

Daily Blogg Part 12A started 1st December 2022 - [Click here to get the Blogg Part 12](#)

Monday 22nd January 2024

A bit more catching up. The Yellow ETZ251 I rebuilt last summer was finally MoT'd in November and then sold via eBay. It was more the challenge of putting it back together than any real desire to own yet another of these bikes. Taking the Supa5 to Spain convinced me that it was still my favourite MZ. Plus the fact that space was needed for the new acquisitions. This is how it looked when it went.



In an earlier post I mentioned that I had fitted a new front wheel to the Supa5 and expressed concern that it had a 3.25" tyre rather than the standard 2.75. I never got round to changing it before the Colombres trip but need not have worried as the handling was fine.. Despite preparing the Serow for the trip with higher gearing and road tyres, I decided not to take it in the end. Mainly because I was concerned about its level of comfort for longer rides. Probably a good decision as we did over 800 miles during the week. It now has its original wheels and tyres, the loan wheels are back with Don Adams. I took it to a VMCC meeting on Thursday and was pleased with the way it went on the higher gearing.

Over the weekend I decided to have yet another reorganisation of the garage. The major objective was to mount the pillar drill on a lower platform as it was difficult to use as currently installed. AS is usual with these sort of jobs it took far longer and involved changing a host of things to achieve the objective. But I got there in the end and am happy with the result. In the process I decided to sell one of my 5" gauge locomotives, I have 4 altogether; the Sweet Pea has never gelled with me and

takes up a lot of space on its hydraulic trolley. I have only advertised it in the club so far. Some interest but no one has yet come to look.

Wednesday 17th January 2024

Yes it is almost 4 months since I updated this blog. Lots of reasons one of which is that I have arthritis in my hands and in my right shoulder which is somewhat debilitating and makes typing painful. However I decided today I would start keeping the blog again. So quick catch-up:

I went to Spain for the Colombres Rally in October. Took the faithful Supa5 for its 3rd visit and it went well all week, apart from front tyre puncture half a mile from the start on the first day. I'll probably do a write-up and post some pictures of that in due course. The group I was with were mostly newbies but enjoyed it so much we are planning to go in 2024.

The AV92 mentioned below has moved on, I did get it running but it was missing parts that I was finding it hard to source. It went to a Mobylette enthusiast in Swindon.

The AJS 14CSR mentioned below was picked up after Colombres and has been fettled a bit to sort a couple of things I was not happy with like the side stand, lack of mirrors and the alloy handlebars. I also (not sure how though) fixed a long standing problem over blowing the fuse when on emergency start. It has done a few local miles and seems fine, just waiting for better weather to take it on a longer ride. I would like to replace the front mudguard the one fitted just does not look right



For some time I had been hankering after an MSS Velocette. Though I have a superb Viper, I just don't enjoy riding it as much as I did the MSS I owned and sold to buy the Viper. My old MSS I took

to Colombres twice and my riding buddy Bill Little had a very nice MSS which also had the Alton Electric start fitted. Sadly Bill died in 2023 but I was able to buy his old bike and it now graces my garage. This is it when collected, compete with 2016 Colombres stickers.



In fact I have been working on it for the last few days and it was what prompted me to re-start the blog to record what has been done as I have never been very good at keeping specific servicing records for my bikes, just the notes in the blog. Anyway I have plans to use this bike for a touring weekend in April with the Somerset VMCC and if that works well, to take it to Spain in October. Over the past week I have fitted a new front tyre, the rear I fine, removed, cleaned and re-greased the rear chain, it is has little detectable wear so not worth replacing yet, but I might if it goes to Spain. I have also fitted a rear carrier. The Viper came with a brand new carrier which I thought spoiled its looks so removed. However, it did not look right on the MSS either so I found an old one in the shed which fitted perfectly and is small and neat. Think it came from a small Japanese bike and the side tubes are perfect for keeping my throw over bags out of the wheel. It seemed a bit wobbly when I first fitted the carrier and



further investigation revealed that the two of the securing bolts for the rear mudguard had never been fitted. Of course it meant the wheel had to come out to get at them but they are now fitted and the carrier is finally secure.

I also decided to fit indicators to the bike in anticipation of its planned trip to Spain and wider use. This turned into a bit of a saga but I got there in the end; you can just see one of them fitted to the top of the carrier just under the top box which I hope will give it some protection. Part of the saga was the rat's nest of wiring inside the headlamp shell, much of which was entirely unnecessary. A further problem was that the lighting switch did not operate correctly. Head, side and tail all came on together in one position but nothing in the other two positions. After much head scratching I figure out how to rewire the switch to give correct operation and got rid of the surplus wires.

Final job this morning was to do an engine oil change (mileage 48073) and check gearbox and chain case levels, both spot on. The oil I removed was so clean it must have had a recent oil change so I decided to leave the filter until the next service. So we should be good to go for the Summer.

Wednesday 20th September 2023

I have acquired two additional bikes recently. The first arrived on the day before we went to Cornwall and came from Tim Sowter who also provided the ETZ251. This one is 1972 Motobocane AV92 moped. This also was in his friends garage and is partly dismantled. More details about this later.

The other bike is a 1965 AJS Model 14 CSR which I bought from Scotland along with a Matchless G8 in 2016 on a whim. The AJS went to my friend Mick the welder straight away. The G8 never gelled with me, it did not compare with the MAC Velo I also owned at the time and has long gone. Mick sadly is not well and was finding the AJS too heavy for him so I have bought it back. Only collected it on Monday so still checking it over – more information later.



The AJS picture was taken by the previous owner in 2016 and as always the photo tends to flatter its condition. The mudguards are not original though the rear is close to correct. The front looks to be from a Triumph in style anyway. It been too wet to get the bike outside for a photo since I collected it.



Sunday 17th September 2023

Cracking week in Cornwall. It was very hot the day we drove down but by the Sunday it had cooled down to normal autumnal UK weather and remained that way for the rest of the week. We did have rain but only overnight and did not affect our riding. The Meteor went well and was the perfect choice for the event, albeit not VMCC eligible. However the chief marshal was also riding a Meteor so I was not out of place. I rode with Kevin Phillips from the WW section plus a small group of friends from Bristol. They changed many of the routes this year so we got to see some new places. On the last riding day the flashing spanner symbol appeared on the Meteor clock indicating a service was due. Bit odd as it was only serviced in June and had done only about 700 miles since – 5-600 of them in Cornwall. I looked up on the internet how to reset the service indicator which has got rid of it for now. Remains to be seen if it reappears in which case I will need to consult Hayballs.

As usual we took down the awning and packed up as much of the camping gear as possible on the Friday evening; just as well as it rained heavily overnight. We did get a brief dry interval in the morning which enabled us to complete the packing/loading but the heavens opened on the way home and this unsettled weather has continued ever since. Hopefully by next year the highway authority will have finished the new section of dual carriageway for the A30 between Carland Cross and Chilverton. The construction work for this 8 mile stretch was major pain all week.

Sunday 3rd September 2023

Little to report beyond the fact that I decided to tidy one of the sheds which has been used for some time as a dumping ground for anything we think might be useful and could not possibly be thrown

out. This time we were a bit more brutal and several ratty (literally) garden chairs and 7 old tyres are now in the back of the car ready for a trip to the recycling centre. I did keep a few NOS tyres that will eventually get used amongst them an unused 2.75 x 18" tyre which is perfect for the ETZ251. So the old tyre (no tread and splits in the sidewalls) was removed and joined the others in the back of the car. New tyre fitted and bike put away again pending its winter restoration. One small step forward and best of all, no cost involved.

My son Philip came to visit yesterday so I got him to help me load the Meteor into the back of the van ready for the Cornwall Holiday which starts next Friday – looking forward to that. I also paid the balance of the Colombres rally fee as a bank transfer. Saves me buying a shedload of Euros and trying to keep them safe.

Thursday 31st August 2023

It's definitely Velocette week as the MOV then came into the workshop for a couple of days. Initially it was to investigate the heavy clutch lever action. I did what Chris Wiggins advised and stripped the clutch completely, then measured each item for comparison against the chart compiled by David Childs many years ago. (curious that as I bought the bike from David). Anyway I found everything to be in good condition and well within spec. Rather as I expected because most of the parts subject to wear were replaced when I restored the bike years ago and its hardly been used since. Out of interest I reassemble the clutch with 12 rather than 16 springs. And As you would expect the clutch action became much lighter and more tolerable but the big question of course is would it now slip.

I carried out the red book procedure for adjustment and there was no slip when kick starting which was encouraging. So I took it for a brief test ride which included a hill and still no slip. Gear change was sweet and neutral easy to find even at rest. All very encouraging so I have left it like that and will give it a longer test.

