tomorrow.



So far as the TS125 Sport is concerned, I have completed its makeover and the re-fitting of 6v dynamo electrics. Most of it went well except that I could not get the charge light working. Had to resort to the wiring diagram and the fault was soon found. Somewhere along the line a couple of wires had been transposed. This did not cause an issue with the Powerdynamo system so I had never noticed. Anyway all is now correct and the charge light not only works but goes out as soon as the engine is running.

I also stripped the carb down to see if I could discover why it would only run on the choke. The cause was easy enough to identify but a bit puzzling. The needle was covered in something green and sticky which was quite hard to remove. I checked the needle jet and the other jets but they did not seem to be affected and the float bowl was clean. Once put back together the bike started easily and runs happily with the choke off. Very odd but

thinking back I have had similar problems with this bike in the past which have mostly been cured by adjusting the needle position. It has only done 40 miles in two years so quite likely it's old fuel that is at the root of the problem. I have drained the tank (which was nearly empty anyway) and put in a gallon of fresh. The bike is now advertised on Car&Classic. We shall see what if any interest it attracts – must say it looks pretty good.



Thursday 17th March 2022

It took Andrew a couple of days to make up his mind but in the end he decided not to have the TS125 Sport back. We now fall back on the alternate part of the agreement which is to sell the bike and split any profit that might arise – taking due note of what I had spent on it in the interim. A group of us have been operating this way for some time and it must work as we are still friends. The Sport is now on the bike lift in the workshop make sure it is presentable and in good order. I am also part way through converting it back to 6v dynamo electrics for primarily mercenary reasons. The Powerdynamo system was only fitted last year at a cost £230 and doubtless they are even more now if I wanted to buy one for the yellow TS125. Frankly I doubt that leaving it fitted will have much if any effect on the price someone is prepared to pay for the bike as long as it is running properly. Indeed many prefer bikes to be as standard and original as possible. The bits needed to convert it back to 6v are on the shelf so no cost to me apart from a bit of time. The Powerdynamo system can go back into stock either to provide spares for the Supa5 or to be fitted to the yellow TS125.

I rode the MAC to the VMCC wandering at Ashley today, only about 5 miles. It smoked a bit when I started it so there is still some wet sumping but it did start easily enough (well 3rd kick) using just the choke. Lowering the fuel level has improved the reliability of the tickover quite a lot but it does still die eventually and almost immediately if leaned to the left. It is also a bit hesitant when riding at a steady speed. Clearly something is still not right so further investigation needed; just realised that I forgot to check the plug which might give me a clue. I am not sure whether to switch attention to the ATD or remain focussed on the carburetion. If the latter I will have to remove the seat and tank to get at the carb.

Two other things I noticed today which need attention. Firstly the saddle is a bit wobbly, might just need adjusting or could be a worn pivot. Secondly, and more worrying, the handlebars are angled to the right when the bike is running straight ahead. One good thing is that the front brake no longer squeals when lightly applied so that is something fixed. As the man said 'Your tools will never go rusty when you own a Velo'.

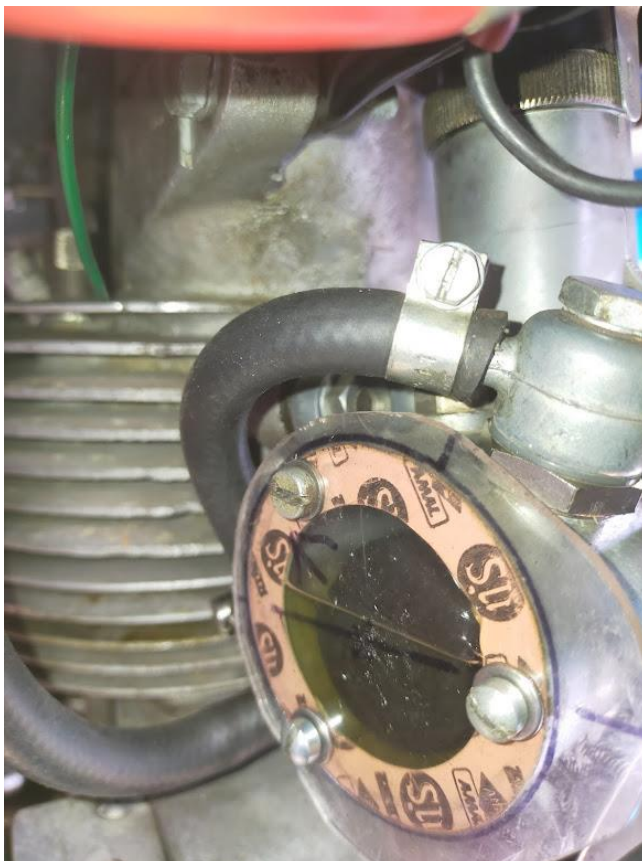
Tuesday 15th March 2022

Over the weekend I reviewed the bikes and concluded that the TS125 Sport was the one to go. Andrew Long asked for first refusal but if he decides against it then I'll tidy it up and put it on eBay or suchlike.

The 276 carb arrived back from Bill Harley on Friday, top job once again. I was tempted to fit it straight away but decided in the end to persist with sorting the Monobloc first. I made up a Perspex cover for the float chamber so that I could see the fuel level. My suspicion had been that this was too low but as the picture below shows, in fact it was far too high. It should be about the level of the black line. After a chat with Burlen Fuel Systems technical department the suggestion was to remove the fibre washer under the fuel intake (which also doubles as the cut-off seat).



This was successful and the fuel level is now pretty much at the correct level. The parallax of the second photo makes it look high. But with the bike level and looking directly at it, the fuel level is spot on the centre point of the line.



I wish I could say that this has cured the problem. Certainly the starting is improved and the tickover is better, but it still tends to slow down and die after a while, just not so quickly possibly. So the problem may not be wholly to do with the carburettor and it was this possibility that made me decide not to fit the 276 carb just yet.

Two people have suggested I look at the automatic timing device (ATD). As the name implies this automatically adjusts the ignition timing dependant on engine speed. The advance is controlled by centrifugal weights with springs to pull them back to the retarded position.

Engines run faster even at a set throttle opening if the ignition is advanced and it may be that the ATD is slow to retard due to friction, damage or weak springs. Certainly worth investigating because eventually I plan remove the Thorspark coil ignition system and convert it back to a Lucas magneto. The ATD would need sorting for this anyway.

Monday 7th March 2022

I did a little work on the MZ, fitted a clock and a top box for the carrier. It's a posh QD type Givi and possibly a bit too big but they are useful things to have.

I also investigated the squeal/creak from the MAC front brake. I have now perfected a quick and easy way of jacking up the front end which helps. I think I have cured the problem. By experimenting, I found that the squeal went away as I slackened the wheel spindle nut. I also noticed that the brake plate moved a little as the wheel rotated with the brake lightly applied. By experimentation with spindle orientation, centering the spindle and wheel nut tightness I arrived at a position where everything worked with no squeak. My guess is that the spindle is slightly bent and I have now got it to a position where the effect of this is factored out. Still need to try it on the road but if the squeal is cured then I just have to remember this procedure whenever the wheel is removed. Old bikes have their quirks.

Now to tackle the erratic tickover. Never a dull moment with an old bike.

Saturday 5th March 2022

Well partial success. I rode the bike to my model engineering club meeting today about 15 miles in total. It started easily and the oil return started very quickly suggesting that the filter chamber was still substantially full. For obvious reasons there is still a small amount of oil above the top of the tube which can still flow back to the sump. There was a little smoke at start up but this soon cleared and this quickly cleared. Nothing like the clouds that used to emerge. The oil in the tank was warm when I got back suggesting it is circulating ok. So perhaps I can put that issue to bed.

However, my attention to the front wheel was less successful. The brake is fine if used hard but at lighter applications particularly when going slow or stopping there is still a noise, more a squealing or creaking than a grinding now I have listened more carefully. Not sure how to proceed with this as yet.

The tickover or rather lack of at times was still an issue. My attempt to check the fuel level did not work so no wiser about that. You can only make it more reliable by having it set higher than I am comfortable with. This is an old fashioned long stroke engine with heavy flywheels, it should plonk plonk plonk steadily. My Viper does and that is a much sportier setup. The low speed running in higher gears is also a little unsteady with a slight hesitation



at times. Whilst it was hot I did tune the carb and seemed to achieve a better setup though still a little faster than I would like and leaning to the left still causes it to fail. Looks like a tank off job to get at the carb properly – b*****r.

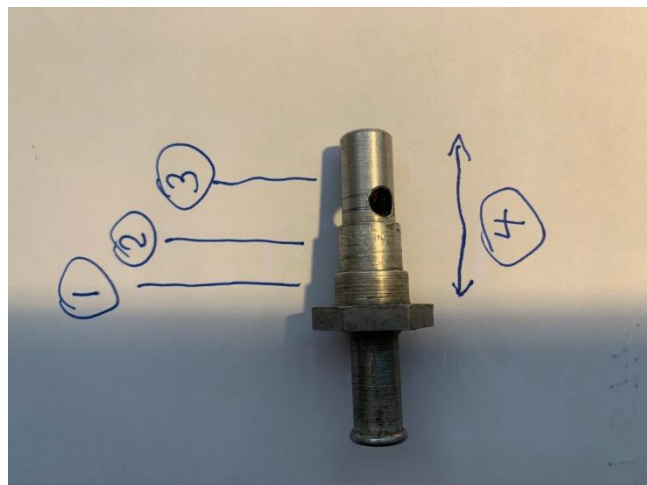
I did achieve one success however, the rear brake lever is now set to a more comfortable position. Not adjustable as originally intended but adequate. Wondering now if I can adjust the gear lever as this is also set a bit high for comfort. I suspect not due to its odd design pivoting on an extension to the engine mounting bolt. The pre-war design was clumsier in appearance but was fully adjustable.

Flushed with enthusiasm and because I was already dressed in full riding gear I took the newly acquired TS125 for a test ride. Preparation consisted of putting in a gallon of premix and checking the tyre pressures – both fine. It absolutely flew round the test route and is pretty much as quick as the MAC even up hill. Nothing needed doing, what a contrast. Made me remember why I love MZs and why I always admired this particular bike.

Friday 4th March 2022

Things have progressed on the wet sumping front though not quite as quickly or easily as I had hoped. If you look at the picture of the filter assembly below you can see that the adapter is the same diameter from the hexagon base past the cross drilling to the point

where the long stud fits. I had assumed that the tube would have a double diameter to allow tight fitting to the base but a passageway for the oil up the tube from the cross drilling. Wrong – The tube supplied by Groves is parallel and the internal diameter is about 10.5mm whereas the adapter is about 12.5mm. A kind member of the Velocette forum provided a picture of his adapter and it has a double step. As can be seen in the picture he kindly



provided. Using this as a guide I machined my adapter in the lathe and it now looks just like that. In my enthusiasm I forgot to take a picture and the filter assembly is now fitted to the bike. Seems to be working ok as the oil is circulating and there are no leaks. The acid test will be tomorrow morning when hopefully wet sumping will prove be a thing of the past. The Velocette forum jury is still out on whether my adapter was home made by a previous owner or an early version which did not include provision for the anti drain tube. One thing for sure this bike has always suffered from drainage from the filter chamber. Wonder why no one dealt with it before.

While in the workshop I decided to investigate the grinding noise from the front brake. I managed to get the front wheel lifted by using the scissor bike lift I bought for the same job

on my other bikes I have owned with no centre stand – mostly trail bikes. Needed a bit of thought as there is not much ground clearance with the MAC compared to a trail bike but got there in the end. With the wheel lifted I was able to spin it freely. No nasty noises and no play in the bearings – phew. However, when I applied the brake it grabbed violently; not something I had noticed when riding it. Anyway it came out easily enough and to start with I could see nothing obvious wrong. The linings are clearly new and still bedding in though they are already a good fit to the drum. They have been chamfered front and back and the surface of the drum is perfect with no sign of rust which is often a cause of grabbing until it rubs off. The only thing I did notice was a lot of dust came off the linings when I cleaned them. Not unusual and part of the bedding in process. Anyway I put it all back together and tested it out. Grabbing now gone and no other unpleasant noises were evident. Hopefully the grinding noise will also be gone when I road test it tomorrow.

Wednesday 2nd March 2022

Investigations into the wet sumping have now established that it is draining from the oil filter chamber not via the anti wet sumping valve on the feed side. When I changed the oil filter I failed to notice that an alloy tube that is supposed to prevent drainage was missing. The photo shows the bits of the filter assembly when I dismantled it today. The tube fits over the stud to just below the top of the filter. Not the best of designs as it is not always a tight fit and can be inadvertently removed with the older type of felt filter. I suspect that is what happened to mine but how long ago is anyone's guess. Fortunately the correct part is listed on the Groves website and I ordered one today.



This does not stop the bike being used, it just makes it hard to start because of the excess oil in the crankcase and it smokes heavily until the excess oil is pumped back into the oil tank. Some of it goes through the engine breather in the drive side main shaft. Eventually the primary chaincase overfills and it then dumps on the garage floor. HOepfull this will shortly be a thing of the past.

I have actually managed a 5 mile ride round the village and was very pleased with how the bike went. Gearbox is quiet in all gears and the change is silky smooth, much better than the Viper. Clutch works fine as well no slip or grab and quite light in action. Just like a well sorted clutch is supposed to be. Brakes are very good though there is a sort of grinding noise from the front when lightly applied. Will have to investigate once I have figured out a way to remove the front wheel – it has no centre stand, just a side stand and a rear wheel stand.

Three other things on my bucket list – none urgent:

- Find a way to adjust the rear brake pedal. It's a bit high for comfort.

- Find out why the tickover slowly dies, especially if the bike leans to the left. It is fitted with a brand new Monobloc so hopefully it is just an adjustment issue.

- Convert it back to magneto ignition so it is not dependant on the battery for sparks.

Tuesday 1st March 2022

First of the day was to tax the Yellow TS125. Not ridden it yet as it is blocked in by the 6 other bikes now park in the garage – maybe tomorrow. Having checked the gearbox oil level (ok) the chaincase oil (probably too much) and the tyre pressures (ok), I was able to take the MAC for its first outing. Very happy with the way it went but there were a few noteworthy points. The front brake at times makes a grating noise if applied lightly. It stops well so I doubt it is anything serious but I will need to look at it if only for peace of mind. First though I have to figure out how to get the front wheel out on a bike with no centre stand.

The gearbox is an absolute delight, silky smooth changes and no whining or other worrying noises. Likewise the clutch operates smoothly, no slip or drag. My 4 mile test route did not allow much over 45-50 but it did show that the motor likes to rev rather than slog. Top gear felt a bit high (something the PO also thought) so I will check the number teeth on the gearbox sprocket at some point – not critical or urgent, just out of interest.

The main thing needing attention is the starting particularly from cold. In theory it should be a doddle, new Monobloc carb and the Thorspark coil ignition. The bike was still wet sumping overnight and this makes it difficult to spin over tdc. Often it spits back which may indicate either the timing is a bit advanced or the ATD is not working properly. I am hoping that taking it for a ride today and getting the oil warm may help the anti-sump valve to work properly. The other possibility is that the wet sumping is not from the valve but drainage from the oil filter chamber. There is another factor and that is the tickover, it is inclined to slow down and stop after a while more so if the bike is leaned to the left. Immediate hot starting is fine but if left even for a few minutes it likes the choke to get going again. Suggests to me that the carb settings need checking as the first step. But again it's not urgent, the bike can be ridden safely enough and that may be the sensible thing to do.

I made my first cosmetic change to the MAC by fitting a clock – one of the most useful instruments on a bike.

Monday 28th February 2022

Sunday at the bike show was tiring but it went well. Despite our somewhat obscure location and almost total lack of signage, we did get a steady stream of visitors. Two of the bikes on our stand (but sadly not mine) got awards. Kevin Philips freshly restored YDS7 Yamaha got 2nd in the Japanese Class and a guy from Lincolnshire (friend of Gary Sleeman) won the best special trophy for a BSA gold star lookalike using a Jawa engine. Did look very nice I must admit. We also had a visit by Phil Read, former World Champion motorcycle racer. He was impressed with the Honda 750/4 Phil Read Replica you can see behind my bikes and signed the tank.



First job today was to unload the van and put the bikes away. I managed to squeeze them both into the garage but with 7 bikes parked there is no spare space. The Velo remains in the workshop for now.

Speaking of which, I have done a couple of jobs on it today. First was an engine oil change. These later MAC's have an oil filter chamber built into the oil tank similar in design to the swinging arm models. When I checked this instead of the felt filter originally specified I found a modern paper element filter which turned out to be identical to a boxer twin BMW filter. This was handy as I have spares of those in stock. The only thing not quite right was the absence of a spacer to make sure the top cover clamped tightly against the filter. Otherwise, and possibly in this case the oil can leak round the sides rather than be pushed from the inside. I made up a spacer when I changed the filter. I did panic a bit when it took forever for the oil to fill the filter chamber and then exit back into the tank. But all is now well.

The other job was to fit a warning light to show the ignition switch was turned on. A couple of times I nearly forgot and it would soon flatten the battery and possibly damage the coil or the transducer. Easy enough job, I cut the wire from switch to the Thorspark unit and put in connectors to take a wire to a warning light on the top yoke. If it is to be a permanent ignition solution, I might put the warning light in the headlight to make it look neater. For the moment at least I have a visual reminder I have left the ignition switched on. Rather surprised this is not a standard feature of the wiring loom for a Thorspark unit but then it does not include a fuse either; all a bit mickey mouse.

At the show I bought a 6v BFP headlight bulb from Paul Goff. Maybe I'll fit that tomorrow. Normally I use these to give the 6v dynamo's an easier life but this one seems to cope very

well even with the demands of ignition and full headlight. On the other hand the 30w main beam is a bit like a glowworm.

Saturday 26th February 2022

Took the Viper and the K12 to the Bath & West Showground yesterday afternoon and they are now on display on the VMCC stand at the Bristol Bike Show. A couple of the bikes are not arriving until Saturday morning and the stand is not properly laid out yet so I decided not to take a picture until I go back on Sunday. I did have a walk round and I was a bit disappointed with the scope compared to the last time we attended (about 5 years ago). It is a much smaller event. Previously the display area has been significantly expanded by use of marquees linking several of the B&W halls. Normally the autojumble and trade stands are separate, mostly in the Edmund Rack Hall but that does not seem to be in use at all this year. This proved to be incorrect as on the Sunday the Edmond Rack Hall was full of trade stands. They must have done the occupation from the doors at the other end. A lot of the spaces formerly give over to clubs are now trade stands and there are also a lot of outside trade stands which is something else new. Fortunately the forecast for the weekend is dry and sunny though cold.

I came home with the little beauty shown below. Long story to this which I will relate some other time. It's a 1987 MZ TS125 restored as a TS150 in 2010 by Paul Griffiths and subsequently owned by Ian Young who is an MZ club members living in Berkeley, just down the road from where the MZ Bristol section meets. I will give a fuller appraisal of the bike in due course. Had to start it of course, which it did second kick and sounds very sweet.



Thursday 24th February 2022

Viewed the Velocette MAC today and NHY354 is now safely tucked up in my garage. I'll be doing a full appraisal on the bike in due course. It looks perfect but without doubt I will find things needing attention, even if it's only to fine tune it to my requirements. The keen eyed will noticed the ignition switch under the saddle. The magneto has been converted using something called Thorspark which provides electronic coil ignition fed by battery. Not sure I am keen on relying on Miller dynamo for my sparks though it does seem to work ok. Something to be investigated. The journey was tedious though in fact the traffic was quite light. Cannot believe that I did this 200 mile round trip every day, but then I was 35 years younger and it was a company car. I recalled the bulk of the journey to the end of the M40 and the last mile or so. The 5 miles in between brought back no memories whatsoever so maybe I had chosen a different route. If so studying the map now gave no clue as to which way I went as there is no obvious better way.



Sunday 20th February 2022

Few minor things to report. I rode the R60 to the Thames Head pub near Cirencester on Thursday. All going well but I did have to fill it up and the fuel consumption has improved to 54mpg which is encouraging. On Saturday I went to the VMCC a/j at Shepton Mallet. Fortunately I did not have a big shopping list as I forgot to take my wallet and phone. I had enough coins in my pocket to pay the entry fee so did not notice the lack of my wallet until I was about to pay my entry fee for the Cheddar Trial. I did achieve the major objective of delivering bags of books to a friends who had stands at the show and Bette Barber sold all but two raising £50 for the RNLI. The Bath Classic stall sold another one raising £5 so a good result.

Today the storms subsided enough for me to re-arrange the bike in the garage so that the two going to the show (the Viper and the K28) are now at the front for easy access. Thanks to the new garage roof with its new insulation they have survived the winter very well; just need a clean/polish and the fuel draining. The workshop has been re-arranged so that the bike lift has clear access for these tasks.

I may be acquiring another bike. There was a 1951 rigid Velocette MAC advertised in the latest issue of Fishtail which I am attracted by. I have arranged to view it next Thursday. Its located in Northwood Hills only a few yards from the Safeguard Offices where I worked from

1987-1990. Wonder if I can remember the way – should do as I commuted daily from the house we still live in for over 2 years.

Monday 31st January 2022

Not much to report as all the bikes have sat unused partly due to other priorities and partly due to the very cold weather. However, I did finally order a surefoot sidestand for the R60 which arrived a couple of days ago and is now fitted. They are so much easier to use and secure than the standard sidestand. Well worth the money in my view. The picture also shows something I added as part of the front end rebuild. The bike now has a front mudguard from a later boxer (not sure which model) that came with some other bits from Terry's garage. It had been professionally repainted and lined whereas the original was looking a bit sad. Not sure I really like it now its fitted and I might just get the original one painted and lined. All being well the R60 will get an outing to Derry Hill on Thursday. I have a couple of other little jobs lined up for the R60. The led voltage indicator suggests that the generator is struggling to balance the load with the lights on. Probably nothing to worry about but to help, I have fitted an led rear/stop bulb and ordered an led headlight bulb. I have also found a genuine BMW Voltmeter and clock complete with housings which I hope to fit. First I need to locate, buy or fabricate the mounting brackets which clamp under the fork crown nuts.



Thursday 20th January 2022

We had a wandering to the Fox & Hounds at Acton Turville today. About a 50 miles round trip so an ideal opportunity to give the R60 a run. The ride out was a bit dire as we had a heavy frost overnight and the roads (mostly country lanes, were damp and muddy. I rode very carefully on the assumption that it was a slippery surface and conscious that the front tyre was new and needed running in. No problems encountered but then I doubt I

exceeded 45mph. By the time I came home the roads had dried out a bit and I avoided country lanes as far as possible. I did try balancing the front wheel after installation but it did not seem to have any heavy spots that needed sorting. On the ride back I ran the bike up to 60mph at times and there was no evidence of wheel balance issues. So looks like it's all sorted at last. I am now pondering on treating the bike to a Surefoot sidestand. They are so much easier and safer to use than the standard BMW offering; drawback is they cost well over £100

Friday 14th January 2022

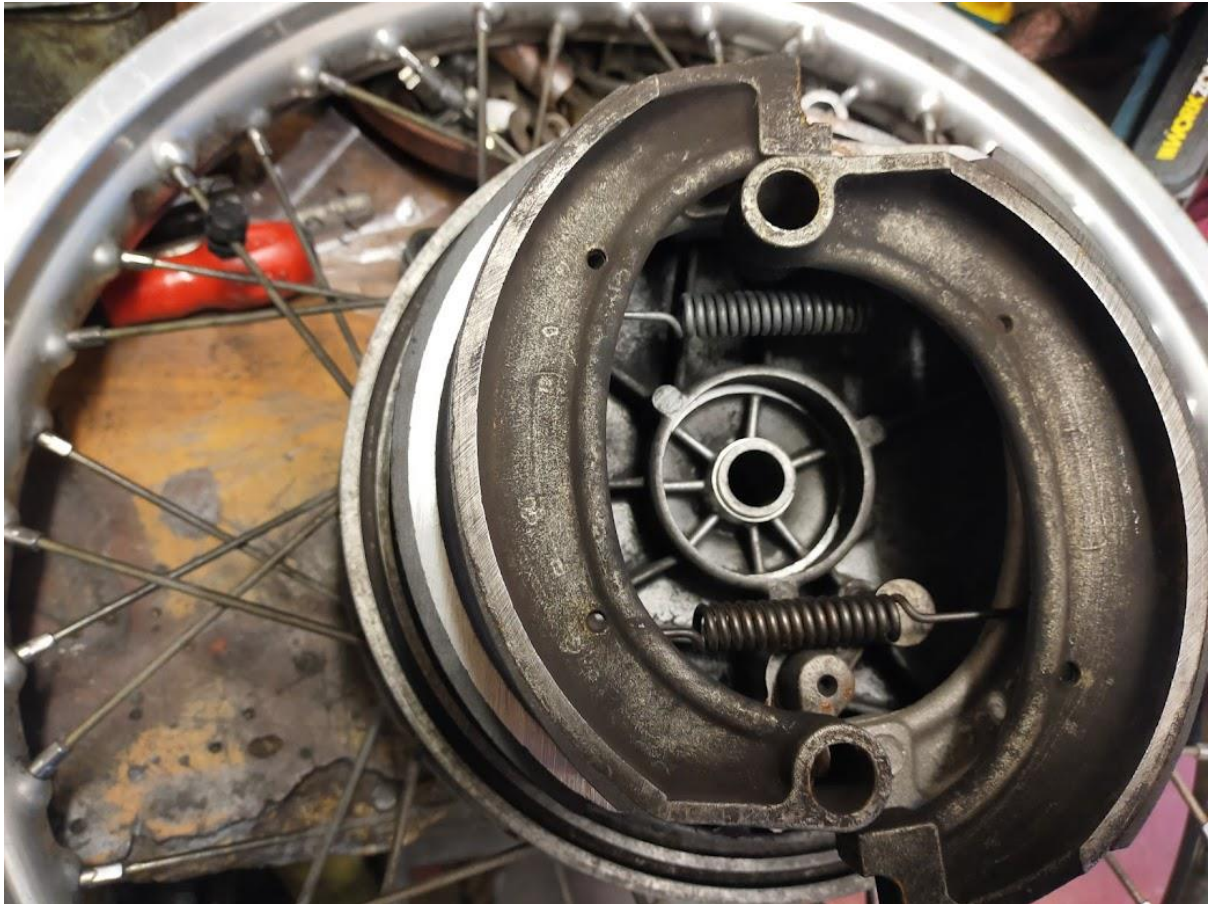
As anticipated the front brake arms are located on splines. This is the picture of the front backplate before I made any changes.



After moving the rear lever closer to the front lever (about 3 splines) the cable was just long enough to be engaged and I could then adjust the brakes according to the manual. The front one has its own adjuster, the rear one is set by adjusting the cable. Everything now back together and working fine. Finally I could get the bike onto its wheels and test both the brake and fork action. Both seem to be working well. The front brake is already good but will improve further as it beds in. The fork action is smooth and no trace of stiction. When depressed the fork now always returns which was not the case before the overhaul. I took the bike for a brief ride and all seems well with no clonking over the traffic calming humps along my road. A longer run will be made when it warms up a bit.

Wednesday 12th January 2022

I rang Friction Services this morning and they said the brake shoes were ready so I drove over to collect them after lunch. I took the picture below to illustrate just how worn the old linings were. The relined shoes are the original BMW parts. You can clearly see that the back shoe is paper thin in the centre; the front shoe about half worn. The original shoes also exhibited as similar wear pattern so it looks like the back shoe does most of the work.



Spent the rest of the afternoon cleaning everything up and fitting the new front tyre. With the wheel back in the forks I discovered the next issue. The front brake cable is nowhere near long enough. This turns out to have two causes. The first – easily remedied was a spacer at the brake lever end to take up slack. However, the cable still would not fit even with the spacer removed. Still pondering on this, but my belief is that Terry moved one of the brake arms, probably the rear one to compensate for the extreme wear in the linings.

I need to check this out but if the arms are fitted on splines (as seems likely) then I should be able to move the lever and create enough slack to fit the cable. A job for another day as the dog needs feeding and her walk.

Sunday 9th January 2022

Rather disappointingly. The shroud grommets from Motobins had not arrived by Saturday's post nor was there any news Friction Services about the brake shoes so it looks like work on the R60 has to be shelved until Monday.

Today was the Bristol MZRC meeting at Ham and since the sun was shining I decided to brave the cold and ride the Himalayan. Part way through the journey I was beginning to wonder if I would ever make it. There was a road closure at Woolley Grange which meant I had to ride through Bradford, not big deal but annoying. Then a huge traffic jam where the A46 crosses the A420. 4 way traffic lights at the roundabout. Even riding round the stopped cars it took 15 minutes to get to the front of the queue as visibility is limited and it double white lines all the way. Then another road closure on the road between Sodbury and Wickwar road due to a horrendous accident. Not an area I know too well so it took me a while to figure out how to get back on route and doubtless I did a few extra miles. Just as well I set out early as I finally made it just after noon. Anyway it was an excellent meeting with a good turnout. I rode back with Richard W who showed me a new route which bypassed the various bottlenecks we had encountered on the way up.

When I got home I found a parcel from Motobins in the letter box. It was correctly addressed and had been sent 24 recorded delivery yet had taken 3 days to get here and the post office don't deliver on a Sunday normally! My suspicion is that it was delivered to the wrong address and a neighbour put it through my door but probably not much I can do about it even though it was doubly annoying. Not only was it late arriving but Motobins had only sent one bottom Grommet. I distinctly told the salesman I needed two of each so why he thought I only needed one is a mystery but in keeping with the rest of this saga.

The good news is that I was able to complete the rebuild of the front forks by using the new bits supplied and re-using the other bottom grommet after a little surgery. There is still some reassembly to do and of course I need the bits from Friction Services but we are getting closer to the finish.

Thursday 6th January 2022 (Twelfth Night)

I rang Motobins first thing and they do have the grommets in stock but they are listed under the electrics section rather than the fork section! Anyway they are now ordered and work will resume when they arrive. This job is turning into a saga.

The VMCC had a wandering to the Westbrook Inn today. As its only about 6-7 miles, I decided I would take the Fanny-B. Nearly changed my mind about going at all as there was a very hard frost last night and sleet was forecast later. Cannot remember the last time I rode this bike, in fact I think it has only been on the road a couple of times since I bought it in 2020. It started easily which was a pleasant surprise but smoked badly. I set off and quickly knocked the choke off at which point the engine died. This cycle repeated itself several times. It would start and run but not well under choke; run nicely for with the choke off for

100 yards then die. I turned round for home and just as we got there it started running better so I resumed my journey and the bike ran happily all the way to the pub.

Same thing happened when I started for home but I then had an inspiration and set the choke (which is essentially a strangler on the air cleaner) partially open. It ran ok like this until it got warm enough to run with the strangler fully open. A lesson learned about this bike and in fairness the temperature was below zero. As far as I could tell there was no significant smoke trail once it warmed up but I'll need to check this later. Quite a pleasant little bike to ride but very slow; 40-45 is as much as it can manage most of the time and less on hills. Glad I took it out though and I must find other reasons to ride it.

Wednesday 5th January 2022

Well I was wrong about the fork rebuild kit, it arrived this morning and both fork legs are now rebuilt and back in the bike. That was when I hit the next snag. I could not get the headlamp shrouds (ears) to fit properly, there was a gap at the top which I had not noticed when I dismantled. I consulted the spares book and watched a Youtube video of a BMW fork rebuild and two things became apparent. Firstly the rubber grommets at the top of the shrouds were missing. These have lips and would have filled the gap nicely. Secondly, the indicator brackets were fitted on top of the bottom rubber grommet so that the bottom of the shroud was not located positively. I could not find these items listed on the Motobins web site so will need to them tomorrow.

Tuesday 4th January 2022

Hard to believe but the front brake shoe linings had worn out in under 30k miles. They were replaced at 29k and the bike has now done 55k. I found the previous brake shoes in the spares I inherited from Terry so they had definitely been replaced. For some reason one shoe wears much more than the other and I did briefly consider using the best shoes from each set but common sense triumphed in the end. Took the whole wheel assembly to Friction Services in Keynsham and they will bond on new linings. Hopefully the job will be done by end of week.

I got an email about the new tyre which should be delivered on Wednesday. No news yet from Motobins about the fork rebuild kit. This is actually the most important element and will probably be the last to arrive.

I did tackle one other minor job. I had noticed that the rear brake light was permanently on. Investigation traced the problem to the front brake light switch. I don't have a spare so for now I have disconnected it. Not sure if it's a legal requirement for a bike of this age but I will have to get it fixed at some point. While I was delving into the headlamp wiring, I fitted an led voltage indicator just to give confidence that the R60 charging system is working ok. Not yet run the engine to prove it.

Monday 3rd January 2022

The RH fork slider has cleaned up really well. I had an inspiration and used a mixture of Solvol Autosol chrome cleaner with a little thin oil and just twiddled the slider up and down, round and round. Within a few minutes it was moving easily and once I had removed the polishing gloop, the action was perfect. All the other bits cleaned up nicely as well.

In comparison the LH leg was a doddle. Though the top and bottom rebound bushes had also disintegrated the bits had all fallen to the bottom and the moving parts were all clean and bright. All the parts for this leg are now cleaned up as well. I wish now that I had ordered the fork rebuild kit before starting the job but that is the wisdom of hindsight. I had no idea what I was going to find inside the forks and what other bits I might need. In any event Motobins were closed from 24th December-3rd January 2022. I'll be on the phone to them tomorrow. I have also ordered a new Avon Roadrider front tyre to match the one I recently replaced on the rear. The front probably has another 6-700 miles of life but easier to do the job while the wheel is already out. With luck the bike will be back on the road in a week or so.

I may have been optimistic. I had a spare ½ hour so decided to get the old tyre off the front wheel, which is partly achieved. In the process, I had a look at the brake shoes which are very badly worn. One shoe is possibly no more than 1mm thick in places, the other not much better. Added to which there is quite a pronounced lip to the drum indicating it is quite badly worn. Some research needed.

Sunday 2nd January 2022

The R60 front end strip down was started today and is ongoing. The part I was most worried about was getting at the nuts holding the handlebar clamps but in practise this was not that bad. However getting the nuts and washers back in place is likely to be more of a challenge. It took me a while to get the front brake cable withdrawn only to discover that the retaining nipples are slotted and I could simply have unhooked them. Not mentioned in any of the manuals or videos I looked at!

So far both forks have their top nuts undone so that I could pull the fork springs. A quick check identified that the LH slider moves freely on its stanchion. Probably not a much wrong with it so I have left this for the time being. The RH fork leg however was very stiff and is clearly the primary culprit. To get the complete leg out I had to make up a 30mm nylon drift as it was very tight in the yokes. I suspect it's the grip of the rubber washers that mount the headlamp ears. I hope that once lubricated, they will be easier to replace.

Once apart the amount of muck in the fork leg was unbelievable and a lot of corrosion was evident on the lower end of the fork spring and the bottom of the damper rod. Both the top and bottom rebound bushes were missing, I imagine their residue accounted for the muck I

found. A quick check over and clean up of the damper assembly suggests that it can be reused as the worn/missing bits are included in the fork rebuild kits.

I have yet to check the stanchion for runout but my gut feeling is it will be within limits and there is no sign of undue wear on the chrome. The fork slider is another matter however. One of the bolts that retain the mudguard bracket cum fork brace was solid due to corrosion. It took me most of the afternoon to get it out working through using the vice as a press, later combined with heat until eventually I had to hacksaw a slot that allowed lubricant to get a better access. Even then it took more heat and the press before it finally came out – phew.

I had to do this job first because if I could not get the bolt out then the leg was scrap anyway, but at least that problem is now behind me. Cleaning the inside of the slider and did not help overly much as it was still very stiff on the stanchion. Looking down the tube it looks as though the assorted rubbish has scored internal the bearing surface of the slider. I wrapped a sheet of fine wet/dry round a mandrel and tried cleaning it up. This combined with some oil has improved matters a little and I was able to get the slider all the way up the stanchion. Stiffer than I want it to be but at least I think it proves the stanchion is not out of true. My plan is to make up a better polishing mop which I can mount on a long rod and then use the electric drill to clean up the slider. I don't think it needs much and with luck I will be able to recover it especially as Motorworks want over £100 for a 2nd hand leg!

Saturday 1st January 2022

Happy New Year; just hope it's better than 2021 but not going to tempt providence by saying it could not be much worse.

I could not decide whether to ride to Miserden for the Cotswold Section meeting or to Bitton for the Bristol Section meeting so in the end I did both. Miserden first which was packed but mostly with folks I did not know and certainly no one from the WW section was in evidence. After a brief chat with the few I did know, I jumped on the bike and wended my way to Bitton. Not by the most direct route as I took a wrong turn in Tetbury but I was there by just after 1pm. I only noticed Martin Hirst from the WW section but there were lots of others I did know. It was good to catch up with people, some not seen for near two years due to Covid. The bike ran faultlessly and I was home by 3pm having covered near 100 miles. While it was still hot I balanced the carbs to an even tickover. Though it had seemed to run ok, the LH carb was barely working at tickover but now it runs evenly on both sides so should be even better.

The front forks seemed a little better whilst riding. The mysterious clonk was only noted a couple of times despite some less than perfect road surfaces but when I got home they still stick on full depression so they will have to be stripped.

Wednesday 29th December 2021

Long time since I updated the blogg as in truth not a lot has been happening on the bike front. I did manage a trip to Ham for the MZRC meeting in early December riding the Himalayan and trip to a VMCC breakfast meet at Kemble just before Christmas but that is all the riding I have done.