One of the other things on the bike that has annoyed me was the decompressor lever which is actually an old clutch lever. I saw an advert on eBay for a nice looking one with a ball on the end rather than the sharp pointed end normally found on such levers. It was no more expensive than the normal type so I ordered one fully expecting it would take months to arrive from India. It arrived within a week so I fitted that today. Had to make up a new cable as the existing one had the wrong nipples; then I found a new one in the spares box! Anyway it's fitted, works well and looks good. Best of all it is well clear of the petrol tank on full lock.

Friday 25th August 2023

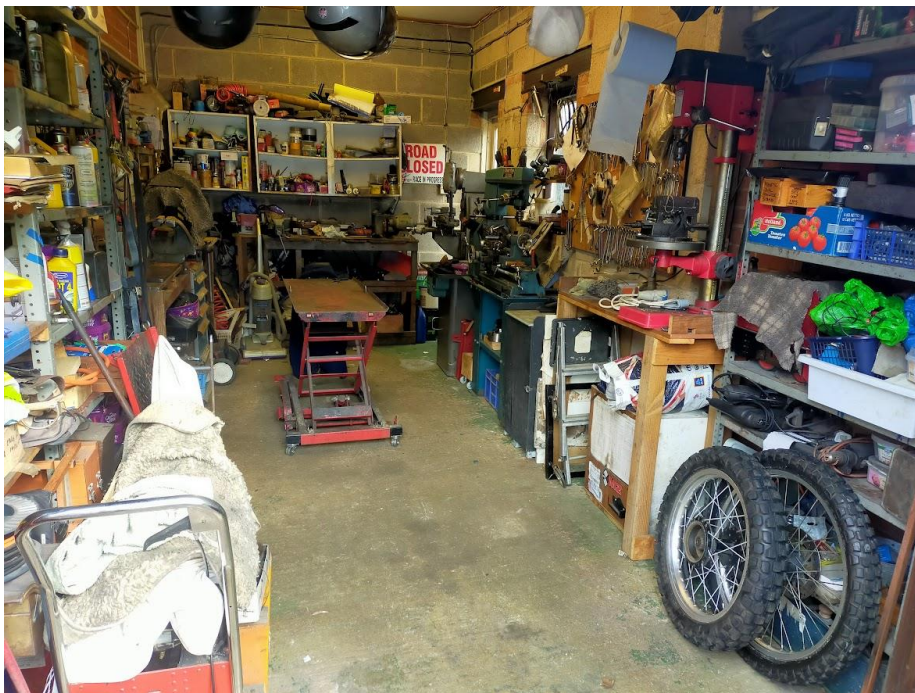
Serviced the Serow today. Fresh oil and filter plus all the suspension greased – 40740kms, just over 25k miles. A few days ago I also replaced both wheels on a temporary basis to try out some more road friendly tyres I bought from Keith Johnstone. The wheels were borrowed from Don Adams. The idea was to see if the Serow could be a contender to take to Colombres as an alternative to the Supa5. As part of the experiment I fitted a 16t gearbox sprocket (standard is 15t) and as the front brake was very poor, I fitted the new front disk and new pads I bought a while back. I used the bike on one of Keith's gentle green lane runs yesterday (24th August). The road performance is certainly greatly improved with better handling and easier cruising at 50mph plus and no droning from the tyres. The higher gearing and more road compatible tread did not seem to me to affect its

performance off road though mostly we were on gravel roads yesterday. We did tackle one muddy lane and I struggled a bit but then I do with the full blown trials tyres anyway as I don't deal well with them and tend to foot my way along. We did about 80 miles altogether and with the Airhawk seat I had a comfortable day. So the Serow is definitely a contender for Colombres.

Whilst in the mood for servicing I pulled the 1951 MAC out of its winter quarters for a look over. I have not ridden it at all this year, largely because it seemed to be a bit noisy and I was concerned it needed some mechanical attention. I did have its original carb refurbished by Bill Harley some while back and it was then loaned to the '29 Sloper for a period until its carb was refurbished. The MAC now has the correct 276 refitted and it started easily when I tried it today and seems to tick over nicely. The engine did not seem to be quite as clattery as I was expecting but it has been running on 20/50 so I drained it and refilled the tank with straight 50. I also checked and found that there was a good flow to the rockers. Possibly my imagination, but it does seem quieter mechanically now so I don't think any urgent action is needed and will pencil it in for a run shortly. The squealing front brake is still apparent though. Investigated this previously and never found the cause or cure but at least it works well.

Tuesday 8th August 2023

Workshop activity for the past few days has consisted of rearranging things to give me a better working space. The major issue was the Centec Mill which sticks out a long way and has a handle that constantly catches me out – usually painfully. Moving it from the middle to one end of the workshop to give me a more usable working area. This was something I had wanted to do for some time but mills and lathes are very heavy and I needed a helper which came in the shape of my son who is staying for a few days. Job now done :



Today I spent swapping the wheels on the Serow and fitting a 16t gearbox sprocket to raise the gearing a little for road work. The new tyres do make a difference to its handling particularly on roundabouts and they don't drone like the enduro tyres. However, the front brake was very poor

due to the badly worn disk on the new wheel. In the end I fitted the brand new disk and pads I had in stock and now all seems to be well in the braking department. However, rain stopped play by the time this was completed so a road test will be done tomorrow.

Wednesday 2nd August 2023

Yet another seriously wet day so an opportunity for some more garage therapy. The tyres are now fitted to the Serow wheels. The front was easy, the rear a struggle and that was without the security bolt which I don't really need if it's going to be run at normal road pressures. Though the spokes on the rear wheel look ok in the picture, they are actually quite rusty so they have now been rubbed down and painted silver. The front spokes are fine. I also ordered from Wemoto a 16t and 17t gearbox sprocket so I can gear the bike up a bit when used purely for road work such as Colombres and possibly the Cornish holiday in early September.



Another job I have been meaning to do for ages is to swap the front wheel of the Supa5 which is currently a 7" Honda t1s for an 8" Honda t1s I bought nearly 3 years ago. It was not essential but it seemed a pity not to use it and the smaller one can be fitted to the TS125 in due course. The wheel is now fitted but I had overlooked that I fitted it with a 3.25" tyre at some point. It just fits under the mudguard and I will try it like that but if it does not feel right, I will swap it for the correct 2.75" tyre.

I was planning to fit the disk brake wheel to the ETZ251 but hit a snag with special double nipple just purchased. The thread is damaged on the LH thread side. I contacted Rob and he is going to send me a replacement so the job is on hold. However, later I did the machine the damaged part of the thread in the lathe and it now sort of works. Enough anyway to prove that I can now correctly set up

the brake pipe. I would not want to use it long term though as the amount of thread left may be insufficient for safe operation.



Monday 31st July 2023

Quite a lot to record since the last update and this may not be in chronological order. On Tuesday I rode the Supa5 to Honey Street Café for a coffee morning via the Esso garage in Melksham. I wanted to brim the tank to work out the fuel consumption on the HOTE event at the end of June. Rather disappointed as it worked out at 57mpg. It should do much better than that on such a gentle run. Not yet had a chance to investigate why. On Thursday I rode the Serow on one of Keith Johnston's gentle green lane runs. I enjoyed it and had no real problems though my shoulder was beginning to ache by the time we had done about 75 miles so I wimped out near Upavon for a rest then rode home on tarmac. When I filled the tank it worked out at 105mpg, that's more like it.

Saturday was Calne Bike Day and I had entered the BSA Sloper. It started first kick and was going really well until I had a puncture at Westbrook. I did have tools, a spare inner tube and a pump but frankly not the energy to try and mend it at the side of the road. I phone the Peter James Insurance breakdown number and a nice young man booked me in for a recovery and said it would be about 2 hours. In fact an AA patrol van turned up within 1.5 hours and took me home using his self assembly trailer. I dumped the bike in the garage, had a coffee and then rode the Viper to Calne.



Sunday was the Somerset Signpost Trial which starts from Creech St Michael near Taunton. I was joined by Kevin Phillips and we had a successful run insofar as we found all the locations and answered the questions correctly. However, the weather alternated between drizzle and howling gale for most of the 94 miles. Turns out we were the first ones back to have completed the course. Only one other person had made it back by the time I left around 16:15. The road safety quiz was tough as usual and curiously Kevin and I both got the same, probably appallingly low, score. I don't expect either of us will figure high up in the results. I rode the Supa5 but not yet filled the tank to see if the consumption is still poor. I did buy one of those PWK flat slide carbs for it a while back, on the recommendation of Andrew Long; perhaps it's time to try it out especially as the Supa5 is currently the most likely to go to Colombres.