The BMW finally made it onto the bike lift and I have done most of the servicing and fitted a new rear tyre. I have done one brief test ride to make sure it runs but ok though it still needs a longer run to get it well warmed up before tuning and balance the carbs. Hopefully this will get done on my return home after the New Years Day run.

One other thing I have not done is to sort out the front forks. When I first got the bike I noticed a clonk if the road was bumpy though it was difficult to pin down and not serious enough to stop me riding the bike. Terry mentioned this and thought it might be a broken fork spring but I now suspect the problem lies elsewhere. One worrying factor is 'stiction' in the fork action. Lovely word I found on the internet when researching BMW fork issues. It neatly describes the problem which is the forks not moving smoothly and tending to stick rather than return to rest position. The action is fairly smooth for the mid range of movement but tends to stick or jam at the extremities. Apparently early BMW telescopic forks are prone to this type of issue. The only solution is to fully strip them, find the fault(s) and make the repairs. Once you have the fork legs out of the frame they don't look that complicated and a refurbishment kit is available. However, getting them out looks fiddly especially removing the handlebars. I am just hoping that the problem is not bent or otherwise damaged stanchion tubes as these are extremely expensive. The strip down is scheduled to start on 2nd January; in part because I will need to remove the tank and it's full at present so very heavy.

Thursday 18th November 2021

On 12th November I rode the Himalayan to Salisbury to have the brake callipers changed under recall. Kevin Philips came with me and we then rode the rest of the Autumn Leaves route into the New Forest to check it out. This has 5 fords and I was a bit concerned about the state of them following heavy rain the previous week but they were all fine and the roads were surprisingly clear of leaves. We had lunch at the Fighting Cocks and were home by 3pm. On Sunday I rode it to Ham for the MZRC monthly meeting and AGM. Biggest turnout I have seen for a lot time and a good natter.

Today I should have been leading the Autumn leaves run but Mrs F has been very poorly for the last couple of days so I could not leave her for such a long period. Kevin kindly led the run, just hope it all went well.

I don't have any plans for any serious riding for the foreseeable future, so today I ordered the bits to service the BMW including a new rear tyre. Although doing the job will have to

wait until the bike lift is clear of the steam loco. Given how heavy it is that will need some help.

Tuesday 2nd November 2021

Well the ETZ251 has been sold. It was bought by Rob Holusza for a friend in Poland and was collected on Saturday. I also decided to sell the 4spd TS250 and put an advert on Car&Classic on Sunday. That went to a new home today so that's 3 bikes disposed of within 10 days – must be a record. The logic was simple, I wanted the space, I wanted the money and I wanted to remove the temptation to tinker with them. There are still 8 other bikes in the garage and two of them The BMW and the Honda are scheduled for attention during the winter. The major project this winter is to be a 5" gauge steam loco. It's being picked up on Friday and the story will continue in the Railway Blogg.



Thursday 21st October 2021

Rob Holusza picked up the Red Beast on Tuesday evening and brought with him what looked initially like a rather sad exhaust system for a 251. Anyway it cleaned up surprisingly well and once the pipe had been sprayed with HT exhaust paint it looked quite good. Yesterday I fitted it so the bike is now basically complete. Much to my surprise the engine started and

sounded fine and the generator light went out so it is presumably charging ok. Even better, the V5c arrived from DVLA. Now to decide what to do with it.



Today I reorganised the sheds to create space to move bikes presently stored in the van of the workshop as I hope to have loco project shortly. I also took a ride to Codrington for the VMCC wandering to the Wishing Well. Good turnout and warm dry weather made it an enjoyable trip. Fingers crossed I will be able to do the Forest of Dean run on Sunday.

Monday 18th October 2021

Having got the ETZ251 sorted, all that stands in the way of selling it is receiving the V5c I requested from the DVLA at the end of September. So today I turned my attention to the next victim of my clearout, the 4spd TS250. Not really a lot needed. First task was to refit the its exhaust system which had been loaned to the ETZ251 for a while.

Next task was to remove the modified Vape system I fitted last winter which used a DC cdi and separate coil. Perfectly good system but it will be easier to sell with a standard Vape system and since I had one in stock this is now fitted. To my surprise the bike still has a working battery fitted, all I had to do was connect it up. This established that all the electrical side was working fine. The only thing I could not do was run the engine as I drained the tank last weekend as part of my winterising procedures. For various reasons the bike will not be sold until April next year so plenty of time to fire it up. Quite a tidy bike so

hopefully it will fetch a fair price. However the modified engine using Supa5 crank may affect its value.

One other small job done today. The BMW now has a proper Accumate connector for battery charging which makes life a little easier.

Saturday 16th October 2021

Not a lot achieved this week as much of the early part was taken up with hospice visits. Sadly Terry died on Thursday evening whilst I was at the section meeting – more of which later. I had seen him mid-afternoon and it was clear the end was near. At least his suffering is ended. Unbelievable how quickly it all happened.

On Monday I rode the BMW down to Silton for the VMCC Wessex meeting, a very interesting and thought provoking talk by a gentleman who was born in Zimbabwe and eventually went blind as a results of a mine clearance accident . Very humbling to hear how he coped with such trauma. Bike continues to run well but it only returned 44mpg on the first tankful which was a bit disappointing. I think some attention is needed to the carbs. New needles and needle jets have done wonders to the fuel consumption of previous airheads and Mike's 75/6 was doing near 60mpg.

The Red Beast reached an amazing £310 on eBay; it's being collected on Monday. Yesterday and today was spent working on the ETZ251. The Supa5 engine has been replaced by an ETZ250 motor which originally came with the Red Beast. The Honda wheel has been replaced by an MZ disk brake assembly and the kickstart lever has been replaced. The latter because the one on the engine had been modified for the Red Beast and did not clear the airbox. Some attention was also needed to the wiring as it had been designed around the Powerdynamo system. All now done and the only significant thing missing is an exhaust system as can be seen below. The intention is to put it on eBay as spares or repair to clear some more space in the garage. When it has gone I will turn my attention to the 4spd TS250. I know I have said this before, but I am done with MZ and other motorcycle projects. I want space time and money to spend on a steam loco project. You need to look at my other blogg for more info on that.



Friday 9th October 2021

Went to see Terry on Wednesday and again today, visibly weaker but not giving up yet. I missed Thursday as I thought I had contracted a tummy bug of some sort. However, I found out today I am not the only one feeling under the weather and it seems more likely to be linked to dodgy beer at the dive club meeting on Wednesday evening.

Not much else to report, the Red Beast is attracting some interest on eBay and will sell. I did have the ETZ251 in the Workshop yesterday and have fitted a replacement dipswitch plus a new chain and the chain rubbers so it's now complete and should pass an MoT if I decided to take it. Still needs cosmetics of course – maybe over the winter if I don't sell it first.

Tuesday 5th October 2021

Monday was a black day. Terry Dixons condition worsened over the weekend and the decision was made that he should go into a hospice as soon as it could be arranged. I went to see him in the morning and we said our goodbyes. I did not feel much like doing anything else for the rest of the day. I did post a notice about him on the section WhatsApp group and lots of nice messages were posted – he is a much liked and respected man. Today I

went over to see him at Dorothy House in Winsley, lovely room with stunning views but he is so heavily drugged now he knows little of his surrounding and conversation was difficult. On the plus side he does appear to be comfortable and not in any pain. I don't think it will be long.

To keep my mind off Terry, I decided to winterize some of the bikes. The main issue is to decide what to do about fuel because of the increasing ethanol content. My decision was twofold. The Velo had nearly a full tank of Esso Supreme which was supposed to be ethanol free when I filled it in the Spring. So I brimmed the tank with some more of the same stuff so there was no space for rust to form. The tank has been lined anyway so it should now be safe. The tanks of the 4spd TS250 and the TS125 Sport were totally drained and the fuel was used to brim the Supa5 and the F-B Falcon. There is a bit left over which will do for the ETZ251 when it is being tested. The oil in the premix should help reduce corrosion anyway. The Himalayan is not a problem as it will get used regularly so the fuel does not really get a chance to go stale; it's rated for E10 anyway. The BMW will also get used regularly but I will top it up after every run just to be safe; it is due a run on Thursday. That leaves the K12 and the CB250RS for which I need a couple of cans of Esso Super unleaded to top up the tanks. That should complete the winterizing apart from wrapping the bikes not being used in blankets to reduce condensation. The new lined garage roof should help in that respect. I think it's called displacement activity but it did take my mind off Terry.

Sunday 3rd October 2021

Successful visit to Reg Eyre today. We had a long chat about the K12 and he put me right on use of the hand pump. Seems it works the opposite way to what I thought. We rode together down to the café at Honey Street; Reg on his 1928 350 AJS. It's about 5 miles with a gradual climb to the Alton Barnes White Horse then more steeply downhill to Honey Street. The bike actually went better than I expected. It needed 2nd gear for the last part of the climb then whizzed down the other side reaching a heady 41mph. On the flat it settled to 30-32mph. On the way back I was impressed with the way it climbed the steep hill, holding an easy 27mph all the way up. Followed by a steady 40mph all the way back to Lockeridge. Apart from initial pulling away I never needed 1st gear, so why it performed so much better this time than on the Wessex run is a bit of a mystery. The tickover was also fine now so the adjustments I made seem to have worked. The plug was rather rich so I have dropped the needle to its weakest setting and will give it a test shortly. I have a suspicion that it will need a slightly smaller main jet as well and am hoping to borrow a selection to try.

The bodge to keep 3rd gear also worked as it never lost engagement once, in fact I forgot all about that problem until we got back. Reg could not see any way to adjust the lever to engage the 3rd gear gate either and has suggested an alternative way to cut a new notch based on how he resolved a similar problem on his 1913 Sunbeam. I will look into that in due course but it's no longer a major issue.

The only slight problem was that the tail pipe on the silencer came loose though fortunately, much to Reg's relief it did not fall off completely as he was following me. All fixed when I got back home. Love it, just like the old days having to screw the bikes back together after a run.

Saturday 2nd October 2021

A few things achieved in the past couple of weeks but no time or inclination to maintain the blog until now; it's a very wet Saturday. In no particular order, Mark's ETZ125 engine is now back together, the primary chain arrived on Thursday and it was a good decision as the difference from the original was amazing. Just waiting for him to sort out collection though my son who lives in Shrewsbury (not far from Mark) may be able to take it back if he comes down sooner.

The toothache has long cleared up as has the kidney infection thankfully. My friend Terry is still with us but slowly getting worse, I ring him every day and visit 2-3 times a week, when he is up to it.

Not much achieved on the K12. I checked the plug which had quite a good colour so probab not much wrong with the overall mixture. I have adjusted the carb and the tickover is now satisfactory, but then it was before the Henstridge run so it really needs a decent run to get properly warm. The gearchange issue is an enigma. All the parts appear to be correct but there simply is not enough travel on the selector shaft to allow the lever to engage in it slot on the gate. Attempts to adjust simply resulted in the loss of the other gears. I think this may be a long standing problem as I noticed a piece of rubber tube in the 3rd gear part of the gate. At first I thought it was limiting travel and creating the problem but this was not the case. I now think it was there t create friction and hold the lever engaged so I have replaced it with slightly better design to see if that helps. Tomorrow I am taking it to Reg Eyre's at Lockeridge (about 20 miles away so using the van). Reg is a flat tank guru an happens to own a 1928 350 AJS which shares the same gearbox and change mechanism. With luck we may solve the problem.

Finally yet another review of my bikes has been done sparked off by an advert on eBay for an AWO425 in Bristol which I noticed a couple of days ago. Turns out it is being sold by an MZ club friend, Rob Holuza and was originally owned by Mike Taylor another MZ friend. In the end my heart was overruled by my head and I have decided to give it a miss but to make room I would have had to sell something else. The net result is that I have decided to abandon the Red Beast project and concentrate on finishing the ETZ251 project. The Beast has been stripped of all the parts needed to create a standard 251 and it is now on eBay to see what it will fetch. I included my 4spd TS250 in the review as I don't really like it compared to the Supa5. It has been the subject of a couple of interesting tweaks over the past 18 months so bringing back to standard which I will do over the winter with the intention of selling it in spring 2022.

The AWO425 is shown below and looks quite tasty in the picture but having talked to Mike



Taylor about it at length I decided it was a high risk project. Primarily it is non standard which always limits resale appeal; it has an ETZ250 front end, an electrical of unknown provenance and a broken kickstart shaft just for starters. There are potentially other issues looming. I restored one of these bikes about 10 years ago and I have just read the diary I kept on the project.

Not the easiest bikes to cope with when you are UK based and don't speak German especially after Brexit. Sad because they are quite handsome bikes but I am sure it's the right decision.

This is the Red Beast as it appears on eBay. Seems to be attracting some interest though really I just want the space back so not too fussed what it fetches..



Monday 20th September 2021

Well my jaw is still aching a bit after the extraction but at least I no longer have toothache which has been nagging me for months. Swapped toothache for a backache which started a couple of days ago and turns out to be a kidney infection so now on antibiotics and strong pain killers. Anyway the K12 performed well at Henstridge and we managed the 35 mile course with no serious problems. About 10 turned out for the run and it was great fun though very slow at times. There are a few issues I need to look into; it was prone to dropping out of top gear on the overrun the tickover problem is back and it seems to lack power on the slightest incline. That said I followed the ride organiser back on his mid 30s 250 BSA and was able to keep him in sight most of the time so perhaps its just my expectations. The gear problem was easily if uncomfortably solved by holding the lever in position with my knee.

Friday 17th September 2021

A lot of the week has been spent dealing with Terry's bikes and workshop. The BMW was collected by courier on Tuesday and is now with it's new owner in Scotland. The Velocette has been bought by Matt Young who earlier bought the T100C and the lathe. I delivered the Velo on Thursday in return for help in loading the Sealey bench drill. This is now installed in my garage along with a tool chest that holds all the bike specialist tools made by Terry over the years. Fitting these items in required a days work reconstructing and moving benches to create the space. Worth the effort though as the pictures shows.



What I still have to do is rearrange the spanner hooks behind the drill. I suspect that much of what is currently hung there can be junked – a job for a wet day.

The picture also shows Mark's ETZ125 engine which is hopefully on the last leg of its rebuild saga. Mark sent down the two missing clutch parts, I found a correct circlip for the tach drive in Terry's workshop which is now fitted and with the aid of my Dremmel I made a k/s thrust washer. Just waiting to see if Mark is going for a new primary chain or retaining the old one.

Looking at the picture, I reckon I could put a couple of shelves across the window for some of the smaller lathe tools instead of hiding them in boxes under box under the lathe.

Last job was to load the AJS K12 into the van ready for Sunday's run at Henstridge. Not looking forward to tomorrow as I have an appointment with the dentist for an extraction.

Friday 10th September 2021

The indicator stalks arrived from Andy Pratt on Wednesday and the indicators themselves I bought on eBay arrived on Thursday. As it was a bit wet this afternoon the ETZ251 now has a very smart set of working indicators. The only thing that now needs sorting before it could be sent for MoT is the dipswitch. This is shown as a replaceable item in the spares book so I should be able to find one on eBay. Either that or a complete LH switch assembly – not in a hurry and no doubt something will turn up like all the other bits.

The remaining part to complete Mark's ETZ125 engine also arrived yesterday. Despite specifying it was a late engine the seals sent were for the early type engine so only one was any use. Fortunately I had a new correct seal in stock so not a problem. I tried a test assembly of the primary drive only to find that three other parts were missing. Nothing dramatic but they are essential and special enough to mean that I could not fabricate replacements. I am annoyed that I did not spot this at an earlier stage but the engine came to me already partly dismantled with the primary drive parts in a separate box. Indeed it's not clear if these separate bits even came from this engine originally and it looks as though some bits are duplicated and some may not be from this type of engine. Anyway Mark is now aware and is going to order replacements from TheMZshop. So the engine is back under the bench until they arrive. Will be glad when it's finished.

Good news about Terry's BMW R100 this evening. A guy made an offer for it last Monday but then withdrew it on Tuesday as he had found another bike closer to home – he lives in Scotland. Anyway it seems the local bike was not as described so he has now paid the deposit on the R100. He is arranging a courier to collect the bike so that should be fun. So that's 8 bikes sold in just over 14 days, Just the Velocette to go. I cannot understand why it has not been snapped up already, I would have thought it would be the first to sell as the price is very reasonable.

Tuesday 7th September 2021

As of the morning 7 of Terry's bikes have found new homes, one of them in my garage. I discovered that the Vintage Run at Henstridge I had planned to attend had been moved to 19th September but as luck would have it the Dorset Section had a run from the same venue. So a good excuse to try out the R60 on Sunday. The hi-rise bars seem to do the trick as I had only minimal problems with my shoulder and a very enjoyable 70 mile ride. So OFC93P is now taxed and insured in my name.



Yesterday was very busy. Paul Miles, who I met at Henstridge on Sunday as it happens, collected the Grumph from Melksham. The MZ Supa5 was due to be collected on Monday evening but Terry was very tired and it would have been an awkward time for me so I took the bike to my house in my van. By that time it was loaded up with all the MZ and BMW spares that Terry had accumulated over the years so quite a load. I had also helped Dave Brierley transfer all the Scott spares into his car. By the time I got home about 4pm I was cream crackered but it was a worthwhile exercise.

John Wiltshire came over about 7pm, was delighted with the MZ and rode it home. I retired with a beer. Tomorrow I have to sort through all these spares, shelve those I will have use for and catalogue those I need to rehome. Only the R100 and the Velo to go now in terms of bikes, don't want to think about the contents of the workshop yet.

Saturday 3rd September 2021

There been a flurry of activity this week over the sale of Terrys bikes which has occupied much of my time. As of today four have gone to new homes, one is paid for and being collected on Monday and a price has been agreed for a 6th which should go next week. So overall a very good result. In a sense they were the easy ones. I need a break before getting to grips with the 500 Velo, which should not be hard to sell and the R00/7. The latter was Terry's retirement project intended to see out his riding years which are sadly far less than anticipated. He knows that we will never get anywhere near what it cost to restore and even getting a good price will probably take time. There is also his old faithful BMW R60 but that is in my garage at the moment. I have it on loan to see if the hi-level bars and suchlike he fitted to the bike would solve the problems I found with the riding position of the R75/6 earlier in the Summer. Too early to say as yet since I only collected it last night and rode 5 miles home but I plan to put some serious miles on it over the next few days.

In the interim, some ETZ125 parts came from Mark Edlington during the week and yesterday I was able to start the assembly of his engine. First task was to strip the spare gear cluster and use its 2nd gear in the original cluster. I could just have swapped the cluster's over but gears tend to wear into each other and are best replaced in pairs when possible as otherwise they may whine. This way any whine will be only be in 2nd gear and only transitory. The practise run I did on gearbox assembly paid off and the basic engine is reassembled. I am still waiting for a clutch part which is being ordered from TheMZshop before I can complete the rebuild. Will be nice to get it all back together, I get nervous when engines are lying around in bits for too long; the parts get legs and walk.

Mark also sent me a 2nd hand but very tidy rear light for my ETZ251 project which is now fitted and working. Andy Pratt has found me a set of indicator stalks which are on the way and I have ordered a full set of new indicators which should also be here shortly. That should just about make the bike complete and technically roadworthy. What to do with it next is the big question. All this came about because I wanted a barrel and head for the Red Beast and the ETZ251 as a project has sort of crept up on me. Do I really need another road legal MZ, especially one that is not tax and MoT exempt for another 9 years. Answers on a postcard please.

Sunday 29th August 2021

Not a lot to report this week as Mrs F is still quite poorly, not life threatening but needing a lot of tlc. I did manage a couple of brief visits to Terry D, mainly to makes notes about his 9 bikes and later to take photos of 5 of them. The other 4 either have potential buyers lined up, or are ones he want to hang on to just in case he does improve for a while – though sady this is unlikely. We have sent in 4 adverts to the VMCC Journal due out in October. I may put some on the club website and possibly try some of the one make clubs websites as well. We are concentrating on word of mouth to local VMCC and associated membership for the moment and there is some interest. Ebay or Gumtree will be a last resort.

I have managed some garage time on the ETZ251 and knocked off quite a lot of the missing items, mainly by robbing bits from the Red Beast as a short term solution. It now has an MPH speedo with drive cable ; I also swapped the tacho as well since the tacho fitted did not have the neutral and charge indicator lights. I also swapped over the ignition switches because the Red Beast had a TS type which it does not really need. While I was at it I 'borrowed' the front brake light switch and the horn. Due to other demands on his time, my son does not really need the distraction of an MZ project for the foreseeable future so my conscience is clear and I have time to find replacements.

Anyway though showing no obvious differences, the ETZ251 is now complete electrically apart from indicators, stalks and the rear light. The latter is in the pipeline, I will probably bite the bullet and buy new indicators as 2nd hand ones tend to be rather problematical. I had a look on the OST2RAD website and a full set of indicators and stalks could be had for about 35Euros by they now want 37 Euros postage, before Brexit it was 15 Euros! So looks like sourcing MZ spares from Germany is a thing of the past. Difficult to understand and surely very shortsighted.

Sunday 22nd August 2021

I was hoping to report the results of my first flat tank outing today but it was not to be. All packed and ready to go this morning when my wife had another Labrynthitis attack. Fortunately it was a relatively mild one she is much better. Perhaps I could have gone later but I would have worried about her all day and felt awful if she had a recurrence while I was away. These attacks are coming more frequently and the doctors seem to have no answer – if it continues taking part in all day events may be a thing of the past.

Anyway to keep myself occupied once Mrs F was sorted I decided to strip Mark Edlington's ETZ125 engine. It came apart ok in the end but for some reason my genuine MZ multi engine bridge did not fit the small ETZ cases. The only tapped holes available in the crankcase were threaded 5mm and I had no 5mm bolts anywhere near long enough nor any 5mm studding. I got round it by making some special 5mm studs out of long 6mm bolts , thank goodness for the lathe. The bolts are now in the MZ special tools box. Bit of a puzzle really as I have rebuilt at least 2 ETZ125 engines (though some while ago) and I don't remember having a problem splitting the cases.

It was just as well I stripped the engine as I found that 2nd gear on the layshaft had lost a tooth. Mark is still ordering parts for the rebuild so this is something he will have to add unless he has a spare in stock. Anyway it's all cleaned up ready for the rebuild and the cleaning is always the worst job.



The missing tooth is in the centre gear of the RH cluster. The broken bit was not in the cases so presumably came out when the gearbox oil was changed at some time in the past. It's obviously an old 'injury' so someone may well have ridden it like that for some time. Unless of course that is why it was taken off the road. Up till now I thought it was because of the seized big end and rusted main bearing but those may be subsequent 'injuries' due to bad storage. Always a risk when you strip an engine of unknown provenance.

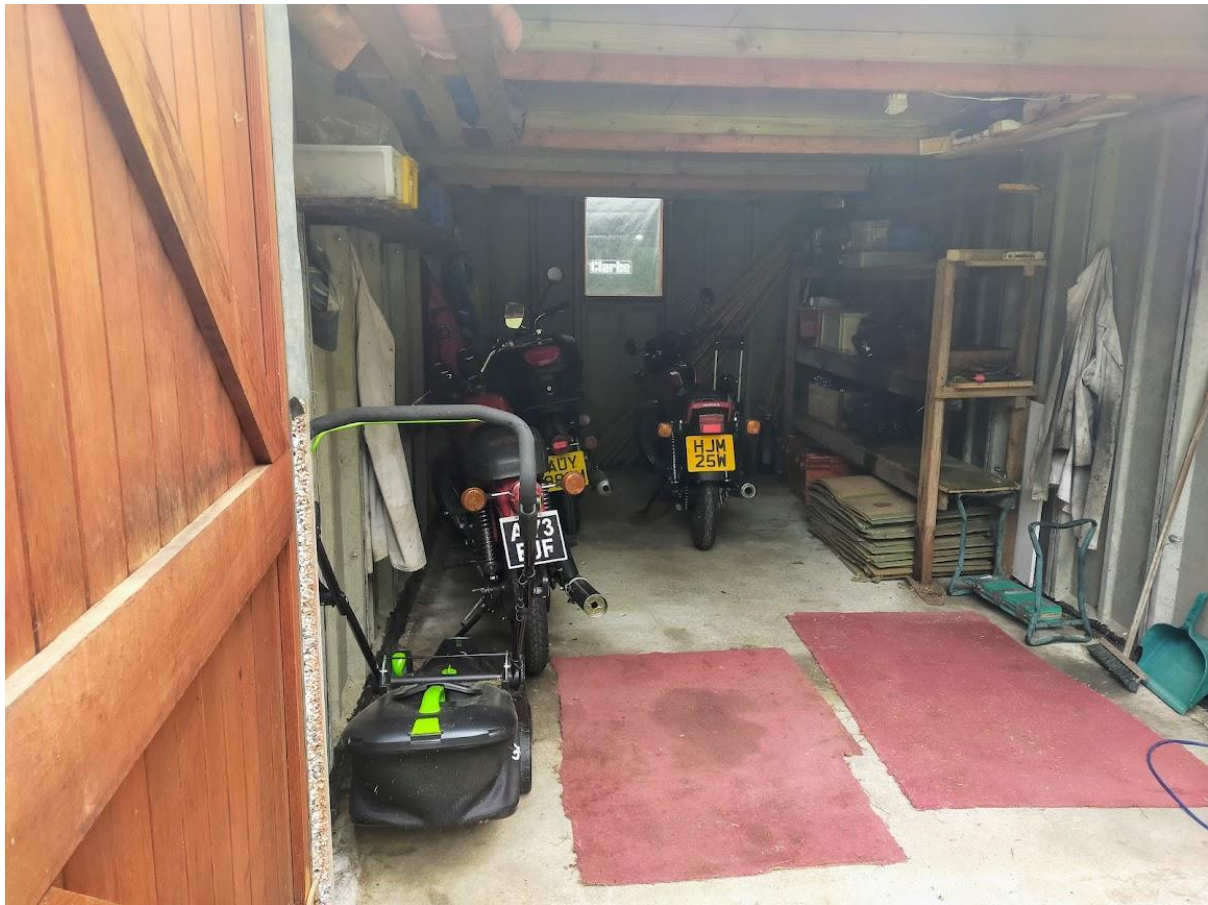
Thursday 19th August 2021

Martin the roofer turned up yesterday and managed to complete the removal and replacement of the garage roof in the one day, on his own. He installed a 2" insulating layer first then the new roof panels on top. The panels are full length so no joins to leak. All in all a good job – not cheap but it had to be done as the garage was awash every time it rained hard and the insulation should help protect the bikes from condensation during the winter.

Today was spent creating some new high level shelving to store bulky but lightweight stuff, then moving all the boxes of spares and suchlike back. Curiously though the shelves were practically full when I emptied the garage they are now half empty even though everything is back. I must have stacked it better though some is probably on my new high level shelving. Only 3 bikes moved back in for now. Bags of space for 2 more or 3 with a bit of squeeze plus the lawn mower. At present two other bikes are in the workshop ready for immediate use (though not always the same two) and two more are in the van ready for Sunday. I also fitted a solar powered led lamp inside the garage to provide light if I visit in

the dark as well as the led security light outside. A good days work.





Not so good news though came with a phone call this evening from my riding buddy Terry Dixon who has been unwell for over 3 months. The specialist has finally diagnosed pancreatic cancer. There is no treatment and life expectancy is well under 12 months. Not really come to terms with it yet and he has asked me to manage the disposal of his bikes on behalf of his sister, no wife or children which I guess is fortunate. Just 12 months after he and I did the same thing for Mike Davis's family.

Monday 16th August 2021

Out of the blue we had a phone call this morning from the company that is scheduled to replace the roof of the Crompton concrete section garage in the garden. Only been waiting since March – delays due to supply problems caused by Covid allegedly. Anyway he announced he was starting work on Wednesday so today has been devoted to finding temporary homes for the bikes and bits. The forecast is for rain so it has to be under cover.

Well as the picture shows the garage is now substantially empty, what is left can be dragged out and covered with a tarpaulin when they start. The bags are piled on the lining that was in the roof to cut down condensation. It's a bit convoluted so I am trying to flatten it out so it could be used to line the walls. The new roof includes proper insulation.



The AJS and the F-B are in the van ready for the Severn Saunter on Sunday. This is an event run by the VMCC Flat Tank Section, more about this later. Two bikes are parked alongside the mowers in a glorified Frame tent in the orchard, One is in a shed with the bicycles and a load of boxes. The other 4 are in the workshop so that is now effectively out of use until the garage is finished. What was on the shelves is dumped wherever else I could find room. I am now shattered, what is worse I have to move it all back again sometime over the next few days.

Sunday 15th August 2021

The original plan for today was to ride the Viper up to the VOC meeting at the gliding club at Nympsfield but it was quite overcast and spotting with rain by mid morning so I aborted the ride. I did however take the Viper over to Melksham to fill up with Super unleaded and then came home the long way. The bike went well no issues at all but my shoulder and neck were beginning to get uncomfortable by the time I got back home. So it is now on the list of bikes for a possible handlebar transplant. Unclear yet if it's possible and how it will affect the appearance and the handling.

While I was kitted up I decided it was time to gird my loins and try a ride on the K12. Checking it over I discovered that the oil tank was dry and a pool of oil under the bike, though not enough to be the entire contents of the tank. I removed the drain bolt from the crankcase and about of pint of clean oil came out. So clean that it's now back in the oil tank

and about half filled it. I had left the oil tap in the on position so presumably it had drained down. However, this was puzzling as it is supposed to need the pumping action to transfer the oil. I must investigate this further.

Anyway with that sorted it was time for a ride. Took me a few kicks to get it going but it finally started with a slowish if lumpy tickover. My first ride was scary but I managed to get to the roundabout with the main road and back without major incident. Everything seemed ok so all I did was tighten the friction screw on the twistgrip so the revs did not die back so quickly when changing gear. Second trip, in the opposite direction was a bit less scary and we came back in fine style. A few observations:

The ride was surprisingly comfortable the front fork action was very smooth and the sprung seat took care of the back end. It sailed over our traffic calming bumps with ease.

The riding position is also very good even though its small and low, I felt very comfortable and the bars sit up very high so should not give my shoulder grief.

The gearbox action was smoother and quieter than I expected even with my lack of skill there were no nasty graunching noises and the clutch action was good.

Despite what Colin Leonard says, it behaves better if you pull away in 1st gear. It will do it in second but needs more revs and slipping the clutch to avoid stalling.

Progress is very pedestrian as to be expected with only about 2 catpower. Not sure how to read my new bicycle speedo correctly but we may have reached 30mph briefly.

Brakes do work eventually but probably just as well it's light and not very quick.

All in all I enjoyed the ride and it has given me the confidence to take it to the Severn Saunter at Berkeley next weekend. The only other modification I felt necessary was to fit the route holder. Roll on 22nd.

Saturday 14th August 2021

I have almost finished the wiring loom for the ETZ251 and most is tested and working. The wires for rear light, indicators and brake light are all in place but need terminating. This is something that will have to wait until I get the rear light unit and a set of indicators.

Likewise the wiring to the horn and the front brake light switch will have to wait until I get the bits. Nothing much more I can do for now so its been put back in the shed. The list of the more crucial bits needed has changed slightly but not actually shrunk, but no hurry:

Indicators plus stems.

Speedo cable

TS ignition Switch

Horn

Front brake light switch and cable.

ETZ250 type dip/horn/indicator switch. Mine is missing the dipper 8626.16

On Friday I drove down to Exeter to visit John and Andrew and to collect the TS125 Sport. A pleasant day but a dreadful journey home as I took a chance on the M5 route which did not pay off.

Today was spent checking over the TS125, investigating the poor running it exhibited whilst in Weymouth last September. Despite not being used for nearly a year the bike started easily and seemed ok but I tripped the carb just in case. Nothing untoward found so I took it for a test ride and it was clear things were not right. It was reluctant to pick up speed unless you opened the throttle really wide when it took off like a scalded cat. Then it stopped completely and I eventually had to push it home, fortunately only a few hundred yards. I put in a new plug and it started immediately so I put back the old plug and it also ran fine on that so no real clue as to problem. I really doubt its electrical as the bike has a new Vape Powerdynamo. A previous TS150 had a similar problem which was cured by raising the needle to richen the mixture so I raised the needle one notch but if anything that made the problem worse but at least this time it did not cut out on me. So I went to the opposite extreme and dropped the needle to its weakest position – and the bike was transformed. It started easily, ticked over more smoothly and generally performed the way it should. I risked a two longer test runs with it still behaving perfectly. Bizarre but at least a positive result. The carb was built from an assortment of bits so I guess it's possible it has the wrong needle. It should be a C3 but there are no decipherable markings so I cannot be sure. My plan is to use it on some longer runs and check the state of the plug. If its still showing too rich then I guess a new needle and possibly needle jet will be needed.

Having sorted the running issues, I was able to investigate fitting a different set of handlebars to give a more armchair riding position than the standard flat bars allowed. The major concern was the lengths of the cables (electrical and Bowden) but in fact they were all fine and the job was quickly accomplished. A further slightly longer test ride confirmed all was well with both engine and the new bars. It remains to be seen if the bars allow longer rides without discomfort to my shoulder.



Tuesday 10th August 2021

On Monday I rode down to Silton (near Zeals) for the Wessex Vet & Vin monthly meeting. Left in sunshine but with 15 minutes the heavens opened but it did eventually stop about 5 miles from Silton and the wind soon dried me out. Pleasant meeting and I found I knew a number of people there including one chap who had phoned me several times about MZs. He now has 3, all non-runners and I suspect we shall meet again. Bette Barber brought the box of carb bits and we found a correct 275 jet block that looked in perfect condition. Bette was happy for me to substitute my 274 JB which was kind. It stayed dry on the way home but within ½ hour of arrival the heavens opened again and it was still raining when I went to bed. I rode the Supa5 with no issues and to my surprise it attracted quite a lot of interest.

Today I set aside for more tinkering with the ETZ251 project. The aim was to 'borrow' the complete exhaust system from the 4spd TS250 which is currently tucked away in a shed with no plans for usage. In fact I will probably sell it once the Supa5 becomes historic in April 2022. No real problems removing the system or in fitting it to the ETZ. Not entirely sure I fitted the top of the rear strut correctly but it all seems to work for now. I need to do some research on this. With the exhaust fitted, I put petrol in the tank and within a few kicks the bike was running. Engine sounds very quiet mechanically, surprisingly so given there was no oil in the gearbox – quickly rectified. It revved fine but needed choke and would not idle

properly almost certainly caused by the missing airbox rubber, which also caused a lot of intake noise. Thanks to Mark E, this will not be a problem for much longer.



It is looking more and more like a usable motorcycle and the next stage is to make up a wiring loom. I had a whizzo idea yesterday about using a TS type ignition switch so that I could wire up the ignition kill via the 'position 5' option suggested in the Powerdynamo instructions. Then I found all my spare ign switches were the ETZ type as already fitted so I'll have to think of another solution for now. Second favourite method is to use the headlamp flasher button. Anyway that's a job for another day, the sun is shining and the grass needs cutting.

Sunday 8th August 2021

Three rides on 3 different bikes in 4 days. Today it was the run of the Supa5 for a run up to Ham for the Bristol MZRC monthly meeting. Sadly when we got there the pub was closed due a member of staf contracting Covid. However, our leader quickly found an alternative and we finished up at a pub called the Salmon just the other side of Berkely. Good to see so many old faces in spite of the wet and very windy weather, The bike went very well though being so light it was quite twitchy on some of the more exposed section of the route. The rain died away once over the M4 and it was dry thereafter. Good day.

Saturday 7th August 2021

Just got back from the Cotswold Signpost Trial which is run from Daglingworth Village Hall. We were very lucky with the weather as the forecast was for frequent and heavy showers. In fact we only had brief and quite gentle showers though the roads were often wet indicating we had recently missed something heavier. A new organising team this year with a few new ideas; some good some perhaps debatable. It was tough because they set 16



controls (normally 12) over quite a wide area and they allowed only 5 hours as we were not allowed to leave until 1030 and had to be back by 1530. Frankly I thought we would never get round them all in time but we made it with about 15 minutes to spare though no time for a lunch stop so I was glad of the tea & biscuits on offer at the end.

To my surprise I was the overall winner and the picture of the trophy is below. Just as well I took the van, I would never have got it back on the 250RS as it has no top box and only a small tank bag – already full of essentials. On the way home the rain started in earnest as I left Cirencester and continued all the way home. Good day out though and I think Kevin enjoyed it – well he said he did.

Friday 6th August 2021

Last weekend I decided my workshop was just too crowded and advertised the Mellor Lathe I bought last year but never really got on with. I obviously under priced it as I had loads of interest and by Monday evening it had been collected and paid for. Tuesday was spent rearranging the garage and I now have a decent workbench and safe storage for various items including one of the 5" gauge locos and my wife's electric scooter commonly known as 'Dolly'. Plus enough space to be able to work comfortably around the bike lift.

Those paying attention may remember that back in June I bought an ETZ251 rolling chassis from Mark Edlington. It is now in the workshop and I have started some renovation work. Click this link to see what I originally bought [#etz251](#). First thing was to replace the front wheel with a ts drum brake so that I had a working front brake . Longer term I will probably fit the spare Honda TLS front wheel . Next think was to fit a complete rear mudguard in place of the cut down item seen in the picture and remove the existing ETZ251 motor which is seized and incomplete. The rear mudguard is virtually brand new but bright yellow so sadly it will have to be painted at some point. The bike is like Jacobs coat of many colours at present. Beige fork legs and side panels, silver tank, black front mudguard plus the yellow rear mudguard.