Today I mended the puncture in the Sloper. I had intended to do the job with the bike on the lift but with a flat tyre it was not possible to get the scissor jack underneath so I had to do it using the bikes rear stand. I decided to attempt the job using only the tools that were on the bike when I broke down and this was successful which was encouraging. Getting the wheel out was easier than I expected as the rear stand lifts the bike quite high and the rear section of the mudguard hinges up to allow enough room to pull the wheel out. I was able to remove and refit the tyre using the levers in the bikes tool kit. Gives confidence that I could do it at the side of the road if I really had to. The reason for the puncture was pretty obvious and rather embarrassing; the picture below shows the pieces of plastic I found inside the tyre. It was new a few months back and this was the bikes first outing since so the plastic must have been inside the tyre when I fitted it. Serves me right for not checking. I think the tyre manufacturer fits them to help the tyre hold shape and I did remove

several at the time of first fitting but obviously missed this one. Just hope I have not missed one on the front tyre I also replaced at the same time. Anyway a new tube now fitted (the valve was ripped out of the old one) and the wheel is back in the bike ready for its next outing,



In the post today was a small parcel from Rob Holusza the MZ guru from Bristol. These bits should enable me to build a compete disk brake assembly for the ETZ251 when I get time.



On a different subject, one of the things I have been pondering on is taking the Serow to Columbres but the Enduro tyres currently fitted, whilst perfect for green laning are a pain on the tarmac, they are noisy and tend to wander on certain types of road surface. Talking about this during the Geen Lane Run last Thursday has resulted in the loan of a pair of Serow wheels from Don Adams and a good pair of more road friendly tyres to match these wheels from Keith Johnston. I picked up wheels and tyres this evening and as luck would have it, I have suitable inner tubes in stock. When time permits I will fit the tyres and swap the wheels to see how the performs.

Saturday 22nd July 2022

What a miserable day outside, they are forecasting a month's worth of rain for this weekend. The rest of Europe is sweltering in 40 degree plus temperatures and it feels like autumn in Wiltshire. On balance though I think I prefer it here. Anyway In anticipation of this weather, I brought the 251 back into the workshop and to tackle some of the remaining issues. The sidelight is working again, not really sure why it stopped. The horn was a tougher job as by a process of elimination it turned out to be the horn itself. Took it off the bike and cleaned up the connections and swore at it and it started working again. One benefit of the exercise was that the headlamp flasher now works as well; that was an own goal as I had the blk/yellow and blk/red wires the wrong way round.

I managed to find an old lock that fitted the battery side panel so it is now held in place but I will need a new one as this one can be opened with a screwdriver. The rear brake light switch is now also connected so as of today all the electrics are working – tick.

I am pretty hopeless with hydraulic brakes but have run out of excuses so made a start today. Curiously enough I managed to get the brake working after a fashion. First issue was the master cylinder which externally looks like it might be a recent replacement. However, the plunger was

stuck fast and would not even respond to a special tool I made years ago for such eventualities. In the end I drilled a hole at the other end to insert a rod which then enabled me to drive out the plunger. There was quite a lot of corrosion but it all cleaned up well and the brake lever now operates the master cylinder – result. The hole was tapped 6mm and a bolt fitted.

To check the caliper I needed to connect the whole system to create hydraulic pressure which was where I hit the second snag. There is a double ended nipple that connects caliper to hose using a special nut that is RH thread on one end and LH thread on the other. This allows the hose to be adjusted to position before tightening. I found the special nut but not the special nipple. Fortunately I found you could connect the hose directly to caliper provided a suitable sealing washer was used. Snag three was the bleed nipple which was badly rusted and stuck in the caliper. Very easy to break these off so I used a lot of heat and WD40 to finally get it free. Anyway with that done I was able to pump brake fluid through the bleed nipple up to the master cylinder. Getting fluid on my shirt and in my hair in the process – don't ask. To my surprise the system pressurised and one of the caliper pistons started to move. I used a G clamp to trap this and the other one then moved. If need be I can now fully extract the pistons but the seals and gaiters look to be in good condition and there were no leaks so I am leaving well alone for now. So it looks like I have 90% of a working brake. The tally of missing or broken pieces is:

- The double ended nipple

- Bleed nipple

- The cruciform spring that sits on top of the pads

- The rubber boot that fits inside the master cylinder reservoir (diaphragm)

- The plastic cover for the pads – mine is broken.

- Plus for safety's sake seal kits for master cylinder and caliper.

I actually found all the bits on TheMZShop website but the total cost was £40 excluding the seals. As I am not in any rush I will look around for decent 2nd hand bits. It is after all meant to be next winter's project – just that winter seems to have arrived a bit earlier than expected. Annoyingly I gave away a box of assorted hydraulic bits a while back and it contained most if not all of these items. I always have the fallback choice of fitting the wheel with the Honda front brake if the current drum brake is considered inadequate when I get to test ride the bike.

Friday 21st July 2022

The tank is progressing well as the picture shows. There are a couple of small dings I did not notice when it was bare metal and there are a couple of runs but overall I think it will do the job for now. Certainly stops the bare metal from rusting further. I have the tank badges but they obviously will not get glued on until the painting is finished. It's still tacky at the moment so not safe to move but the intention is to put it in the conservatory for a few weeks to make sure the paint hardens thoroughly and (hopefully) is petrol proof. Certainly the earlier versions of Hammerite were provided the paint had been allowed to harden before use.



The headlight connector arrived from Mark E today and has been fitted. So we have a working headlight and one more item knocked of the to do list. Replaced by the need to investigate why the sidelight and horn no longer work – doh! Weather forecast for the weekend is dire so I have scheduled some time to investigate the hydraulic components of the front brake I am pretty sure I am missing a couple of bits which with luck I can get from TheMZShop or Rob Holusza.

So the list of tasks as of today is:

- Leave the tank to harden for 3-4 weeks, then fit the tap and onto the bike.
- Investigate why the sidelight and horn stopped working
- Connect the rear stoplight switch.
- Connect the oil tank hose.
- Fit a lock to the battery side cover.

That should get the bike to the point where I can ride it at which point no doubt other things will arise. Longer term if it is to be a keeper, then I need to sort the hydraulics on the front brake and give more attention to the cosmetics. This how the bike looks today:



Thursday 20th July 2022

Making the stepped Anode certainly worked well as the amount of rust it collected once this was done improved considerably. Tonight I decided it had gone on long enough and stopped the process. The tank was agitated and washed out several times and now looks pretty good. I dried it out thoroughly using the hot air gun – surprisingly quick and effective and then put in 1/4pt of oil which was swished around to make sure all surfaces were coated. The swishing will need to be repeated regularly until the tank can be filled with fuel. The outside of the tank was rubbed over with emery cloth to remove any traces of rust. Tomorrow I will clean it with Cellulose thinners and start spraying. The petrol tap I ordered from China arrived today, that was quicker than expected, and it looks good. Will be a while before it's needed though.



Tuesday 18th July 2023

The rust removing technique for removing rust worked well on the oil tank and it was a useful learning exercise as there are aspects to consider when using the technique. The first is to wash out the tank after a while and agitate with stones or nuts/bolts to loosen what remains. Then wash out the black sludge that seems to form a part of the process. The other is that the process is essentially line of sight and rust hidden round corners does not get picked up, or probably more accurately is less likely to. It was not really a problem with the oil tank which is a simple square box with a central access hole. However, with the fuel tank the filler hole is on the RH side. To overcome this I used a long rod which is stepped to fit over the central part of the tank and dip into the LH side. The process is on-going and will take a couple more days.



The picture above shows some of what came out of the oil tank , this was after the third iteration. The picture below shos the tank set up for electrolysis. For the oil tank I used the bikes 12v battery which worked ok but decided a bigger battery for the tank as it hold near 4 gallons of liquid.



I managed to secure 4 cans of smooth yellow Hammerite paint from someone local at a very good price on Sunday evening. The intention initially is to paint the battery cover and petrol tank mainly to stop them rusting. The battery cover is now done and looks quite good but it is clear that either the original paint has faded or that Hammerite has changed the formula slightly since the bike was originally painted. Possibly a combination of both. However, with the 4 cans I may well have enough to refresh the other yellow painted items. A decision that can wait until the bikes long was actually intended for another model of MZ as the original slotted holes are much too far forward. But it now fits fine and I am contemplating cutting off the surplus metal at some point. Last night the rusty spokes in the rear wheel finally got to me and I rubbed them down and painted them silverterm future is decided.

Some progress in other areas as well. The new seat cover arrived yesterday and has now been fitted. I also fitted the rear carrier that came with the bike. When first tried it would not fit due to the silencer bracket and the location holes at the front. The former problem went away when I sorted out the silencer fitting and the latter problem was solved by slotting the fixing hole on one side to allow it to centralise. I suspect this carrier. This technique worked well on the CB250RS and the Serow so will last a while on the MZ and certainly looks better from a distance anyway. If it's a long term keeper, I may well rebuild with s/s spokes but they are pretty expensive these days. Not much more to do to make it a runner. Outstanding tasks are:

Finish re-rusting the petrol tank, paint it and fit the petrol tap when it arrives.