While the motor was out I was able to give the under part of the frame a good clean and fortunately there was very little rust. A rebuilt Supa5 motor is now installed complete with Powerdynamo stator and rotor. The ignition side is wired up and working. The other electrics need more thought as well as locating very components like a rear light unit, indicators, horn and brake light switches. I am sure that somewhere in my garage there is a box with most of not all of these items but so far I have failed to locate it.

No rear chain cover was fitted but I had a new one in stock along with the speedo drive unit so it was a fairly easy job to sort this out and re-fit the chain. I have not bothered with the chain gaiters yet as the whole assembly will have to be removed for painting at some time. In fact I may well replace the existing swinging arm with the more robust type from an ETZ250 along with an 18" wheel. Out of interest I have offered up an 18" wheel to the existing s/arm and it fits ok though I had to use an 18 tooth gearbox sprocket to be able to use the existing chain. One of the possible outcomes of this project is to make it into a trail bike and an 18" rear wheel will give a wider choice of suitable tyres.



That's it so far other than compiling a shopping list of parts I will need. Some I am sure are lurking somewhere in the garage, the rest I will have to beg, borrow, steal or actually buy though heaven forbid – this is an MZCred project. The list is surprisingly short at this point but doubtless it will grow. It includes:

Exhaust system – ideally I will make up something hi-level but worst case is I can borrow the complete system from the 4spd TS250 for testing.

Rear light unit – the square type but I guess any would fit

Indicators plus stems if I go for MZ items but most likely I will use cheapo LED type

Speedo cable – annoyingly I have loads of new Tacho cables but no speedo type

ETZ ignition key. I have a spare TS type but they don't fit properly.

Horn – peanuts on eBay

Seat cover as the old one is a bit challenged.

Brake light switches.

Not essential but useful would be an mph speedo, the one fitted is kph and an ETZ tacho as the one fitted has no warning lights.

Rubber connector between airbox and carb; very annoying as I have two of these. One turns out to be for the ETZ125/150 and won't fit the carb end. The other is for the TS250 and fits the carb end but not the airbox end as it's too long.

This is not a concours restoration to original spec, it's more a work in progress as and when bits arise and time allows. Many things will get made to suit, like the wiring loom for example which will be very simplistic and probably without a battery. Quite like old times really.

Thursday 5th August 2021

Today we had a VMCC run lead by Colin Nicholls based loosely on the Watership Down Run lead for many years by Bob Fisher. He was with us in spirit as Colin produced some photos of Bob at the lunch stop. Nice route and we got to Whitchurch pretty much in the dry. The afternoon however was very different as it rained solidly all the way home. I rode the Himalayan and had no shoulder problems at all during the morning ride though this was essentially two 25 mile sessions with a long coffee stop. There was no afternoon stop so it was a 55 mile trip home and towards the end my shoulder was beginning to complain. It was a good effort by Colin who has not led a run before, pity only 10 decided to take part.

Sunday 1st August 2021

I did the Somerset Signpost Trial today. I think it's a cracking event but only 9 people took part including, 3 from the West Wilts section. Keith Johnston riding a very nice low mileage (7k) CB250RS and Kevin Philips riding a Serow. Keith did his own thing but retired after completing 7 checkpoints as his instruction sheet dissolved in the biblical rain. It was Kevin's first attempt at this type of event so we did the planning and riding together. By the time we

had completed 3 controls we were soaked, the rain was horrendous across the Blackdown Hills. We almost gave up at this point especially as there was a serious discrepancy between the picture of the signpost in the instructions and what was found on sight. But it finally stopped raining while we were discussing this problem so we decided to continue. Thereafter it was mostly dry and we were the second to finish the event. When I left for home just after 4pm half the entry had still not appeared.

Anyway it was an enjoyable day and I had very little problem with my shoulder riding the CB250, largely because it was a very stop start event. I plan to use it again for the Cotswolds SP trial on 7th August.

Thursday 29th July 2021

Two positive developments today. I rode the Supa5 up to Coaley Peak for an MZRC get together. No trouble with my shoulder on the way up and only a little niggle on the way back. This should mean that I can find other bikes with a similar riding position and/or modify existing bikes to make them more comfortable. The CB250 will be the first candidate for this treatment but likely a winder project. The Supa5 and the Himalayan will probably become the bikes of choice for the balance of the riding season. I guess I am lucky to have a choice. The others are unlikely to get ridden far enough to make it an issue and can be dealt with later. Quite a number of MZers turned up today, many not seen for 18 months due to the Pandemic. We are able to have our first monthly meeting at Ham for 18th months on 8th August. Looking forward to it.

The 275 carb arrived in the post today and Bill Harley has done a fantastic job. I put it back on the AJS this afternoon and it started first kick and idled straightaway at a sensible speed. A bit lumpy it's true but I need to get it properly warmed up before tuning the carb. Great relief as I was concerned about my diagnosis and afraid it would make no difference. Still other work to do on the bike, its mechanically noisy and it seems to smoke a lot. I need to take it for a decent run and then assess things.

Tuesday 27th July 2021

On Monday I replaced the rear tyre on the Honda with a new one I had in stock. Not sure if the old tyre – which was an Avon Roadrider, was worn out or not. There was stacks of tread on the outer edges but the central groove was down to 1mm. However, during the ride on Sunday on some roads where the tarmac had been grooved the back end seemed to follow the grooves. Very unsettling and I thought at first I had a puncture. I even stopped to check but it was fine and no one else seemed to notice the road condition so I put it down to the rear tyre. It will be interesting to see if it still does the same thing with a new tyre. I did check the bearings and s/arm whilst the wheel was out but no problems found.

This afternoon, Kevin a fellow member of the West Wilts section came round to try out the BMW. He had seen it during our holiday in Wales and expressed interest. Anyway he took it

for a ride and has decided to buy it. Doubly sad to see it go but thinking back, I sold my last BMW 2 years ago because it was getting too big & heavy. Though even on a trip to France I don't remember having problems with my shoulder and the LS65 had low bars with a sporty riding position as well. Just an age thing I suppose.

Big question, do I simply bank the money and settle for the bikes I still have or start searching for a replacement. Trouble is I have no idea what will prove suitable and in truth the Himalayan is as close as I can get to an ideal at present. What I need is something similar but VMCC eligible – but darned if I know what.

Sunday 25th July 2021

Today was Brian Newbury's run to the Mendips and I promised him I would go. Which was a pity in some ways as it was also the Dorset section's Giants Run for girder fork machines and I would quite like to have watched that. Anyway about 15-20 people turned out for Brian's Run with me riding the CB250RS as a prelude to next week's Signpost Trial. I gave up at the coffee stop as my neck and shoulder were really giving me grief by that time. So now I have two bikes which I cannot ride comfortably for more than a few miles.

Thinking about it on the way home I am pretty much convinced that the BMW R75 will have to go as there is little prospect of modifying it satisfactorily without spoiling the bike. Still thinking about the Honda as in other respects it's a great little bike; however, it will not be a quick fix. I have an MZ club run on Thursday so will try the Supa5 and if it's reasonably ok that will be my ride for the Signpost Trial. Bit depressing maybe my riding days are numbered unless I can find a comfortable bike. I even started thinking about the bigger scooters like the Burgman as they seem to have the armchair riding position I think I need.

Saturday 24th July 2021

Well we are making some progress on the carb front. Bill Harley rang me on Wednesday evening to tell me he had started work on the 275 and had identified that it actually had a 274 jet block installed. They are obviously very similar in construction as it appears to fit the 275 body but equally there must be differences which may well account for the problems I was having. He told me he could do nothing further until a correct jet block was provided.

Fortunately I was able to call on a couple of friends for help and Thursday morning I rode over to Lockeridge and borrowed two 275 carb bodies (complete with JB's) from Reg Eyre. Also spent a convivial couple of hours looking at his bikes and talking about the world in general and the VMCC in particular. A correct 275 jet block was in the post to Bill by Thursday afternoon. I borrowed two carbs because there were obvious differences between the 2 bodies and I was unsure if the difference(s) extended to the jet block. In fact the JB's were identical so some time I need to examine the bodies to establish what the differences are and if they are significant.

I tried fitting one of the 275 carbs borrowed from Reg which appeared to be in good condition to the bike. It would fire sometimes but not run reliably and eventually stopped altogether. Changing the plug helped seemed to help but only briefly so I gave up and await the return of my refurbished carb. I am a bit dubious about the petrol in the tank, Colin Leonard told me he was wary of unleaded pump fuel and always got Avgas from Compton Abbas airfield. Certainly what is in the tank does not smell quite right so I have drained the tank and will replace it with super unleaded.

Monday 19th July 2021

Several weeks ago I bought a 1928 AJS model K12 which I finally collected on 22nd June after returning from the Welsh holiday. Due to other commitments and priorities I have not yet tried it out on the road but a few days ago I did start it up. This revealed a problem with the carburetion, the tickover is far too high and nothing I could do would slow it down to make the bike usable. Needless to say, the carb has been stripped and examined by numerous people without identifying a specific cause. In general it seems to be in good condition with little obvious play in the slide.

However, I remember having a similar problem with the MOV Velo I restored some time ago and this was cured by having the carb refurbished by Bill Harley in Wolverhampton. He bores out the body then makes an oversize slide to fit. So the carb is now on its way to him in the hope that it will solve the problem. If it doesn't then I have already established that an Amal concentric will fit so I may resort to buying one of those to at least get it running.

Monday 5th July 2021

Yesterday was our annual premier event, the White Horse Navigational Scatter Event. We used to give it a much shorter and potentially more accurate name of the White Horse Trial but political correctness invades even vintage motorcycling. Using the word trial has implications, particularly with regard to insurance cover. So it's now an 'Event' but the format remains the same. Numbers were down to 30 this year partly due to Covid and partly due to a clash with other events. Nevertheless those who did take part, some from far afield, enjoyed themselves even if it did rain at times. Quite a lot camped some from Friday and we are thinking of making it a weekend event next year. But first we need to get a bit more enthusiasm and support from our own members, only 5 took part this year and most of the helpers were friends and family.

I finished the results by lunchtime today and they are now out with the entrants. Doing the accounts, we will make a small profit for club funds and raised £82 for the LARA fighting fund. Once the dust has settled on this event, I need to start work on next year's holiday – no peace for the wicked.

I forgot to mention that I visited the Physio last Friday and he has diagnosed that my neck problem is actually caused by tendon damage in my right shoulder. This was aggravated by

the riding position on the BMW. He gave me some sort of electrical stimulation and some massage as initial treatment and instructions to rest the shoulder as much as possible (fat chance. I have another session next Friday when I will need to discuss long term implications. I rode my push bike into town today to bank the WHT cheques and even that made the shoulder twinge a bit, but then so does typing. Oh b****r.

Wednesday 30th June 2021

I mentioned a while back that I had bought a project MZ from Mark Edlington. This is a slight exaggeration as what I really wanted was an ETZ250 barrel, piston and head for the Red Beast which is scheduled to go to my son Richard. Mark only had an ETZ251 barrel and MZ folklore says that the 251 barrels will not fit the earlier ETZ250 cases. So the cunning plan was to buy the project bike from Mark which had a 251 engine so worst case was swap the complete engines over. The result is I brought home what is shown below together with some other useful bits to help complete the bike and the Red Beast.



Subsequently I made two discoveries. The first is that an ETZ251 barrel will fit into an ETZ250 crankcase. The outer diameter of the liner is 80mm in both cases – indeed the same as the TS250 liner. Another myth put to bed. Secondly having fitted the ETZ251 barrel to the Red Beast, the trick hi-level exhaust system which was the reason for change still would not fit, it was designed around the modified barrel/head with rounded fins which has long since been given away !. So one step forward two backwards. I still cannot move the Red Beast on to Richard until we have figured out what to do about the exhaust and I now have another project bike littering the premises which I am unlikely to be able to resist the temptation to rebuild. Just to complicate matters, Richard has also taken a fancy to the 251 petrol tank, which would be relatively easy to fit to the Red Beast but the same is not true of

fitting the 250 tank to the 251 frame. Everything now back in the shed until inspiration strikes.



Monday 28th June 2021

Quite an eventful period. The Hereford on the Edge event was due on the 27th June and I was still concerned about the shoulder and neck problems I had endured during the Welsh holiday. During the preceding week I tried out a number of my bikes to see which if any I was comfortable. The Honda with its lean forward riding position was a definite no-no as was the Himalayan which was both a surprise and a big disappointment. I had been convinced that its armchair riding position was the answer. In the end the only bike that did not provoke immediate problems was my trusty Supa5. To prove the point I rode it to the VMCC club night on 24th June a round trip of 50 miles. No problems with my shoulder and the bike went well, not having been ridden for well over a year.

The following weekend was quite busy. I drove up to near Red Marley with the bike in the van on the Saturday morning for the Cotswold Weekend Road Trial. This was based on a farm and we were kindly allowed to camp overnight. An airbed in the back of the van for me, some came better prepared. It was an excellent event though sadly they only had about 30 entries. They put on a BBQ for Saturday night which was a pleasant surprise especially as the service at the lunch stop pub was so slow I never got a meal. Nice to meet up with some

old friends. Not many younger bikes as it was mainly aimed at the Flat tankers who were there in force.

The original plan was pack up the van and drive down to Ross on Wye for the start of the HOTE on Sunday morning. However, the farmer, Peter Whitecliff kindly said we could leave our vans/campers in his field for the day so a group of us rode the 13 miles to Ross, mostly using the M50 which was very close. Bit scary but the MZ buzzed along happily at 55-60.

The HOTE started well and apart from one minor hiccup of navigation and by 2pm I was well on target with 14 controls found including 3 of three of the 4 cardinal points . About 60 miles to go and all the remaining checkpoints were ones I had visited before and could find easily. Then suddenly the bike was all over the road following a rear tyre blow out. At the time I was on the Cefn Road, quite literally in the middle of nowhere though only about 10 miles from Hay on Wye as the crow flies.

Having succeeded in not falling off I was not unduly worried as I had 2 spare inner tubes in the top box plus the tools needed. This quickly changed to despair when I realised that both inner tubes were 18" size whereas the MZ back wheel is 16"! Id I had known what was in store I would almost certainly have attempted a repair using one of the 18" tubes but that is the wisdom of hindsight. Instead I phoned the rescue service provided under my bike insurance. All seemed fine initially, they were very helpful on the phone and I got a text a just after 2pm saying iwould be picked up within 2 hours. Six hours later the rescue van finally arrived having come all the way from Wolverhampton. The saga has been the subject of some discussion with the recovery company as you might imagine and I may write up the

experience later.



However, the day was not yet over, I then had to navigate the driver (who was very friendly and helpful incidentally and in no way to blame for the issues) back to the field where my van was located. Then I had to load up and drive home getting back around 11:30pm. A long and tiring day and most gutting of all I missed out on a 3rd HOTE Gold award, mostly through my own stupidity.

Lots of other entrants passed me during the day, mostly I waved them on but many stopped anyway and offered help but the slit I found in the tyre when I inspected the damage at home was well beyond help from Finilec or suchlike gloop. There was no sign of the offending nail so it must have got ripped out when the tyre deflated. Anyway all now fixed with new tyre and tube just to be on the safe side.

Saturday 19th June 2021

This is the final day of the West Wilts Section annual touring holiday. 30 of us have been based at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells since last Sunday. I prepared a number of routes based on previous knowledge of the area combined with intensive study of OS Maps, Google Maps and Streetwise. These were only suggestions however, and everyone was free to ride them in any order or simply do their own thing. It seems to have gone very well though very sad for me as my long standing riding buddy Mike Davis is no longer with

us. His lovely BMW R75/6 did make the trip however and has clocked 540 miles during the week.

My personal; objective for the week was to visit as many of the 32 Hereford VMCC Section Cwmpass Ride locations as possible. Today I found the final 3 so have I have reached the Gold Award standard – whoopee. The main VMCC club has also introduced introduce the National Waypoint Event as the name implies covering locations across the whole UK. Some of these were within reach and have been logged as well. In this case photographic evidence rather than answering question is the proof required.

Its been a good week marred by two things, the absence of Mike and a continuing problem with my neck whilst riding the BMW. The jury is still out on whether it's a new medical problem or the riding position of the BMW. I did take a day off from riding on the Thursday and did feel better for it but by today, (Saturday) it was as bad as ever and I was glad it was only a 50 mile trip. Not sure which is worse but I will be investigating both possibilities when I get home. The day off was used to collect some MZ bits from Mark Edlington, more about this later.



Keith Johnson and me at the top of Bwlch y Groes. This was a Cwmpas and NWP Location



The R75/6 in Tregaron Square another MWP Location



The R75/6 and Jim's Bonneville by the waterwheel in Pont Rhyd y Groes



The R75/6 at the top of Llyn Brianne

Saturday 5th June 2021

For some time I have been hankering after an early bike to widen the scope of my activities. Despite keeping a weather eye on the eBay and the journals I still subscribe to nothing tempting had come up so far. Either not what I was looking for, too expensive or simply too far away to allow make viewing a serious possibility. Then a chance phone call with a friend sent me down to Christchurch to look at a 1928 AJS model K12. Perhaps not the most exciting bike in the world, its a250cc side-valve. But it does tick most of my boxes. It was restored by Brian Barber about 15yrs ago and is still in stunning condition. The deal was done but due to the commitment of the club holiday it will not be picked up until 22nd June. Really looking forward to that.



Wednesday 12th May 2021

I seem to have lost the plot so far as keeping this blogg up to date. Since I last posted I had one of my periodic reviews of the 'garage' and reached the conclusion that I still had too many bikes and decided that two Velos was one too many. The Venom was advertised and sold and paid for within a couple of days although it was not collected until 1st May. Bit sad but I the Viper is a cracking bike and an order of magnitude tidier. It's been given a couple of test runs and is going to be used on rally soon. Some of my time recently has been spent checking out the locations for our White Horse Trial event. I used the Himalayan for this as 10 of the checkpoints are along green lanes and it is the best tool in my garage for this task. Great fun and I managed not to fall off this year.

The BMW R75 has also been given some exercise to make sure its in top order for the section holiday in Llandrindod Wells in June. I finally completed all the routes last week, incorporating the Cwmpas Ride checkpoints where they were a close fit. Planning the holiday has been something of a nightmare since due to the pandemic it has been in the pipeline for 2years and at one point I was close to cancelling because of the number of threatened dropouts. However it all came good in the end and we have over 30 now going. Really looking forward to it.

Most of my time recently has however been spent building electric push bikes. The original intention was to build an electric motorcycle but the more I looked into this the more complex it became. Not so much the technical challenge as the legal complications over tax, MoTs and insurance. Although there are some legalities surrounding electric bicycles, they are much easier to cope with. I plan to write a separate article about this in time but the two bikes I have built so far are shown below. One uses a rear hub motor and the other a mid motor built into the bottom bracket. Each has advantages and I am still trying to decide which I prefer. I have another bike which has front and rear suspension which I am still experimenting with. They are great fun to ride and both have already clocked up around 100 miles.