Connect the rear brake light switch.

Fit the headlight connector block when it arrives.

Quite good progress for 10 days of ownership and yesterday the V5c in my name arrived. Biggest problem is likely to be where to keep the bike as the garage is already quite full.

Saturday 15th July 2023

Looking at the picture of the RH side of the 251 below It struck me that the silencer is sitting lower than I would expect for this model. I needed to sort out the fit of the exhaust pipe in the barrel anyway so decided to tackle both jobs this morning. The silencer position was resolved by using a shorter support strut and mounting this inside the frame lug so it was tucked in more. Normally I don't use a copper asbestos gasket when fitting an MZ exhaust pipe, I just keep tightening them until they stop leaking. However, the 251 pipe looks new and is made in s/s so not sure my usual technique would work. I managed to find a correct size exhaust gasket and fitting that solved another issue. Without the gasket, the exhaust screwed so far into the barrel it would not allow the correct C spanner to engage – now it does.

I then removed the air cleaner assembly to get access to the oil tank which is secured to the back. I am using the oil tank as a test run for de-rusting the fuel tank. Its currently bubbling away in the garage and the anode is already covered with rust residue. In truth there is not all awful lot of rust to be removed but I don't want to take any chances with it getting into the pump or engine. If this works ok I will tackle the petrol tank.

My friend Mark E has come to the rescue with a headlamp connector which he is going to send in due course. That's the nice thing about the MZ world, everyone helps out.

Friday 14th July 2023

It was club night for the WW section on Thursday so I rode the Viper. The clutch dragging is much improved now that I have put some slack in the primary chain. I even managed to get it into neutral a couple of times. Not quite right but much improved and the bike itself seems to be getting livelier as the mileage increases. Its still only done circa 350 miles since the engine rebuild with new piston. My plan is to do nothing further for the moment other than ride it to see if it beds down with use.

The weather forecast for today and tomorrow is dire; heavy rain and strong winds. Perfect excuse to have some more garage therapy with the 251. The back wheel was making some odd noises so it was the first to be looked at. As I suspected, the brake drum was heavily rusted but not difficult to clean up with a flap wheel and some brake cleaner. The brake shoes look to be new which was a bonus. All back together and the grating noises have gone so that should be one thing fixed.

The front forks were next on the list. They hardly worked at all and made the most disturbing creaking noises so I was expecting serious issues. Indeed the springs on both sides were lightly rusted but the main problem was lack of suspension fluid. Both legs were bone dry. With the springs out the stanchions moved easily in the sliders so hopefully the bottom part of each is not rusted. For now I have limited remedial work to de-rusting the springs and putting in 220cc of fork oil. On the bench both legs now perform smoothly with no grating or other worrying noises.

Forks now reinstalled and working smoothly. Not overly impressed with the drum front brake, the whole wheel was originally on the TS125 and I now recall I swapped it for the old front wheel from my Supa5 because it was not very good. Looks like it needs new linings but perhaps better to get on and sort out the disk brake assembly.

The inside of the petrol tank is quite rusty so I have been researching methods on the internet. Using electrolysis looks very promising. It's seems very effecting and best of all costs pennies; just some washing soda, water, a piece of scrap iron and driven by one of my leisure batteries. Worth a try anyway.

This is how the bike looks now:



Wednesday 12th July 2023

I was busy on other things this morning so it was mid afternoon before I got near the 251. First job was to figure out why the front indicators were very dim whilst the rears were bright. Eventually I found it was the master earth connection on top of the air cleaner box that was loose. A further search of my spares box produced the correct ETZ type choke lever and a new choke cable plus an oil pump cable so all these are now fitted. The pump seems to be working so having established that I have temporarily disconnected the cable so that it is passing minimal oil as I am running it on petrol for the moment. The oil tank has been dry for a long time and looks like it rusty inside so it needs cleaning before being used. I have also set the ignition timing so in theory the engine should run. Might give it a try tomorrow.

This evening I exercised my credit card and bought a petrol tap and a seat cover. I am sure I have a couple of the former somewhere in the shed but so far I have failed to find them. They will of course now turn up but the tap was only £9 including postage from China and appears to be a replica of the MZ design. The seat cover by contrast is coming from Rob Holusza in Bristol. I may have found a source of cheap yellow Hammerite smooth and if this comes fruition, I will paint the tank and sidecover yellow for now to match the rest of the bike. Longer term if I like the bike and decide to keep it, I may well do a proper paint job. The inside of the battery cover shows it was originally rather nice metallic blue. But that's a long way down the road, as yet all I have done is put it back together, there could be all sorts of horrors come to light when I get it running and try to ride it. Which reminds me, I need to find a chain.

Tuesday 11th July 2023

Now spent the better part of two days reassembling the ETZ251. The majority of the time was spent on the wiring. The bulk of it was still present and fortunately pretty much original but things like the lights and indicators had been cut off and I had to make repairs – always very time consuming. Then I had to sort out the rats nest of connections in the headlamps shell. Some of it is quite easy and obvious but there is always a small number left over that have no obvious use and do not seem to conform to the wiring chart even though they are clearly originals. Got there in the end and everything now works or would if only I could find the headlamp bulb connector.

As part of this electrical work I had to dismantle and clean the speedo and tachometer so that I could see the idiot lights. Both instruments had clearly be left upside down and in the rain as though now dry, the glass was totally obscured by a rust residue. Though far from pristine they both cleaned up tolerably well and amazing both still seem to work. I have not fully crimped the bezels down so that I can give them a better clean and paint the needles but only worth doing that if they actually work which I won't know for a while. The important part was to be able to see the idiot lights.





As you can see above I have fitted a drum brake wheel I had in stock for now so that at least I have a working brake. The disk brake assembly needs a lot of attention so has been parked for now. Last task today was to strip and examine the carb which was actually pretty clean. There was a twistgrip in the box of bits and this is now connected up. As we also have sparks, in theory the engine should run but not trying that just yet. This is meant to be a survey not the restoration.

As it stands today the only parts I have not been able to find so far are:

Fuel tap

Choke lever and cable

Headlight bulb connector

Seat cover (there is a new one but not for this bike sadly)

Chain – but I would fit a new one anyway. There were pair of new chain gators though.

Toolbox lock assembly

Oh yes I had to use my spare Alternator stator as that was missing also.

Not bad really but still work to be done

Monday 10th July 2023

Yesterday was busy as it was our White Horse Navigation Event. We had 51 entrants and against all the predictions the weather was fine and everyone had a good time. Still working on the results and other admin. Later that evening I took delivery of my latest toy a 1990 MZETZ251. I was helping the previous owner to sell the bike and finished up buying it myself. As you can see it's a project and the



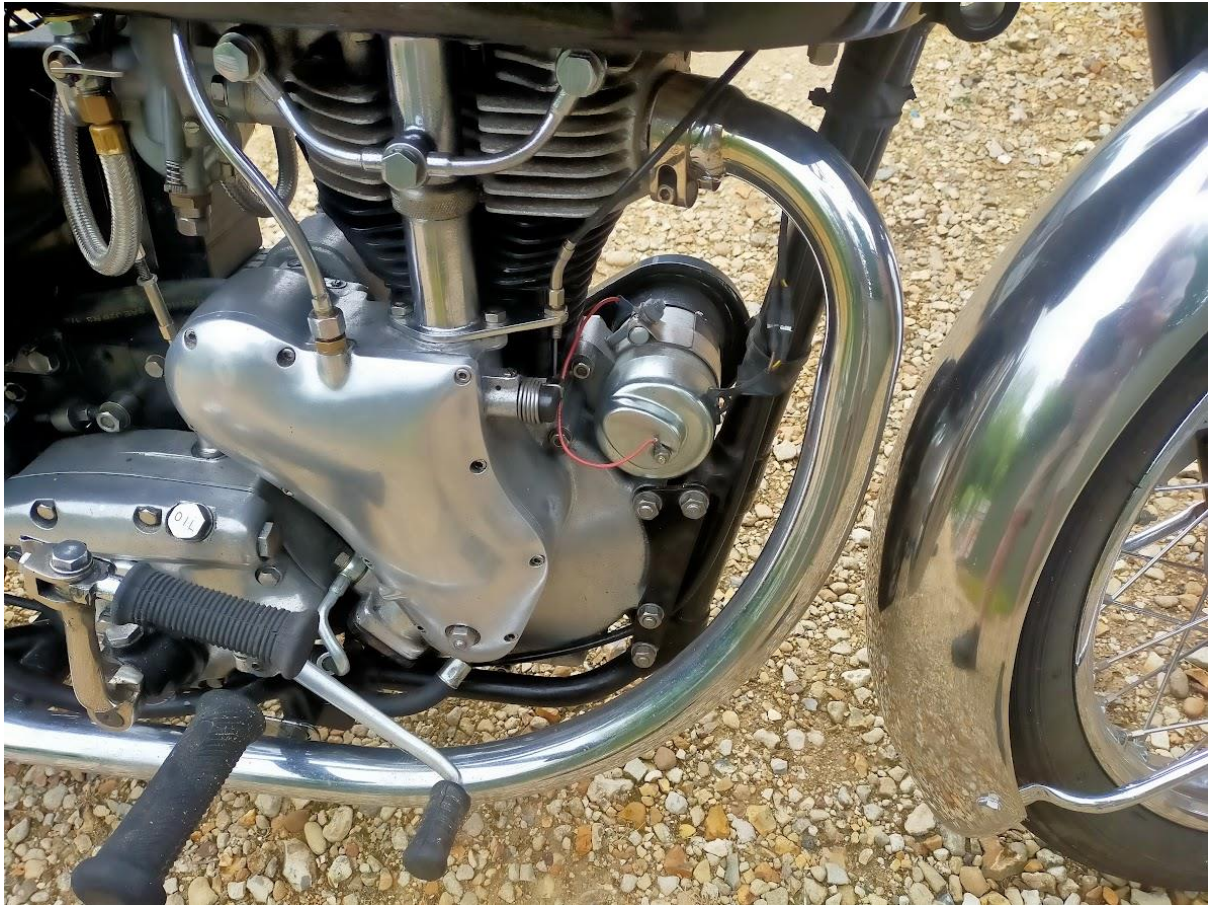
first task is to establish how much is missing.



And here's the rest of it. The bike had been on extended loan to a friend of the PO who sadly died. When he collected it the friend had made a start on restoring the bike, removing lots of bits and starting with to strip the yellow paintwork. Pity because I would have been quite happy to keep it yellow. Intended to be next winters project but no doubt I will not be able to resist trying to get it running.

Saturday 8th July 2023

The replacement dynamo end cover arrived this morning very quick and seems to be well made. I expected it to be raw metal but in fact it has some sort of plating so I have not bothered to paint it for now. I replaced the rather short screw that originally retained the cover with a longer stud and a nut with spring washer. Hopefully it will not come loose again but I shall now include it as part of my pre-ride checks.



The wire by the way is because the body of the dynamo is painted and does not earth to the crankcase. It needs that earth to charge properly for some reason.

The VOC Forum has been offering suggestions about the dragging clutch. One was to check the lever to make sure it has the correct $1 \frac{1}{16}$ " distance between centres – it does. Another was to check the primary chain as if too tight this could promote clutch drag. Indeed when checked it was certainly tighter than I would have set it so I have now slackened it. It's currently raining so a test ride will have to wait.

Wednesday 5th July 2023

I rode the Serow today for the first time since before the Giants Run incident. Partly because Mrs F wanted the car and partly because I wanted to find out if my shoulder would cope. Firstly I went to the WWSME track as it's a working party day, then I came home the pretty way to check a couple of the WHT locations, one of which was along a green lane above the Westbury White Horse. Though I did not have any real problems, the shoulder was a bit uncomfortable and reluctantly I concluded it would be better to skip the Dorset Dakar on Saturday. I need to be match fit for the WHT on Sunday and it would be silly to risk aggravating the shoulder with a spill.

In the evening I rode the Viper to Biddestone near Corsham for a meet up with some friend from Bristol. The bike went well enough but the clutch is still dragging making gear changing ponderous and selecting neutral difficult. On the way home I felt something hit my right leg followed by a tinkle on the road. Stopped as quickly as I could and noted that the dynamo end cover was missing. Walked back and found it but by that time several cars had passed by in both directions and the result is show below:



Little chance of fixing this but I did find a new replica on eBay which I have ordered. The other disappointment was that the riding position makes my neck and right shoulder ache. Not really much I can do about this without spoiling the overall look of the bike so sadly it will be limited to shorter rides and is probably not a candidate for Colombres especially if I cannot sort out the dragging clutch.

Friday 30th June 2023

Gosh, half way through 2023, where does the time go. Sorting the Viper fuel leak turned into something of a saga. I had to remove the fuel pipe on the LH side and the battery to be able to get at the monobloc float chamber. Once apart I could not find anything obviously wrong, the carb was new just before I bought the bike and the float needle is the latest nitrile tipped type. I ran some fuel through to wash out any grit that might be present and then blew through with the air line. I replaced the outer cover with a clear plastic one I made a while ago so I could observe what was happening and also check the fuel level. Initially the needle was reluctant to pass any fuel but after tapping the side of the carb it did oblige and the fuel level was perfect. The bike started ok but the

tickover and pickup were hesitant – typical symptoms of a blocked pilot jet. Not easy to get it out with the carb still on the bike but sure enough once on the bench it was clearly blocked. A combination of the airline and some soft copper wire strands finally got it cleared.

Once back together the bike was very reluctant to start and when it did it ran like a dog showing all the signs of being far too rich. Since it ran pretty well before I tinkered with the pilot jet, logic said it had to be something to do with that. To cut a long story short, it seems that the monobloc pilot jet has to be screwed fully in and tight, otherwise fuel can leak round the top rather than through the jet at the bottom. Another lesson learned. Getting it tight was not easy but achieved in the end by using a washer held in pliers. The bike then started easily but the tickover was far too fast due presumably to previous adjustments trying to compensate for the blocked pilot jet. Simple enough to reset and now it has a super smooth slow tickover and picks up cleanly.

On Thursday I took it to Melksham to fill the tank with fresh 97 octane petrol and did about 8 miles around Seend. The engine pulled well and no further fueling problems. It settled to a slow steady tickover when I got back – sorted. Less happy about the clutch though as it is dragging slightly and makes selecting neutral hard unless done prior to stopping. Not overly happy with the riding position either – the bars are low and too far back for my liking combined with a hard seat which seems rather high to me compared to my other velos. However they both have sprung saddles rather than a dual seat. In the end I decided against riding the Viper to Hunters Hall as I felt the 70 mile round trip a bit ambitious for a first longer ride especially as it was likely to be getting dark when I came home. Had a nice ride on the Meteor instead.

Tuesday 27th June 2023

I took the MOV out for a test ride this afternoon. The bike ran up to 45mph and steered properly without any sign of weaving. I don't really know what I did to fix it, possibly a combination of things. I still need to fix the worn bottom bush but seemingly that was never the cause. So the MOV is now an option for shorter rides, with today's roads and its primitive suspension it is not the most comfortable vehicle to travel far on.

However, it did fire my enthusiasm to get the Viper on the road with a target of using it on Thursday for a Wandering to Hunters Hall near Nailsworth. It was tucked right at the back of the garage so everything had to be moved to get it out. Amazingly it started first kick after flooding the carb and using the choke. However, the euphoria was short lived as petrol was observed pouring out of the carb. I guess the float needle is stuck, something that has happened previously. The bike is now in the workshop for attention. Needs a good clean as well.

Monday 26th June 2022

Success, I tackled the Hereford on the Edge in stages. On Saturday I avoided doing anything that might aggravate my shoulder and had an early night. Both successful as I felt fine on Sunday morning and drove up to Ross on Wye without any real problems. I took the long route via the M4 and A449 which makes it motorway and dual carriageway for the bulk of the journey which I guess helped. As I still felt fine after unloading the bike I decided to do the event. Riding the bike was actually a lot easier than driving and my only real problem was stiffness in my neck but that is a long standing problem and a couple of paracetamol half way round dealt with that. The route I planned covered 24

of the 28 controls and was about 170 miles. I missed a couple of turns which involved some backtracking but nothing major and the speedo recorded 180 miles. The rain that was threatened around midday never materialised and it was dry and sunny all day. Very lucky as my son who lives in Shrewsbury only about 25 miles further North than I travelled reported biblical deluges during the day.

The bike ran faultlessly all day and was a joy to ride. I filled the tank to the brim and we did not get to reserve – I will brim it again shortly and see what the fuel consumption actually was. I met a number of friends not seen for a while including several who have entered the WHT. Got back to the finish around 4:30 pm and was presented with a gold award for doing 20 controls plus the cardinal points (28 in total). It seems I was the oldest rider to finish the event so I won a rather nice Oxford bag containing goodies to keep the helmet in good condition. All in all a good day but today I am pretty tired and a bit stiff; all over not just the left shoulder. To be expected as in total it was 340 miles roughly half driving and half riding.

Friday 23rd June 2023

On Wednesday I drove the Traffic van to Westbury and then to Melksham to fill it up. It was uncomfortable but not overly painful or difficult. Jury still out on whether I could cope with the trip to Ross on Wye. On Thursday morning I rode the Supa5 for the first time since I injured my shoulder. Partly to see if the clutch repair was successful and partly to see how my shoulder coped. The clutch worked fine and I had not realised just how bad it had become. No crunching when selecting first from rest and easy to find neutral. I should have repaired the clutch a long time ago. Strangely, riding the bike was a lot easier than driving the van so maybe there is hope for Sunday; I am continuing prepping the Supa5 anyway.