The lockdown rules are finally easing and we are taking the caravan down to Bagwell Farm near Weymouth on Friday for an informal version of the Weymouth which sadly died about 5 years ago. The South Dorset Section are re-introducing the Weymouth Run scheduled for 16th May from its traditional start point of the Pavilion. They are then offering daily rideouts which start from Bagwell Farm. I am taking the Viper to use on the Sunday event and the Honda CB250Rs as an alternative for later runs. Should be fun.



Monday 5th April 2021

As promised, Andy Pratt turned up bright and early on Sunday morning and by 9:30 had loaded up all the MZ spares and was on his way. He left behind a disk brake front wheel and

a disk brake fork slider. Both items are intended for the Red Beast. I already had a stanchion assembly prepared for the fork slider so all it needed was a new seal and the leg was ready for installation. The wheel was a bit more complex. Andy had told me it had a steel rim so I had kept back a suitable 18" rim and in the 'stores' was a set of the correct s/s spokes bought long ago. Three hours later I had a totally correct and very shiny disk brake wheel assembled. Long time since I have built a wheel from scratch, normally with MZ wheels you just need to change a couple of spokes at a time. Very satisfying when it all works out.

Swapping all the bit over was fairly easy though I had to hunt round for the correct spacers needed on the new wheel. The only slight difficulty was bleeding the hydraulics, messy job but I got there in the end. The finished job is shown below. All I have to do now is deliver the bike to Shrewsbury but that will have to wait until I have taxed the van; probably 1st May.



Saturday 3rd April 2021

Today I rode round the southern 16 locations for our White Horse Challenge basically checking Keith questions, he is doing the same for mine locations in the North. I rode the Himalayan and did about 100 miles in total. Some cracking riding opportunities and views. The picture below was taken on the old road from Larkhill to Shrewton. Its right on the boundary of the Larkhill ranges and the part that used to go round the Westdown Camp is now closed but fortunately that was beyond the point I needed to reach. The field visible through the gate behind the bike is the site of Shrewton airfield which was operational as a

Remote Landing Ground for training aircraft from Netheravon from 1940-1944. There is no visible sign of this activity now but it does make an interesting ride.



Thursday 1st April 2021

First thing this morning I cycled over to Holt Post Office to tax the RS250 as an Historic vehicle. Tried to do it yesterday on the basis that the DVLA allows you to tax a vehicle for the following month once you are within 2 days of the current month end. It was not possible for some reason and the postmaster suggested I came back on 1st April. He was right, today I taxed the bike historic at no cost and the V5 is on its way to DVLA to be updated. That's a lesson learnt for the future.

Anyway the Honda was pulled out of the shed and given a quick checkover; it seems to have survived the winter in good form. A few kicks and the motor was running sweetly. Terry D rang wanting to borrow something so it seemed like a good excuse to ride over to Melksham and try the bike out. Went well though at times I thought I could hear a clunking noise if I went over a bump. Could not see anything obvious when I got back, but with the engine hot it seemed a good opportunity to change the oil. I could not remember if I had done this when I gave the bike a makeover last summer but what came out was very thin and black so obviously not. It now has 3 pints of 20-50 in its tummy. Strangely, these motors don't have replaceable proper filters, just a piece of gauze in the sump. Very primitive and a

good reason the change the oil frequently. Mileage was 47669 for the record. Apart from the Himalayan, I now only have one bike which needs tax and MoT, my 1981 Supa5 but it too will be historic on 1st April next year.

Wednesday 31st March 2021

No major bicycle developments since the last update. Mostly I have been riding the Richmond bike and that did a return trip to Melksham on Tuesday and a trip to Holt on Wednesday including a diversion to pick up some shopping from Lidl. I did my first night ride that evening to visit some dive club buddies now that we are allowed parties of up to 6 outside. No issues other than I am now reluctant to strip the electrics from the Richmond to fit on the Jeep. Neither do I want to use strip the Reflex as my preference is for the Jeep to use a mid-motor rather than hub motor. I cannot make up my mind so if in doubt , do nothing.

Monday 29th March 2021

The Covid-19 lockdown rules were eased from today and 'Stay Local' has replaced Saty at Home. I took advantage of the change to ride the northern 16 White Horse Challenge checkpoints. I clocked 125 miles between 10am and near 4pm and it was a real treat to be back on the Himalayan. I filled it up in Calne on the way home and it worked out at 89.6mpg – the last time it was refuelled was 8th November nearly 5 months ago! Hard to believe it will soon be 2 yrs old and still under 3k miles on the clock. I have to check the southern 16 controls over the next week so another outing is scheduled.

Friday 26th March 2021

The Jeep has tidied up quite well. The suspension was virtually non-existent to start with, a combination of the pre-load being set very high and lack of lubrication on the various pivots. Even after servicing and adjustment there is not a lot of movement so I may fit the saddle from the Vulcan which has a sprung stem to add a bit more comfort.

The front disk brake is fine and the rear now works properly after I lubricated the cable and adjusted it correctly. Tyres are both pretty bald but they hold pressure ok and the wheel bearing look as though they have been regularly lubricated. Both wheel are wobble free at rim and bearings. One of the pedals was very slack but I managed to dismantle it expecting to find that it had lost its ball bearings. Turns out they don't have any bearings as such, the cones of the shaft just run in the plastic of the pedal so all it needed was a clean, lube and adjustment.

The big job of course was the missing derailleur. I had to pop over to Melksham to borrow a chain splitter from Terry D and was able to get the old chain of the Jeep quite easily. It had clearly suffered some damage when the original derailleur broke but this was limited to one link so I broke the chain at that point. I also had to split the Vulcan chain as it had no split link, at least not that I could find. It was easy enough to disconnect the cable and remove

the derailleur – it was only fixed to the frame by one bolt. Thankfully there was an identical bolt in a similar location on the Jeep frame so the transfer was easy enough as was threading the chain and threading the cable. However, to start with I could not get the thing to fit properly. No idea why but when I removed it and started all over again, everything seemed to fall in place. Getting it properly adjusted was another challenge on two counts. Firstly the range of movement is insufficient to allow selection of the highest gear. Even second gear was marginal until I spaced out the spindle with a washer to move the wheel over a little. There is not enough thread on the spindle to use this trick to get top gear sadly but I can live with that for now. The other issue is that the gear shifter works the opposite way round to my other three bikes. On these the highest gear is position 7, on the Jeep its position one. Eventually I will have to sort this out but for the moment I have five gears which select smoothly enough to live with. Gear 7 is only ever used in combination with the lower gears on the front sprocket so inability to select that is normal. I have not bothered to test the front shifter as it will be removed when I fit the motor anyway.

Two more learning curve moments. I will need a special tool (now on order) to remove the bottom bracket and adjusting the height of the handlebars is not straightforward. I was expecting to be able to undo the central bolt – tap it down to relieve the taper plug and slide the spindle up the headstock. Indeed my first two bikes were adjustable this way. However, the Vulcan and the Jeep are a later design and the handlebars clamp externally to the stem with only a limited range of adjustment via spacers. On both bikes I can remove the spacers to lower the handlebars but both are already at the top of the stem so cannot be raised further. Research in the internet established that I need a stem extender so one is now on order. So the Jeep project is on hold other than some more test rides to make sure nothing else needs attention.

To keep the Vulcan mobile, I converted it to a single speed machine by shortening the chain. It's on the middle gear and is quite rideable in this form. I plan to hang on to it for now as it may donate a few other parts to the Jeep project. Final job of the day was to sort out the rear gear shift cable on the Reflex bike. Whilst investigating the loss of gears caused by badly fitting the side stand, I noticed that the cable was not correctly threaded through the support tube under the bottom bracket. It had been working ok despite this but I was worried it could get knocked out of position so I have now threaded it correctly.

For the record, I have ridden the Reflex to Melksham and back twice without recharging the battery. It still had a ¼ charge (2 bars) at the end of the second trip. So a 20-25 mile range looks entirely feasible given a bit of pedal assistance.

Thursday 25th March 2021

Well the Carrera Vulcan turned out to be a poor choice as the basis of my next e-bike project, just as well that it was very cheap. I decided to put it on Gumtree to move it on but it did not sell which was somewhat lucky as it happened. I have continued to improve the other two bikes. The Richmond now has a set of canvas bags fitted to the carrier which

enhances its shopping trolley image, though it has yet to be used in this role. I rode it over to Melksham to show it to Terry last week. It went well and gave no problems but it is not as comfortable on the green lane section of the route as the other bike. This has front suspension and a gel saddle – paved road use in future I think.

The original mountain e-bike has had three upgrades. I bought an aftermarket gripshift gearchanger to replace the combined shifter/brake lever. This enabled me to fit the Voilamart brake lever with its motor cutout switch. However, like many improvements it had a downside in that the twistgrip throttle was not really viable. I did use the bike without a throttle at all and it was perfectly usable for the most part but I found a thumb throttle on eBay which is now fitted just in case of need. I also fitted a side stand to make it easier to park the bike and worked well though perhaps a bit flimsier than I had hoped. I did it in a hurry and when I used the bike today I found that the gearchange no longer worked. Back in the workshop I found that I had inadvertently trapped the cable under the stand clamp! Fortunately no damage done.

My search for a Mountain bike with full suspension that was suitable for e-bike conversion finally paid off on Wednesday with the purchase of the Jeep Cherokee model below. It was cheap because the derailleur was broken but complete otherwise. It does have the correct type of gripshift changer and an excellent disk front brake of the later type. The back brake is a calliper type and nothing special at the moment but I am hoping that the Carrera Vulcan will supply the parts needed. First job is to check it over and repair anything suspect. If it all works ok then I will contemplate fitting the Bafang motor to this bike and pension of the Richmond.



Sunday 14th March 2020

My continuing search for the ideal donor for an e-bike conversion resulted in a successful eBay bid for the Carrera Vulcan bike. It was very cheap which is just as well as when collected it was obvious that it had been unused and badly stored for a long time. Moreover, the drum gear shifter arrangement which was one of its major attractions turned out to be yet another design with the brake levers integral to the shifter. It seems that to misquote George Orwell, not all shifters are equal. Anyway, all is not lost, the bike does have some useful bits and I was able to get the gears working by the end of the day. I plan to check through and service it then make a decision on its future.



Friday 12th March 2021

I now have two fully operational e-bikes. My first ride on the mid-drive one was disappointing. The default PAS setting was 3 levels and in setting 1 (the lowest) it went straight up to 16mph which was also the default maximum speed. A link to download the C961 display was provided and I could get into the basic settings menu but this was very limited – not even the ability to set the wheel size. All my attempts to get into the advanced settings failed so I emailed the supplier. In the interim I did a search on the internet and came across another version of the C961 manual and found that the instruction I had been using gave the wrong button combinations to access advanced settings. Armed with the correct information I was able to configure the controller correctly. With 9 levels of PAS I now get a more gradual take up of speed making the bike much more controllable. I have also ordered a special USB cable which allows the Bafang controller to be programmed from a laptop using a program downloaded from the internet.



Thursday 11th March 2021

The weather was dry and reasonably warm on Monday morning so I rode the e-bike over to Melksham to visit Terry D. Prior to that I had experimented with various settings for the controller and made some improvement. In the lowest PAS level setting (1) I now get a little assistance but not consistently. In level 2 it is still trying to run at 15mph. I alternated between level 1 with some throttle assistance and level 2 but only pedalling occasionally. Not ideal but we made it there and back and the battery was still showing a full charge after 11 miles.

Later on Monday I found another donor bike in Warminster. A gentleman's roadster this time rather than a mountain bike but it did have proper mudguards, a carrier and a good centre stand which alone were worth what I paid for it. I felt it would look the part as a shopping bike. First job was to strip the bottom bracket assembly. As luck would have it, the Bafang kit included a proper crank puller so getting these off was straightforward though both were very tight. Just as well the bottom bracket assembly is not required as the bearing cage on one side was completely rusted through and the balls were unsupported. Yet when I test rode the bike it gave no indication of the problem. Just as well it's not needed though a new set of bearings is very little money should I decide to keep revert it to a push bike at some point.

Fitting the Bafang motor is pretty straight forward, the only slight complication was a protrusion inside the bracket for the guide rail fixing for the derailleur cables. My new Dremel made short work of that. The cabling is straightforward as each connector is colour coded. One of the reasons for choosing this bike was the gear selectors which are the SRAM type rotating drums rather than levers and do not have integral brake levers. This meant I could use the new levers supplied with the kit which include engine kill switches. A not so good feature is that it has conventional rim brakes rather than disks but they work very well and this is not intended to be a fast bike so they should be fine.

The bike is now fully assembled and working but needs the wiring tidied. Usefully it came with an led headlight powered by the 48v battery and can be switched on or off using the standard PAS switch. The Bafang controller is integral with the motor rather than a separate unit so one less thing to mount but equally there is nowhere to hide the surplus cables. I bought a second identical battery so they are interchangeable. I could even take one as a spare if I contemplated a long journey.



Thursday 4th March 2021

No cycle ride today, flat rear tyre this morning which turned out to be a thorn when I finally got the tube out. So much for riding off road, the hedge trimmers have obviously been at work. When I inflated the inner tube to find the hole the darn thing split – not impressed. I have 'borrowed' the inner tube from the bike's original wheel for now so all being well it will be ok to ride tomorrow but I think I will stick to tarmac for now. I have also ordered a pack of 4 inner tubes just to be on the safe side. On reflection I should have ordered a spare tyre as well as the tyre on the old wheel does not inspire confidence.

Whilst I was in the mood to spend, I decided to order a 750w Bafang mid-drive conversion kit. If I cannot source a suitable donor bike, I will convert the present one and put the hub motor kit to one side for now. The reasons are pragmatic. Without doubt the 1000w hub motor I have will have a higher top speed but this has hidden dangers. The law limits e-bikes to 250w and 15mph and hub motors of this power are tiny compared to mine. So far it has not attracted undue attention but if I took it into town for shopping or suchlike and moreover used its performance this could well change. The Bafang mid-drive motors are physically the same size whether 250, 500 and 750w output. The kit also comes with a 250w sticker so that removes the most obvious clue. Road tests I have seen suggest it will still give me the 20-25mph performance I have found most satisfactory and of course the battery should last longer per charge; though mid-drives don't provide regenerative power so this may not be wholly true.

They should provide more usable torque as they drive through the existing chain and gear system and they have a built in controller making the wiring simpler. The downside of course is a broken chain means loss of drive and you cannot even pedal the bike home. With the hub motor you would still have power to the wheel. Aesthetically the mid-drives look better in my view – closer to the e-motorcycle I really wanted to build. Also having the engine more central makes the unsprung weight lower should I get a bike with rear suspension.

Anyway, the long term plan is to have one of each type so I can choose which one to ride on any given outing. The hub motor will be favourite when it can be used away from prying eyes and where its better performance is beneficial.

Wednesday 3rd March 2021

I took the e-bike for a 6 mile ride today. The byway to Semington then back via the canal tow path to Marsh Farm and paved road back home. Battery was still showing full charge when I got back home though it did drop to ½ charge briefly when I used full throttle on a hill. I have been studying the cycle path routes round the local area and will do some more exploring. I can also get the Terry's house in Melksham with only a minimal amount of main road. Lockdown rules are eased from 8th March so a trip to see him is a possibility.

I am keen to try another e-bike project. This one will probably have what they call a mid-motor which is located around at the bottom bracket. They are a bit more expensive but do seem to offer a number of benefits. I can source a kit easily enough but I am still looking for a suitable donor bike. I realise now that I was very lucky to get my present bike so quickly and cheaply. Though there are plenty of bikes on Gumtree, there is nothing close to the spec I need.

I have brought the Himalayan up to the workshop ready to be brought back into use next week. The battery was charged fully on 5th February and showed 13v at that time. It has been disconnected since and today was still showing 12.77v. I put it on charge and it was fully charged again within 30 minutes.

Monday 1st March 2021

I have been toying with the idea of building an electric motorcycle or more correctly converting a conventional petrol engine motorcycle to electric motivation. Lots of videos and articles on the internet but they all make it look a bit daunting. In part technical but also because the legal situation is complex so far as tax and MoT's is concerned and insurance might be an issue. In the end I decided to defer this project and build an electric bicycle instead. No tax, MoT, or Insurance to worry about and more flexibility in use for short journeys anyway. Plus of course a helmet is optional.

The added advantage is that there are loads of kits available providing most of the parts required to convert your donor bicycle. In most cases the only additional thing required is a

a battery. There are plenty of Youtube videos showing the building of these kits so a few evenings were spent viewing these and collating information. There are of course plenty of commercially made electric bikes on the market these days but reasonable ones tend to be topside of £1000 and double that for the better known makes. They also come with smallish motors, typically 250-350 watts and limited to 15mph (as required by law).

However, the kits come with motors ranging up to 1500 watts and no built in, or easily disabled speed limiters. Some of these are capable of 40mph but they of course need bigger and more expensive batteries if you want a reasonable range. The most popular low cost kit on the market is called the Voilamart (Chinese of course, despite the French name). In the end I opted for their 1000w hub motor kit. The 1500w motor was not that much more expensive but would have needed a significantly heavier and more expensive battery. Videos of this kit in use suggested that it would deliver a 35mph top speed under favourable conditions and frankly 25mph is probably as much as I would feel comfortable with on a push bike. The battery selected was a 13ah type that comes with a lockable cover and a charger. The kit was about £225 and the battery was £230.

In parallel with this I was researching suitable bicycles as I don't currently own one. I found one that ticked most of the boxes in Melksham and bought this last Monday. It's made by Reflex (a Bangladeshi company) and is at the bottom end of the market as well as being cosmetically challenged. However, a day in the workshop found nothing seriously wrong with it and I discovered that it has an alloy frame which means its lightish and won't rust. One major consideration was disk brakes as the motor kit comes with the hub already drilled disk. I was never a fan of ordinary bicycle calliper brakes especially on a bike likely to reach 30-35mph. The picture probably makes it look better than it really is.



The battery and the kit were ordered from separate suppliers as no one seemed to provide both from the same source and both arrived late Thursday afternoon; very good service.

The Voilamart kit is shown below and is quite comprehensive. You get the hub motor already built into a new 26" rim plus new tyre and tube. They also supply a new 7spd gear cluster which saves trying to remove the old one from the existing rear wheel, plus a controller, brake levers, twistgrip throttle, pedal assist pickup and an instrument pod. I'll explain the function of these items as we get to the relevant point.

by the bearing adjuster lock ring. The plate bearing the magnets just pushed into the shaft. To fix both of these items requires the pedal shaft to be removed, This in turn needs a special tool and wonder of wonders, I found the correct extractor in my toolbox.



Fixing the battery is also quite straightforward. It slides onto a plate which is secured to the tapped holes normally used to hold a water bottle on the front down tube. There are only two of these and the plate has slots for 4 fixing bolts so I drilled and tapped two extra holes. The battery is quite heavy and I wanted to be sure it was securely mounted. I will fit threaded inserts in due course to make an even stronger fixing. At this point I hit a slight snag in that the battery has to slide into its mounting and the front section of the frame is the battery shaped and effectively slopes upwards interfering with battery insertion and removal. After some experimenting I found a position where the battery cleared the seat post tube and could still be removed/replaced. One more thing to consider for any future e-bike project.

Next minor hiccup was the handlebar configuration. Voilamart supply new brake levers which included switches to cut the motor power when the brake is applied. The clear intention is to replace the existing levers with the new ones and just swap over the brake cables. My bike has lever integral with the derailleur gear changers. Something else to be considered for a future project. One option I suppose is to retain the existing levers and forgo the cutout switches and I wish in some ways that I had tried this out. Instead I drilled out the old lever pivots to get them out of the way and slid the changers inboard. It works

after a fashion but the change levers are awkwardly placed and foul the new levers, particularly the cutout switch wiring. In fact I have damaged one cable. It still works for now but looks decidedly fragile. I may yet find out how essential these cutout switches are.

Whilst at the handlebars fitted the led instrument display which simply clamps on the bars, togethert with the Pedal assist switch unit. This latter has 3 function; it turns the power on and off, it allows selection of the power assist level from 0 (no assistance) to 5 (maximum assistance plus providing an edit function for the controller. I will cover items later.



Nearly finished now. It was just a question of running the cables as tidily as possible and connecting all the leads together. Voilamart supply a bag to hold the controller with Velcro straps and I fitted this on the seat tube above the battery. Some choose to fit the battery and the controller on a rear carrier but I don't yet have one (see wish list) and anyway I think the weight needs to be within the centre part of the frame not dangling off the back end. I tucked as much as possible of the surplus cabling inside the bag and remainder was fixed to the frame using either cable ties or velcro straps. The latter for the cable from motor to controller as this needs to be easily detachable should the wheel need to be removed to repair a puncture for example.



And that was it really. My first attempt was unsuccessful caused by the battery not being fully engaged in its holders (see above). Once fixed everything came to life and worked fine. Started about 9:30 and it was all running by 13:30. Needless to say there has been a lot more fiddling to get things the way I want them but the basic product literally worked out of the box and is great fun. I have now fitted handlebar end mirrors, a rear light and mudguards, all things I considered essential from a comfort or safety aspect.

On the road it is great fun and gets up to 20mph easily and will sustain that up inclines; you can see the battery dropping back a bit but it recovers as soon as you slow down a little. I have set the maximum speed to about 27mph and on several occasions I have seen over 25mph with ease. On the flat and with a bit of pedal assistance I reckon would it top 30mph easily enough but I don't want to push it or me until we are both run-in. The pedal assist mode can be a bit sudden if using the higher settings making slow speed manoeuvring 'interesting'. Something to be aware of and looked into but no other downsides yet.

Battery life is an unknown and will obviously depend on how much of the performance I use. Also it's confused by how much freewheeling and downhill running you do as it is a regenerative motor so will top up the battery on the overrun. Today it had clocked up 12 miles and was still showing full when I pulled into the garage though it had dropped to under half charge not long before when I maintained 20mph up the hill not long before. It took about 3 hours to fully recharge. The book says 7 hours so I guess I had used about half

charge. Used more sensibly on a pedal assisted journey I would reckon about 30 miles range. Time to invest in a pair of cycling shorts and try an endurance test (for both of us).

Over time I want to add a prop stand and a rear carrier with a bag so it can be used for minor shopping trips. Whether I will modify this bike or look for another to convert is a moot point. This project has been a learning curve and these are some of the things I have learned so far and would seek to address if I built a second bike:

It needs lights and some of the controllers offer a 6 or 12v connection to support this function. I have a rear light – need to source a front light.

A carrier and panniers are essential if it's to be any use for shopping trips or spares.

Rear mirrors re essential, I had a pair of bar end type in stock. They were a bit small for the m-bikes but perfect for the e-bike.

It needs a prop stand – looking out for one of those.

Not sure a twist grip is a good idea, it's too easy to give it an unintended tweak. A thumb throttle is probably safer.

Security is essential. I am using strong piece of chain and a padlock. Remembering the keys is an issue so a combination lock would be better.

My bike has a 20" frame and even for a 6ft rider it's a stretch. A step through frame is an attractive possibility but does pose some issues in mounting electrics.

Need to investigate more thoroughly other motor options. Mine is an ungeared moto, the geared motors and supposed to be smoother on takeup. There are also mid-motors which may offer benefits in weight distribution.

I had some issues sorting out the derailleur gears and a proper bike stand would be a definite asset.

Overall though I am very happy with the way it has worked out.

Sunday 21st February 2021

Not got round to updating the blogg for near 2 weeks and though I have been busy, the memory is a bit dim on what order I tackled various jobs.

I was pleased with the way the BMW front wheel turned out but it made the back wheel look a bit tatty so a set of rear s/s spokes was ordered. The back wheel is a lot easier to tackle. No callipers to negotiate and no discs to remove. Like the front the tyre was hard to remove and I did not want to risk damaging it as it is near new. Eventually I got it of and the rest of the job was quite straightforward. It's all back together ready for the end of March when the Covid-19 restrictions are eased enough to go for a ride.

My son Richard was asking me about the Red Beast the other day, he is still keen to have it when lockdown lifts but he preferred its original form rather than the changes I had made. The KTM front end had long since been sold so not much I could do about that but I still had most of the other bits. So I refitted the monoshock rear suspension, not without some difficulty. Though it came with an 18" rear wheel, there was no way I could get one to fit so I used a 16" rear wheel instead. The original configuration was 21" front and 18" rear but from a balance point of view it looks of with an 18" front and 16" rear.

He was not keen on the standard type exhaust system either and since I still have the hi-level exhaust I tried to fit this. Not a chance because it was designed for an ETZ barrel with a central exhaust port and the motor now fitted uses a TS250 barrel with angled exhaust port. As a long term project, we will try to source an ETZ top end and he may then be able to fit the trick exhaust. In the meantime I decided to have a go at modifying the standard exhaust to something a bit funkier. Actually it turned out quiet well as you can see in the picture, It still needs welding up but it does work quite well. A bit noisier than standard as I reduced the silencer part by half. However, the expansion chamber is unaltered so it should still perform well. He was quite pleased with the result and is impatient to get his hands on it.



The seat looks of because its sitting on top of a battery which is far too big. But at least it worked sufficiently to prove the bike is still a runner and all the electrics work. All we need is an easing of lockdown so Richard can take possession.

Wednesday 17th February 2021

Work on the 4spd TS250 has progressed quite well though there was one slight hiccup along the way. The immediate job was to revise the wiring which had been optimised for the full Vape system. The charge indicator wiring had been reallocated as the low tension cutout for the Vape cdi and the warning light had been reallocated as a headlamp main beam indicator. As the bike is now dependent on a good battery for its sparks I wanted peace of mind that it was charging ok. That part of the Vape system is still standard using the 6 coils on the stator and the Vape Rectifier/Regulator. It took me a few minutes to refresh my memory of the wiring and to unwrap the loom under the seat to get at the red/green charge indicator wire. Once swapped around however, the engine started fine with the charge light going out immediately – sorted.

Next task was a test ride as the weather had warmed up considerably and the overnight rain had cleared. So far as the ignition side was concerned I felt that all was well. The engine had plenty of power and pulled up the test his at over fifty with some in hand. In 3rd it ran smoothly to beyond 40mph, no tacho so I don't know what revs but it was well into the power band for a change to top. The downside is that it felt flat at part throttle openings, the power coming in with a rush when beyond half throttle. I did several laps of my test route and it did improve as the motor warmed but still did not feel right.

So yesterday It went on the bike lift and I removed the carb for examination. It was quite clean inside and the pilot jet did not appear to be blocked. This had been my initial suspicion. However the whole thing was given a good clean and all the orifices were blown through with the air line. I started to put it back together, then realised I had not checked the fuel height. This was over 30mm when the correct setting is 27mm meaning the fuel level was low and would account for the symptoms, giving a weak mixture at part throttle openings. Not so much above half throttle as the main jet, which sits very low in the float chamber, has more influence by that point. Anyway I reset the height to 27mm, put it back together and the carb back on the bike. I also set the tickover speed a little higher using the adjuster that raises the slide – which turned out to be a mistake.

At this point I hit all sorts of problems culminating in the engine revving its nuts off as the slide was jammed half open. My initial reaction was a recurrence of earlier issues with this carb which is a Chinese copy of a BVF. There is a brass pin that stops the slide twisting in the bore. This pin came loose, the slide turned a tad and then jammed on the throttle stop screw when trying to shut down. An interesting experience when approaching a tight bend at 50mph. Easily fixed once diagnosed. Though the symptoms were identical it was not the cause this time as the pin was still properly located. Eventually I found that it was the tickover adjuster causing the problem. If you screwed it in too far it locked the slide and if you then opened the twistgrip hard to release the jam, the slide would not drop below the adjuster! Which takes me to the second problem I had with this carb. For ages I was plagued with a rattle at low revs which had all the symptoms of a broken ring or a worn small end

bearing. I stripped the engine and fitted another barrel with a new piston thinking that would solve the problem. Not a chance, the rattle was just as bad as before. Eventually I realised the noise was emanating from the carburettor and it turned out to be a loose fitting slide; bear in mind that this carb was almost brand new at the time. Anyway I found a genuine BVF slide in my spares box which fitted perfectly and it has been in use for 3 years including a trip to Colombres in 2019. Quite why it should throw up a problem now with float height and locking up is beyond me. Regardless with the problem identified, a bench test suggested all was now well.

This morning I took the bike out for a second test covering about 5 miles and it worked fine. No ignition problems and the flat spot was gone. Once warm you could trickle along in 3rd gear at a walking pace and it would pull away, slowly but steadily until you hit the power band when it would fly. Well over 50mph on both test hills with something to spare, I don't want to flog it as it's still running in after its rebuild. Even the whining gearbox seems to be settling down. So now I have solutions for two type of Vape system failure and a complete original system on the shelf as a backup. Result.

Now I have run out of projects – when will this lockdown end so I can take my bikes for a proper ride.

Saturday 13th February 2021

The Falcon now has a 6v regulator/rectifier unit fitted and it seems to work a treat, Charging is balanced across all loads at about 1 amp. Strangely this rises to slightly when direct feed to the head and tail light is selected which might be useful should the battery go flat and need a quicker top up. I took the bike out for a quick spin and it went well, though its pretty gutless compared even with a TS150 MZ. The gearchange takes a little getting used to as it requires very little movement to select. I kept pressing harder because I thought the change was balking when in fact the gear was already selected. Need some warmer weather to allow a longer ride. Falcon now back in the rear garage.

Conveniently on Wednesday, the rear wheel spokes for the R75 turned up. To get the rear wheel out needs that back end of the bike to be raised unless the NS silencer and pannier frame are removed. The bike lift is ideal but I had to ask Terry D to pop over and give me a hand to get it on. Once done getting the wheel out was much easier than the front wheel, though getting the tyre off was a real struggle. As its almost brand new, I did not want to risk damaging it. Rebuilding the wheel was also straightforward. I found a technique to get the spokes undone without damaging anything. I now have a full set of spare spokes/nipples in quite good condition which happen to be the same size as a 16" MZ wheel (140mm). The tyre went back on a lot easier than it came off and the wheel is now back in the bike. Took me a couple of days altogether as the freezing temperature meant my fingers kept going numb so I had to go back indoors for a warmup. Took some persuading to get me back into the garage but job now done.

I did a couple of other small cosmetic jobs, replacing rusty fixings with s/s items. Bike is looking good, just need better weather and the lifting of the pandemic restrictions to take it for a ride. With such a big engine you need to cover at least 10 miles to get it properly warmed up. Round the block is a waste of time.

Next task, some fine tuning of the electrics and a test ride on the 4spd TS250 with its modified Vape system.

Monday 7th February 2021

With most projects completed or on hold, I decided to gird my loins and tackle the wheel build on the R75/6. To be honest the spokes are not that bad, they clean up ok but most of the chrome has worn so thin that they develop surface rust very easily. And as is well known, I hate rusty spokes. I ordered a set of s/s spokes & nipples for the front wheel from Motobins a few weeks ago but had put the job off for a while. Partly because I couldn't raise the energy to get the bike from the rear garage to the workshop and because I had recollections of problems when I did the same job to my first R75. Not the respoking, more getting the wheel out and especially getting it back in again.

I read the workshop manual and talked to Terry D and in truth it did not seem that complicated so I made a start a few days ago. The only slight difficulty getting it out was the need to deflate the tyre to get it past the ATE callipers. I used paint spots to mark which side the wheel went into the forks and more paint spots to mark where the disks were aligned to the hubs. Not sure the latter was essential but it did no harm. Getting the tyre off was a struggle, harder than with the MZs so I think the rim edges must be a bit higher. Anyway, once removed it only took a couple of hours to replace the spokes.

I was intending to unlace the old spokes and keep them as spares. However, I found that the nipples supplied were nickel plated steel which would eventually rust again. The original spokes were plated brass and in excellent condition provided you did not try to undo them under tension. So I cut the old spokes out 2 at a time with the angle grinder and the nipples then came off easily. The wheel was rebuilt within a couple of hours. The tyre only had about 2.5mm of tread so was just over half worn. It would probably have given me another 1000-1500 miles but then I would have to do the job again possibly with 18 months or less. So I ordered a new Avon Roadrider which was due for delivery on 11th February. Not much else I could do in the workshop, a BMW without its front wheel is not very mobile.

Surprise surprise, on Monday afternoon a courier dropped off the new tyre, so today it was refitted to the wheel. It was a bit reluctant at first but eventually it went on without pinching the inner tube. Thanks to my paint spots, the rest of the wheel was assembled quite easily and on to the job I was least looking forward to – putting the wheel back in the forks. The issue is trying to get the disks into the callipers. The later Brembo callipers are held by two bolts and can be easily removed, the wheel replaced, then slid back over the disks. The ATE callipers are a strange design and if you remove them they have to be

carefully re-aligned. However, this time I was lucky and I managed to get the disks into the callipers at the third attempt, once I had remembered to deflate the tyre to get it past the callipers. The rest of the job was straightforward and the bike is now back on its wheels. It's still in the workshop though because I have now ordered a set of rear wheel spokes (without nipples).

In the same post yesterday was the 6v rectifier regulator for the F-B Falcon. So that's tomorrow's job.

Sunday 31st January 2021

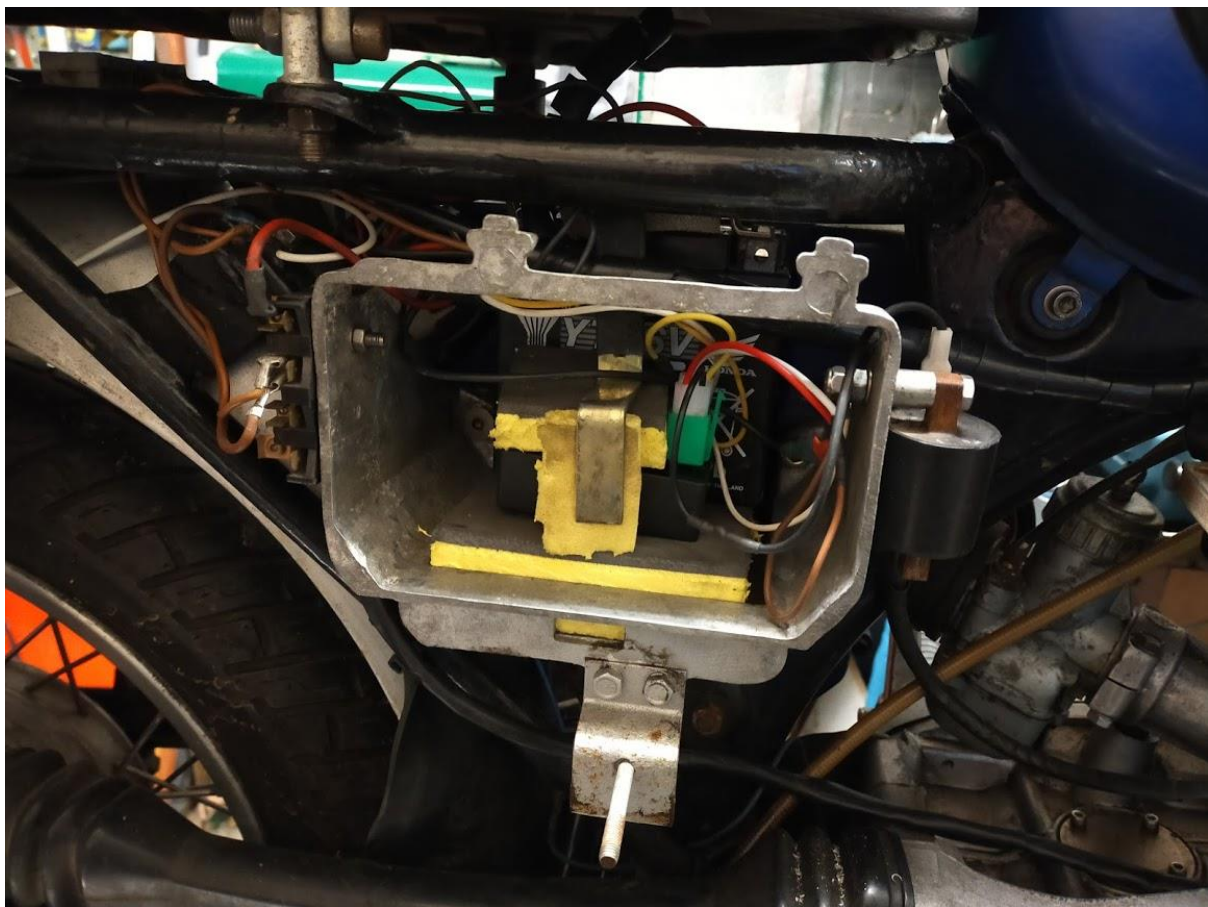
Well the modification to the side stand did work but having solved one problem, another immediately appeared. The plate which the side stand pivots on is just not man enough for the job and now that it cannot rotate, it simply bent under the weight of the bike. I may try to remake the plate in thicker steel at some time but for now I have taken it off. After a search on the internet, I found a single phase 6v rectifier/regulator unit intended for an early 70's Honda SL125 and doubtless other similar machines of the period. I have ordered one but the only source was China so it will be a while turning up. The Falcon is now back in the rear garage.

Its place on the bike lift has been taken by my 4spd TS250 to continue the experiments with Rogers' damaged Vape unit. I removed my own Vape flywheel and stator and put them safely away. I left the Vape coil in place; it has no role in my experiments but no need to remove it either. It will make reinstatement quicker once I have finished experimenting.