In the evening I rode the MOV to Yatton Keynall for the VMCC meeting. First time I have attended such a meeting as an ordinary member rather than a section officer in near 20 years – did feel a bit strange but in a good way. I think Jon Hall will do a good job and he has youth (relatively) on his side.

Mechanically the MOV went well, it did leak a little oil when parked up, but no more than an MAC parked close by. There was far less oil from the rocker box than previously so overall, I think my decision to just ride the bike was the right one. However, it has now developed another problem in the shape of a weaving that becomes uncomfortable beyond 40mph. Below an indicated 38 its fine and this seems to be the bikes sweet spot anyway. Given the girder forks and rigid rear end and today's potholed roads, that is plenty fast enough most of the time. However, it should not weave and I don't remember it doing this on the Giants Run so something has changed.

Today I jacked up the front end to investigate. I found nothing radically changed to account for the weave. The steering head bearings were a little slack so they were tightened. There was a little side play in the links which I also adjusted. What I find was a lot of slop in one of the bottom bushes but that has always been present so unlikely to be the cause of the weave. The wheel bearings were properly adjusted and the wheel spins freely so nothing obviously wrong here either. Bit of a mystery really and I doubt I have yet cured the weave but won't know until I do a road test tomorrow. However, something has changed for the better as I noticed that a clonk I used to get when wheeling the bike around is no longer present. I also need to modify the front pivot bolt on the

saddle to include a lock nut. The saddle was a tad loose which would have exacerbated the wobble effect of the weave but I doubt it was the cause.

Tuesday 20th June 2023

Not much progress on the MOV. Chris Wiggins had a look at the engine yesterday and was of the opinion that it was probably the fibre washers I had used to seal the pipe connections. I found some alloy washers which passed his inspection so these were fitted last night. I also ran the engine to make sure oil was still circulating to the rocker box and returning from the sump – which it was. Decided in the end to do no further investigation and simply use the bike sparingly on shorter runs to see if the leak gets worse. If it does I will do a full engine strip over the winter.

Today I rode the Meteor down to Hayball's in Salisbury for its first annual service. After weeks of hot dry weather, last night we had heavy rain with some T&L from about 2pm and it was still drizzling when I left home at 8am. I borrowed a Himalayan demonstrator and used this to ride round the last few WHT locations that needed checking. By that time the rain had stopped so it was a pleasant tootle. I found the Himalayan riding position not as comfortable as the Meteor's and was glad to get my own bike back. I had a look at the new Enfield Hunter while in the shop. Attractive bike in some ways but it has a much sportier riding position and even if it had been available last year, I suspect I would still have chosen the Meteor.

The good news is that my left shoulder stood up the circa 100 mile ride so tomorrow I plan to try the Renault Trafic van to see if my shoulder copes with that. If it does then maybe I will be able to do the HOTE.

Saturday 17th June 2023

Famous last words. While I was sorting out the carb on the MOV I noticed that it was leaking rather more oil than I was happy about. So it was put on the bike lift to make investigation easier. First I gave the whole engine and gearbox area a good clean. Then I placed some paper underneath to catch the drips and help establish where the oil was coming from. This of course only told me where it finished up, the lowest point, not necessarily where it came from.

Turned out there were two sources of leaks. Firstly from the gearbox and secondly from the engine. The gearbox leak was easily fixed as it just needed the outer cover screws tightening a little. There is still a very slight weep from the kickstart shaft but they all do that as there is no oil seal. We tried running the engine but this did not produce an obvious or immediate oil leak. However, if left for a while oil does eventually start to drip from the oil strainer bolt. Not a huge amount – perhaps a teaspoonfull over the course of a day. More annoyingly, it continued to drip for several days. The source has proved hard to trace but has now been narrowed down to the the oil pump flange where it meets the crankcase. Bit of a puzzle as this is not a known fault and its not clear how it can leak at that point. The base screws are all tight. Consulting the VOC forum got all sorts of dire warnings about running the bike with a leak in that area and I am somewhat conflicted about what to do. Though the bike did give me some problems during the Giants Run they were mainly

associated with the loss of the tickover screw. It gave no signs of oil starvation and does not seem to have used much oil. The pump seems to be working properly as oil is returning to the tank and when I drained the crankcase today only about 100cc came out which is normal so its not wet sumping. Mechanically it is smooth and quiet, much quieter than the MAC.

However, oil is still slowly dripping out after a week and the mystery is where is it coming from. In theory I have drained all the oil and the anti-wet sumping valve seems to be working.

Saturday 10th June 2023

I had to take the tank off the bike to release the old throttle cable. While it was off I tried offering up the Monobloc carb formerly fitted to the MAC Velo. Bizarrely it would not fit as the oil tank and the seat tube were marginally in the way. I guess on the MAC it sits higher up due to the longer stroke. It could possibly be made to fit if I removed the securing studs and used set screws instead but not desperate enough to try that yet.

While the 275 carb was in bits, I set up my test rig to check the fuel level. It was just over half way up the bottom nut (cup) that retains the jet block which is text book (unlike the Sloper). I did not find any other reason for the plug being so sooty, so I dropped the needle another notch to see if that will help. The main jet is a 120 which is correct. I then rebuilt the carb including a replacement tickover adjuster screw with a spring to stop it coming undone and reassembled the bike. It started easily and I was able to set a rock steady tickover. As far as I can tell the bike is now fixed but obviously an extended road test to confirm this is required.

Friday 9th June 2023

The Sloper is now thought to be fixed; the saga is in the separate Blog. Not ridden but looking hopeful. However, it has created a space in the workshop. My friend Keith came round today and kindly unloaded the MOV from the van. I had a look at the plug and as suspected it was very black and the spark looked rather feeble. No signs of life so I tried another plug which was much the same. Eventually I located a brand new plug and this finally got the bike running. It sounded fine, no smoking so it had not wet-sumped but as soon as I shut the throttle it died; absolutely no tickover whatsoever. But when I tried to adjust the tickover I found the reason; the adjuster screw had gone AWOL. About the same time the nipple came off the throttle cable so further investigation will have to wait until this is fixed.

The only other casualty I noticed was a loose headlamp switch easily fixed by tightening the clamp. Given that this was the bikes first serious ride I guess they are the sort of things to be expected.

Monday 6th June 2023

Things have been difficult for the last week. Seems my shoulder could well take 5-6 weeks to fully heal so I have to do things pretty much with one arm and that one already had a dodgy shoulder. On top of which a suspected urine infection has taken away pretty much all of my remaining energy and enthusiasm. Very frustrating, I have 4 bikes needing attention as well as a ride on mower in bits so the grass is getting no attention. Not sure it's a good thing but I have absolutely no appetite and when I weighed myself yesterday I was under 12 ½ stone. It must be 50 years since I was that weight. No wonder I have no energy. Anyway enough of feeling sorry for myself, this blog is supposed to be about my bikes not me.

There has been some activity around the BSA Sloper and this is reported in its own blog. The MOV Velo is still in the van and has not been looked at since I got back from Dorset. Until my arm is much better I am not even going to try and unload it so investigations into its bad behaviour will have to wait.

There was better progress on the Supa5. I had actually removed the clutch from the spare engine before the MOV incident so I was able to strip it down to check over. It seemed fine with even wear across all of the plates but I decided to strip the original clutch and retrieve the new plain plates before rebuilding it. Long story short, it is now back in the bike and the engine rebuilt. It took me the whole week as I needed frequent rests and then had to order some light gear oil. I managed to get it off the bike lift this morning, Testing was limited to pulling the clutch to make sure the plates cleared cleanly – which they did and making sure the engine would start which it also did.

While it was running I engaged 1st gear without the clunk I had got used to – better yet it slipped back into neutral easily. Obviously a road test is needed but that is 2-3 weeks away I suspect. I still cannot drive the car even though it's an automatic.

Sunday 28th May 2023

Well the day started promisingly. The weather was fine and the trip down to Spire Hill Farm near Stalbridge quick and easy in the van. As I had opted for the short route, let the majority of the other 100 entrants depart first. The MOV started first kick and ran well for the first 10 miles or so apart from a slight hesitancy at very light throttle openings. Something I had noticed on Friday's test ride. To me it feels as though it is running a bit rich at that point, but not sure of the cause. Anyway it did not seem to be a major problem and the engine revved cleanly above this point. Whether this issued is connected with the later problems remains to be seen.

Then I made a mistake and had to stop to look at the map at about 10 miles. The engine would not tickover and stalled, proving difficult to restart, a problem that persisted for the rest of the day. Initially it ran ok once started but towards the end of the route it started misfiring as I tried to accelerate and needed careful throttle control to avoid stalling if

waiting at junctions but it did eventually get me to the finish. My suspicion is that the plug was getting very sooty due to an over rich mixture but it never got to the point where I had to change it.

Worse still, whilst stopped to look at the map, the bike started to fall over. Not really sure what happened but in trying to stop it falling I wrenched my left shoulder quite badly, in fact at first I thought I had dislocated it as the pain was so bad. I managed to ride the bike and complete the remaining 25 miles of the route including the picture in front of the Cerne Abbas Giant. However, with its bad behaviour and my throbbing shoulder it was not a pleasant experience. Driving the van home was a nightmare; I dreaded every gear change. Took pain killers and a large glass of Scotch and went to bed though neither helped much. It was a little easier on Monday morning but I will not be doing anything that requires two working arms for a while.

I enjoyed seeing the wonderful display of older bikes and meeting many friends but overall it was not a good day for me. Investigating what is wrong with the MOV will have to wait but the carb is the obvious culprit.



Saturday 27th May 2023

For a long time there has been an irritating problem with the clutch on the Supa5. It seems to drag and often makes selecting neutral at rest difficult. You also have to make sure to the clutch has freed before each ride otherwise first gear goes in with a bang and a lurch. Up to

now it has been more an irritant than a major issue but using the bike on the Black Mountain Trial last Sunday convinced me it should be investigated, not least because it is most likely the bike I shall be taking to Colombres in October.

So today the bike was put on the lift and the primary drive side stripped down. With the clutch in bits I think I found the problem. The rear pressure plate holds 6 studs that locate the springs and clamp to the front pressure plate. These studs are screwed into the rear plate and the thread was stripped on one which presumably meant the plate did not lift squarely. Certainly the wear on most of the plain clutch plates suggests it was running unevenly. Not enough to stop the clutch functioning completely but possibly enough to create some drag. Otherwise everything looked fine. I managed to weld the loose stud in place and reassembled the clutch but there is a slight concern that the extra weight, in one spot would unbalance the clutch which runs at engine speed. I do have a complete spare engine and have now removed its clutch for checking and if it is ok, I will use that on the Supa5 and rebuild its original clutch when I have sourced a replacement pressure plate.

Friday 26th May 2023

On the Thursday 18th May I met up with the Weymouth Week group at their lunch stop in Shaftesbury. My route was somewhat circuitous as I visited a number of the WHT checkpoints on the way. Nice day out but sad that Daph and I had missed what would have been a great holiday with perfect weather. The picture was taken at the top of Zig-Zag Hill with Shaftesbury in the distance.



On Sunday 21st May it was the long drive to Llandeilo for the Black Mountain Trial. It's a variant of a regularity time trial. Normally these have secret checkpoints where they note your time and work out how close (or far) you are from your chosen average. In the BMT they ask you to record your time of arrival at a number of points on the route and to estimate how far you have travelled and your average speed; odometers are blanked off. It was a cracking route but I made a couple of silly errors adding considerably to the mileage on 2 of the sections. Trying to figure out what the route mileage was and thereby work out a sensible average speed was a tad difficult so I am not expecting to figure in the results. Met up with a number of friends not seen for a while so overall a very pleasant event. The organiser was a 'relatively' young lad called Morgan Thomas whose grandfather Johnny Thomas sold me my first Vintage bike a 1933 BSA W33-4 back in 1968 when I lived in Cardigan. The picture was taken at the lunch stop in the Castle car park at Llandovery. My

MZ is the blue bike in the centre. Went very well apart from neutral being hard to select.



On Wednesday 24th May Daph and I visited no less than 17 of the WHT checkpoints – albeit in the car. It was good to get her out of the house after her illness. We had lunch at Honey Street and did 81 miles in total. Only another 16 checkpoints to do. Ten of these being the green lane options which Keith and I will do together on 8th June. I used to do them on my own but common sense says its better to have company – just in case.

Thursday 25th was another of Keith Johnstone's 'gentle' green lane runs. Nine of us took part so we split into two groups. It was not as tough as the first event and I managed not to fall off this time, those I did have one scary moment. Not so lucky was Matt Young who attempted a ford on the Fosseyway near Kemble and fell off mid-way. The bike was totally submerged nothing visible at all. Amazingly, after draining the carb and the air cleaner the bike did actually start and he finished the ride with just the odd misfire. The rest of us used the footpath alongside the ford. Serow went well and I felt much more confident with the Airhawk seat cover and the raised bars. I can now ride standing on the pegs more easily, though not for too long as I get cramp in my right knee – getting old is a b****r. The Serow starter relay has started playing up so I have ordered a replacement.



This is the old Roman bridge on the Fosseway near Easton Grey; very picturesque. It is not the ford where Matt fell in by the way, that's about 2 miles further North.

Last Monday I rode the Sloper to Westbury to the model engineering club, mainly to make sure it was running ok and to fill the tank ready for the Giants run this coming Sunday. Went fine on the way over and started easily for the trip home. However, on the way to the garage it started misfiring when I tried to use more than half throttle. I had a suspicion as to the cause and was not unduly worried. Filled up the tank at Yarnbrook and the bike simply refused to start. In the end I had to pick it up with the van. Same thing has happened for the rest of the week. It will start from cold first thing in the morning but as soon as it has warmed up even a little, will not re-start. General consensus is a failing magneto and the spark certainly looks weak. It would probably get me round the Giants route provided I did not stop the motor, it might even restart if bumped but it's a risk I don't want to take as it's meant to be a fun day out and break downs are not fun. Reluctantly I have decided not to use it on Sunday.

Which brings me to today when the MOV Velo was wheeled out for a test ride to see if it would survive the Giants Run. Though thought to in good usable condition, it has actually only done about 10 miles since I first put it back together in 2018. First call was Melksham where I filled up with Esso Super unleaded which is Ethanol free (but not for much longer sadly). Bike started first kick after the petrol stop so we went home the long way doing

about 20 miles altogether. The front brake is not overly effective and the clutch is dragging a bit making neutral hard to find at times. Overall however nothing identified that stops it being used on Sunday. Even the oil leak from the rocker box seems to have eased a bit. Bike is now loaded on the van; fingers crossed for a successful day out.

Wednesday 17th May 2023

It was the MZRC monthly meeting on Sunday 14th May which I could now attend as I was not going to Weymouth. Decided it was about time I gave the Supa5 an outing so I checked it over on the Saturday as it has not been used since Hereford on the Edge in June 2022. It started easily but would not tick over. I took it for a 4 mile ride in the hope it would improve but no joy. So yet another carb strip except I cheated this time and left it on the bike. By removing the slide the choke I was able to turn the carb 90% to remove the pilot jet. This was blocked as I suspected but easily cleared with the air line. The float bowl and rest of the carb was spotless so not sure why the pilot got blocked, there are plenty of filters in the air line. Now ticks over really steadily at 1200rpm. I followed Richard Warne up to Ham and he rides quite quickly but I was able to keep up with him quite easily. We had a 20 plus turnout again at Ham so overall a good day out. Every time I come back to the Supa5 I wonder why I need any other bike!

On Monday I met up with David Spencer and a couple of his friends from the North Birmingham Section at Melksham. They were en route to Lands End having already been to John o' Groats last week. I rode with them down to a coffee stop on the A303. They continued on to Exeter & beyond whilst I turned off at Mere then a couple of other places checking WHT locations. Enjoyable day but on the Enfield this time as I wanted to try out my dashcam. This proved to be a disappointment as I could not get the videos to play back on the PC for some reason.

Looking at the calendar I realised that it is the VMCC Black Mountain Trial this coming Sunday. Have not done it for over 20 years as it's a long way and always seems to clash with other events as indeed would have done this year if we had gone to Weymouth. I emailed the organiser to see if I could enter on the day and he kindly agreed so I now need to prepare a bike and the van. Looking forward to it.

Friday 12th May 2023

The MoT on the Serow runs out on 15th May. I have gone through most of the cycle parts since buying the bike and tidied it up – mainly to remove surface rust from various parts. Especially the s/arm and the spokes. As part of this process I replaced the rear brake shoes which showed signs of grease or oil and one of the wheel bearings mainly because it was a tad slack in the hub. The replacement was fitted with bearing lock to keep it located. Back brake now works very well. One observation on previous MoT's was a slightly worn rear chain. Though it did not appear on the most recent MoT certificate I am pretty sure the

chain had not been replaced so I fitted a new one yesterday just to be sure. The difference was remarkable.

I am not overly impressed with the front disk brake, it improved a bit after bleeding but still a bit spongy and it needs a good squeeze to stop quickly. On the other hand its possibly ideal for off-road work where you don't want too powerful a brake. The pads looked ok but the disk itself is likely the original anhave in stock a new disk (£23 delivered from China) plus new pads. However, I decided to have the bike MoT'd without fitting them to see what the examiner thought. The bike got a new ticket today without any observations so clearly the brakes are acceptable. I'll still fit the new disk and pads when the mood takes me.