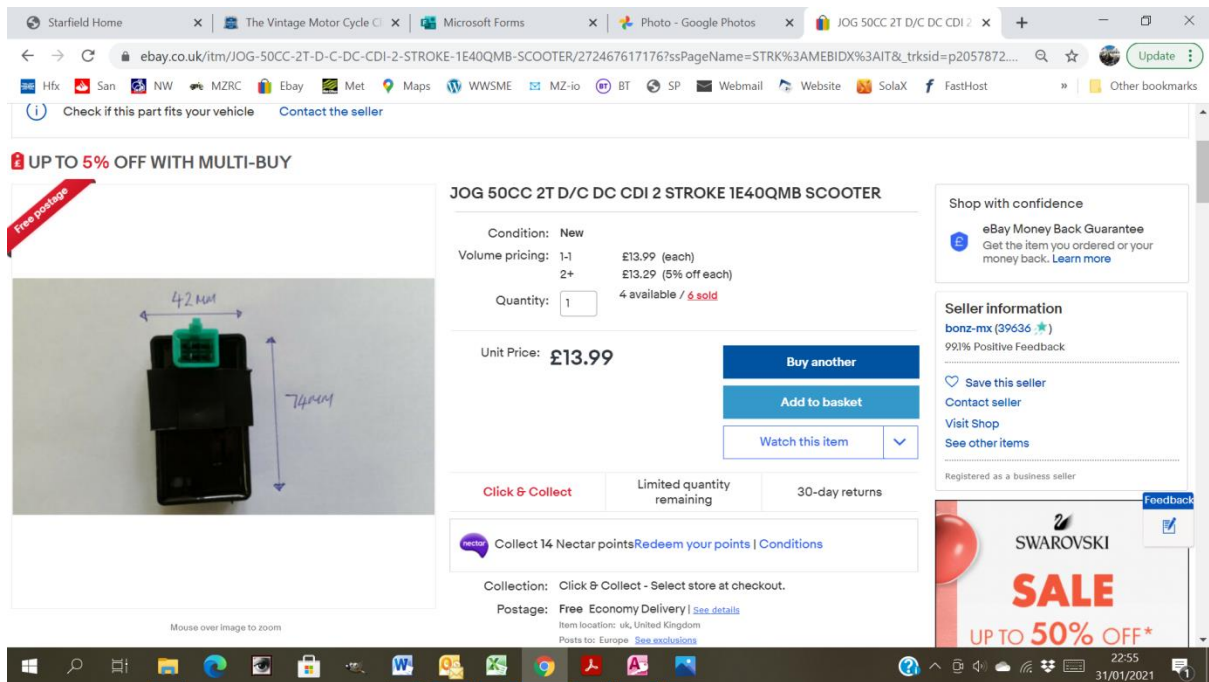
I temporarily wired in the new DC cdi and coil just to check I had a spark. Ok so far. Next step was to odder up what was supposed to be the proper connector to the cdi. No way would it fit as supplied, the pin spacing on the connector were too close together, Eventually I solved the problem by cutting the connector in half and fitting them as two pairs rather than a foursome. It had one added benefit because I could alter the presentation so that I got the correct colours from each pin. The rest of the wiring was tedious but straightforward as was the mounting of the coil. The cdi sits on the same rubber mattress as the battery and is lightly trapped in place by the battery strap.

Next step was to fire up the engine. It kicked back strongly if you were timid but it did run. Getting from the k/s side to the timing side whilst keeping the engine running was not easy as the garage is now very cramped with the two lathes opposite each other but I managed in the end. Though the bike was running apparently ok the timing was miles advanced. So I removed the rotor and put the trigger coil back to its standard position. It still appeared to be miles out even with this change so I double checked my timing marks on the flywheel. Not sure how I cocked it up but they were well out. When I chalked a new set in the correct position the strobe indicated the timing was pretty much ok. However, my chalk mark for 22 degrees was a guess so I noted where the mark was actually aligned on the crankcase with the engine running. I then using a graduated timing gauge through the vertical plug whole

and found the timing was around 2.5mm btdc. The book specifies 2.5-3.0 mm so close enough I would think. That was it really, just needed some tidying up of the wiring and fitting the timing cover. Once back on the ground I the engine started easily enough needed choke to run reliably until it warmed up. No doubt because it has been standing a long time and the temperature was near zero. Indeed we had snow later that day. So far so good but a proper road test is needed to establish if it is a permanent fix. A satisfying result in that I have salvaged an otherwise scrap Vape unit for significantly less than its cost of repair. About £15 compared to over £90. The downside is that it requires a batter whereas the Vape system is self-energising and does not require one. But I still have the Vape 12v charging system so that should not be an issue and it's nice to have the lights on even when the engine is not running. Bike now back in the rear garage until a ride is feasible.



This is the actual cdi unit I used. There are loads of these on eBay that look identical, some a lot cheaper but most are specified for use with the GY6 systems designed for small 4-strokes and have a built in auto advance. MZs, like most 2-strokes run on fixed timing and the unit I bought has no advance curve – proven with the strobe. It does not appear to need a special coil; the one I am presently using came of the Red Beast and look pretty tatty. Similar coils can be found on eBay for under £10. I imagine a standard MZ 12v coil would work as well. I may experiment with this some time.



Thursday 28th January 2021

Work continues on the Falcon. The standard centre stand is impossible to reach with your foot when standing on its LH side and unlike Simon, I cannot get used to pulling it on from the RH side. I had previously fitted a spigot which was only partially successful so I modified it and it's now much more successful. That has lead on to another attempt to fit the side stand. I bought one on eBay some while back and altered it to fit but could not stop it rotating and letting the bike fall over so it was abandoned. However, after fitting it again today, I figured out a way of locking it to the bottom frame rail. Not a very elegant job right now as it was a case of trial and error to get all the bits in the right place. However, I think the design is pretty much there and tomorrow I will get the bike off the lift and try it out.

Wednesday 27th January 2021

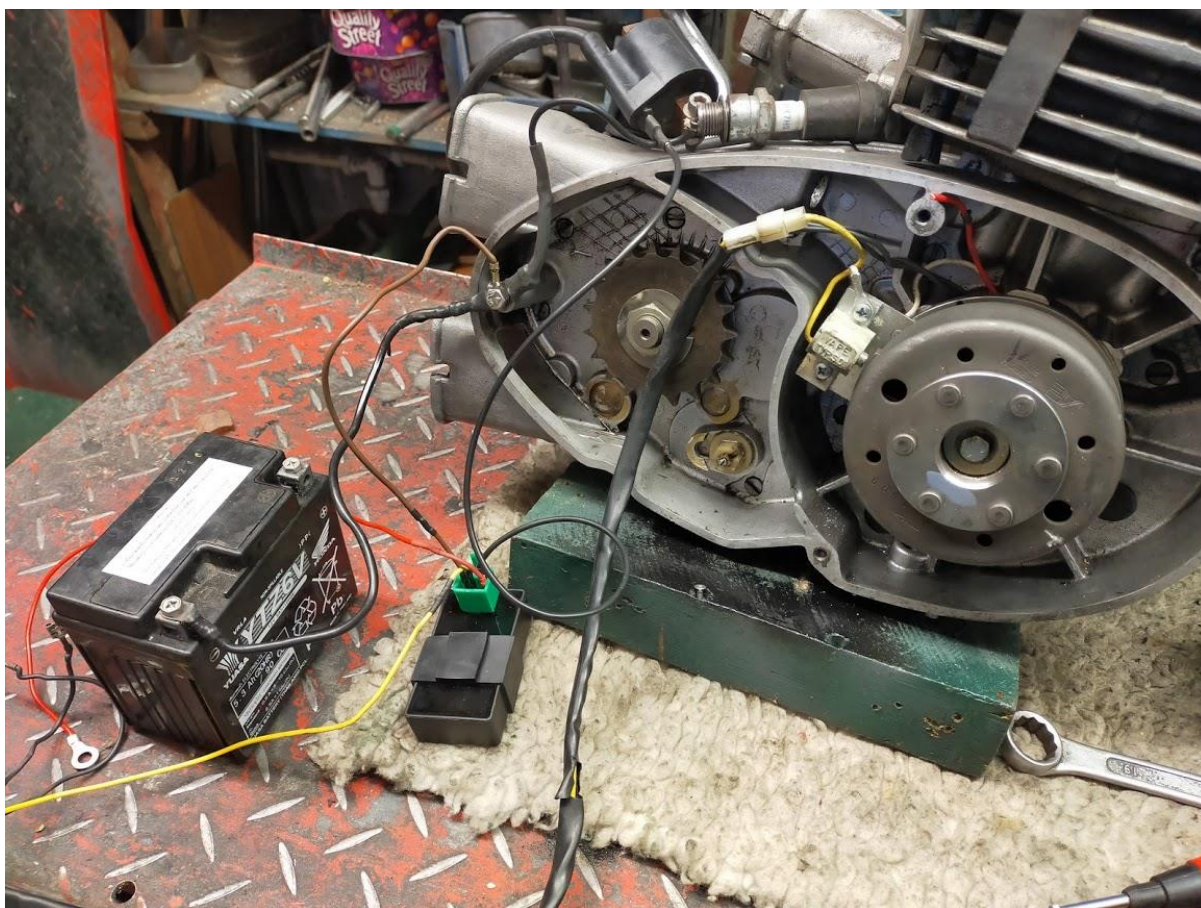
Yesterday and today it has been the turn of the Falcon 74 for some attention. There are several things I want to investigate, the clicking noise when you operate the front brake, converting it to -ve earth, and having another go at making a side stand. The clicking brake operation was a puzzle at first and even with the wheel out I could see no obvious cause. In fact it all looked very good for a 64yr old bike. Finally the penny dropped. Roger being an engineer had shimmed up the operating arm to remove any slack. But he had overdone it and put shims on both sides of the operating arm the inner was just smidgeon too tight. I could not find or make a suitable thinner inner shim and in truth the amount of side play was minimal so I simply left it out. A bit of slack does not affect the efficiency of the brake and now the clicking has gone away.

The reason for converting to –ve earth is to allow usage of a 6v led headlight bulb I had in stock. This was necessitated by the fact that the Villiers charging system did not output enough current to balance the full headlight. This was clearly a design fault as the lighting switch provides a position to power the headlight direct from the generator. Investigation of the wiring identified a modern solid state rectifier which would be easy to swap over. Next issue was the rear light unit which was already converted to led with a combined unit which was presumably +ve earth. Fortunately, the rear and side light elements each had their own earth wire so I was able to swap over the leads. All the other electrical components were not polarity sensitive so could be ignored. So in the end it was a pretty straightforward job and the new led headlight works a treat. What was a surprise is that the direct AC current actually powers the led lights as well, no that it is needed any more. The generator now balances the full headlight load with plenty to spare. All that remained was to swap over the terminals on the ammeter so charge and discharge read correctly. The power requirement with the led bulbs is so low that there is very little discharge even when they are fully on. In fact I am now searching for a 6v rectifier regulator to avoid issues with the battery boiling on longer journeys.

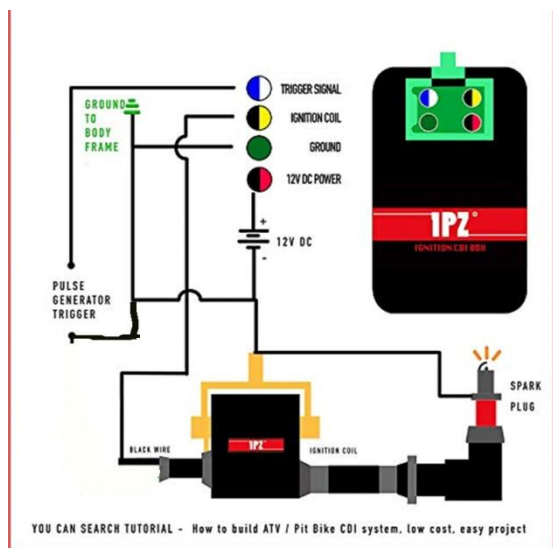
Saturday 23rd January 2021

The DC cdi arrived on Friday and since I had a lull in my loco project, I decided to investigate how to set up a test system. My original intention had been to use the 4spd TS250 as a test bed, and then I remembered I had a rebuilt Supa5 motor under the bench without any electrics so I have pressed that into service. First issue was lack of the proper connector, still on its way from China, but I managed to make up some temporary connectors from spares in my electrics box. The other unknown was the coil; I used one that came with the Red beast which had been set up DC cdi system cobbled together from various sources. Most of it long since thrown away but the coil looked ok so was kept.

Eventually I had a complete if somewhat Heath Robinson wiring system connected up and I used the battery drill to spin the motor. Eureka, I had sparks; moreover it also sparked if the motor was spun via the kickstarter.



That was on Friday. Today I rigged up my strobe light, marked 22 degrees advance on the rotor and gave it a spin. Not so good, Difficult to be precise when trying to operate the strobe and the drill at the same time but it looked as though the spark was occurring nearer tdc than at 22 degrees bt dc. It was also difficult to see if there was any auto advance as the drill did not offer a wide enough speed range. However, I think it probably is fixed timing otherwise the issue would have been wildly advanced rather than retarded timing. Trouble is with that amount of retard I doubt I could get the engine to start or rev to check it in the TS250.



Subsequently I may have found a partial solution at least to get an engine running with this setup. The pulse generator is mounted on plate and has two sets of locating holes. Moving it to the rear set of holes did advance the engine but only by a few degrees. Next setup was to remove the complete back plate and move it backwards using the rearmost of its original fixing holes and carefully drilling/tapping a hole for the other end. Fortunately it uses 3mm screws so I had the necessary tap and drill (there are shedloads of

3mm fixings on my loco project). A further strobe test suggested it was fairly close to 22 degrees btdc. Certainly should be close enough to get the engine running for a more accurate check. However, if it's not correct, it is less clear how I can adjust it. I'll tackle that problem later. This is the wiring diagram of the new ignition system. One of the drawbacks is of course that it is now dependent on a charged battery; removal of that dependence was the main reason for going Vape in the first place!

Wednesday 20th January 2021

I have ordered the bits for the Vape rescue project but at least one is coming from china, not because of price this time but because I simply could not find the requisite connectors anywhere else. I'll pick up this thread in due course – don't hold your breath.

For some time I have problems with water leaks in my garage, the one in the back garden; one of those Roundtoit problems. But finally I decided it had to be sorted. Some of the water is clearly coming from the roof. Not so much because of holes in the galvanised sheeting, more from the water lipping backwards inside because the slope is very shallow. Also it's very prone to condensation which drips over everything. However, in other places I think it's coming through the walls and floor. It's a Crompton concrete slab garage I installed probably 25 years ago, maybe longer. Last week I had ½" or more across most of the floor. Not the best environment for expensive motorcycles even though they covered with waterproof sheeting. First step was to contact some local roofing companies and arrange for a survey and quotes. I have had 3 visits so far with quotes awaited.

In the interim having talked to Terry D about it I have followed his suggestion and started drilling holes in the floor to drain the water away. With hindsight I cannot understand why I did not do this years ago. It's very slow going as the floor is 15" thick and very dense; I clearly over engineered this when I laid the base. I have borrowed an SDS Hammer drill from another friend and it will drill the holes but it takes several recharges of the battery to complete each one so slow going. I have done about 8 so far and it is clearly working as the puddles are now much shallower and more localised even though we have had quite heavy rain. I am now at the point where I check each morning looking for puddles and drilling another hole at their centre point.

While I was moving stuff around to get to the optimum place to drill I had a eureka moment or maybe it was an epiphany. All my MZs are complete and running and I intend running down to the point where I will only have a couple of MZs. So why do I need shelves and shelves of MZ spares. On the one fine afternoon we had last week and while the bikes were out in the garden, I sorted through all the spares. A few (very few) were clearly worth keeping in just in case but the vast majority would only really be needed if I was undertaking another project – which I don't. Having got this far I sorted through some more boxes of MZ related spares in the workshop and basically I now have one box of essential backup spares and about 8 boxes of mainly tat. But tat which is gold dust for someone. I put an advert on the MZRC website – Free to a good home - and within 24hrs it was spoken for. Still with me

because the current Covid-19 lockdown precludes travel for this sort of thing but Andy Pratt will be down as soon as he is allowed - sorted.

Another thing I noticed was the front wheel of my recently purchased BMW R75/6. The spokes are past their sell by date, not totally rusty but letting the bike down a bit and as is well known – I hate rusty spokes. So I took out a second mortgage and ordered a set of s/s spokes from Motobins. BMW use straight spokes like MZs so it should be a relatively straightforward job to swap out a couple at a time and be able to clean the central hub at the same time. First though I have to get the wheel out and the disks off. The spokes arrived today but have not scheduled the job yet. I have not yet looked closely at the rear wheel spokes; I'll wait until the front wheel is done before diving in to that.

Monday 11th January 2021

Already well into the New Year – time goes so fast. I parked the battery loco project for a while as it was waiting for parts and decided to experiment with the Vape unit that had given Roger Bibbings so much trouble. I am using the 4spd TS250 as a test bed. Initially it would not go anyway as there was no spark. My initial thought was the replacement Chinese AM6 coil had failed but in fact it was the cutout wired into the headlight flasher shorting out. Once disconnected it was fine and you can still kill the motor with the ignition switch in position 5.

First item swapped was the cdi coil as it's the quickest and easiest thing to do. The bike ran fine so I took it for a 5 mile test ride; actually 3 laps of the test circuit round my house so I was never far from home if it did not work. Next I checked the resistance readings of the AC input coil the cdi coil and the trigger coil on Rogers unit and those on my own unit. The cdi and trigger readings were identical. On my AC input coil it read 456ohms, on Rogers it read 416ohms. I then fitted the complete unit to the bike and immediately got a spark I was expecting this as Roger had reported that it would always work initially then fail after about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. Sure enough the engine started ok and I got it running for a while as it was a bit fluffy.

Suddenly it stopped and would not restart. On checking I found no spark. Left it for a while but still no sign of a spark and when I tested the AC input coil there was no circuit. Initial thought was a damaged wire caused by removing and refitting the unit but the wiring was all fine. The fault is within the AC input coil itself and as it's an integral part of the stator, probably not repairable cost effectively. I did subsequently find a replacement stator unit for this model on the Vape website but with postage it would be around £90 and probably import duty to pay now we are out of the EU.

Discussing the problem with Ollie Harris we (or lets be honest he) have come up with an alternative. Convert the system to a DC powered cdi unit using the existing trigger coil which I have since tested again deciding which bit to and is still fine. I am still agonising over the bits to buy and it's not a priority project so I will probably take the cheapo route and buy

from China. I don't really need to unit for any of my present bikes, it's more an interesting challenge and a long term insurance against failure in Vape products. The much vaunted reliability of their units is looking suspect, that's two failures for no apparent reason now.