Riding the bike for the first time since fitting the seat pad and raising the bars has confirmed both were a good decision. Even the examiner commented how comfortable it was.

We had the caravan booked into Bagwell Farm for the Weymouth Week due to start on Sunday and I was planning to take the Serow along with one of the Velos. Sadly the holiday is cancelled as Mrs F is very poorly and spending a week in a caravan not a good idea. If the anti-biotics do their job and she improves sufficiently, I may ride down on one of the days towards the end of the week.

Monday May 8th 2023

A huge gap since I last updated this or any of my we blogs. Primary reason is a problem with arthritis in my hands, particularly the index fingers which I use for typing . I never did master touch typing despite a lifetime spent at the keyboard, which may very well be the cause. Anyway, I have decided to give a quick and short update on what has been going on at Fielding Towers for the last 4 months.

The Honda CB77 was completed to the point where it was running and rideable but still needed work. It was the challenge of putting it back together that was its main attraction and it looked a treat on the VMCC stand at the Bristol Bike Show in late Feb 2023. But then I rather lost interest and when the MOV became available – see below. I decided to sell it.



Sadly my riding buddy Bill Little died in March 2023 and his widow kindly agree to sell me the 1938 MOV Velocette that I restored and which Bill have persuaded me to sell him in 2018. It had not turned a wheel since and I had only done one very brief road trip on it before selling so it needed final commissioning. Nothing dramatic but I was able to source a couple of parts not obtainable when first restored. There was also a growling noise which was eventually traced to the gearbox so it has been stripped to replace the sleeve gear bearing. I took it on a longer (3-4 mile) road test today and it now performs well though it does have a minor oil leak from the rocker box – then it is a Velo so will always leak oil. Lovely bike to ride. Tempted to use it on the Weymouth Run and the Giants Run both in Dorset during May. The picture is from 2018, I will post a fresh picture shortly, not that it has changed much, though the handlebars look different?



I have taken part in both the Felix- Burke and Cheddar Trials riding the TS125 MZ. It went well but the rider did not do I justice so well down the results list but two good days out. The Enfield Meteor has been used for most social riding otherwise and I am still very pleased with it though I could wish it was a bit lighter.

In late March I bought a 1990 Yamaha Serow, a bike I have always hankered after so that I could try a bit of green laning. It is pretty scruffy but goes quite well and I used it of a VMCC 'gentle' green lane run at the end of April. Fell off once but it was soft ground and no harm to bike or rider but I did find it quite tiring. Based on that experience I have fitted an Airhawk inflatable seat pad. Mainly to stop me sliding down the slippery seat into the tank and since the picture was taken 2" bar risers to give a more comfortable position when standing on the pegs. Looking forward to the next green lane run at end of May.



One future event to look forward to is Colombres in October; have not been since 2018. Mainly due to Covid and the subsequent illness of my other two riding companions Mike and Bill both of whom sadly no longer with us. A small group of us talked about Colombres at the Bristol Bike Show and now we have a party of 12 in total attending from the local club.

Friday 27th January 2023

The refurbished carb for the Sloper arrived back on Thursday and as work on my steam loco project had come to a temporary halt, I decided to fit the carb. Bit fiddly to start with as the seat and the tank have to come off before you can get at the carb. Thereafter it is pretty straightforward as I was able to use the existing float chamber and pipework. Initially it was very reluctant to start but when I gave it a really good tickle it sprang into life and tick over smoothly. I need to take it for a ride to get it thoroughly warm to set the carb properly. Trying to ride it back in the bottom garage the bike made a horrible rattling noise and refused to move. The chain was so slack it was sliding over the teeth of the gearbox sprocket. I clearly did not adjust it properly when I fitted the new rear tyre and chain a couple of months back. Soon sorted but embarrassing. I did find the Sloper very heavy when pushing it around and I am a bit concerned about getting it into the van.

The Velo Mac is now in the garage ready to have a carb swap. Replacing the current Monobloc with the Amal 276 which I had refurbished and then 'loaned ' to the Sloper. There is nothing wrong with the Monobloc which was fitted by the previous owner to solve a problem that turned out to be ignition. However, the 276 carb is original to the bike and I would like to put it back to standard. I think it will turn out to be a trickier job and I hope I don't come to regret it. Pushing the MAC around was very easy compared to the Sloper.

Monday 23rd January 2023

Three MZRC members expressed an interest in the ES250/2 and Kamil Pieta's name was drawn as the lucky winner. He collected the bike yesterday with the help of Rob Holuza. This allowed me to move the CB77 into the van to create space in the workshop for another bike.



About a week ago I found Bill Harley's phone number and rang him to confirm he was still refurbishing Amal carbs – which he is. I sent the ex MSS Velo carb body bought at Shepton last November to him last Monday and it came back this Monday, a very quick turn round. He bores out the main body a little to restore it to round and then makes an oversize slide to fit. As a bonus he also machines the manifold face to remove any bowing. I plan to reassemble the carb using the original 170 main jet and fit it to the Sloper over the next

week or so, Once this is done and working ok, I intend to fit the 15/16" carb currently fitted to Sloper onto the Velo MAC from which it was borrowed.

Tuesday 10th January 2023

The puncture in the front wheel is now fixed. I gave in and took the wheel to my local motorcycle dealer and got them to fit a new inner tube. Cost was only £20 including the tube, wish I had done it earlier. Anyway the wheel is now back in the bike so it is mobile again. I have now fitted the link tube between the RH side of the tank and the petrol tap. As I suspected, it was a very fiddly job but hopefully one not needed too often. I also found some bits of plastic tubing in one of the boxes and these turned out to be breather tubes so these are now also fitted.

On the way home from the MZRC meeting I picked up the remains of an ES250/2 Trophy from Mark Cox in Bristol. He bought it as a project in 2015 but had done nothing with it since and offered it to the section. It came as large lumps so I spent yesterday morning putting what was there loosely back together and did an inventory of what was not there or damaged. The list of missing items is quite daunting and is of course the rarer or most expensive parts so my judgement is that about 70% is present. It was imported from Poland in 2012 and I am still trying to establish what if any import paperwork exists for it to make sure it can be registered with DVLA. I have written up my conclusions and offered it to local MZRC members – a couple have already expressed interest. It's in the van at present and I don't want it hanging around too long.

Thursday 5th January 2023

Ticked a few things of Tuesday's list today. The front forks have been filled with 10 grade fork oil and all are now bolted up firmly. The holes in the front mudguard are now plugged; two with rubber grommets and four with 5mm nuts. Took a while to get this right but pleased with the result. I stripped of the sticky black insulating tape on the tacho drive cable and found there was a fair amount of the original grey plastic sheathing still present but with gaps where some had broken away. Using the hot air gun I managed to soften the sheathing and move the good bits so the part you can see looks quite presentable, the bad parts are hidden inside the headlight shell. When connected up I spun the motor on the starter and the tacho works fine. I will eventually replace the cable but not until after the Show as I want to present it with as much of its original parts as possible.

The petrol pipes are now fitted to the carbs and connected to the taps. I refitted the tank before I remembered the tank link pipe so that is a job for another day. Not going to be easy as there is very little room. One little job not on the list but completed anyway was to repair one of the stick-on registration numbers. This had hardened and curled up but using gentle heat I was able to soften and refix it. One more original item repaired. Apart from fixing the puncture the bike is now ready for the show. None of the other jobs are critical for that objective.



Tuesday 3rd January 2023

Well the CB77 finally looks like a proper bike and though still needing a few tweaks to become a runner, it is pretty much ready to take to the Bristol show at the end of February. A solid day in the workshop got the drive side engine cover fitted and the gear change connected. With these in place I was able to fit the LH exhaust system. Next job was to fit the carbs which was straightforward. Not so easy was connecting the throttle cables and I had several goes at getting them in place. The alignment is critical and having sorted that, I had to partially dismantle everything to allow the front part to be screwed into the twist grip.

Whilst I had the slides to pieces I removed the second springs that Rob had fitted as I felt they would make the throttle too heavy. This had mixed results; the slide worked fine on the RH side but the LH slide would not easily return to fully closed. I suspect that is the reason why Rob fitted the extra springs in the first place. I partially got round it in two ways. Firstly I slacked the carb fixing nuts as overtightening these can distort the body causing slides to stick (Amal Monoblocs suffer from this). That did help but not enough so I re-fitted the second spring. There is in any event something odd about the carbs as one slide is plated and looks new (the one that sticks) the other has no plating and shows signs of having been rubbed down to fit. As they were not fitted to the carb body's when I got the bike I am unsure which way round they should be fitted. This is something I will probably

have to re-visit as I am doubtful they will work properly. In any event, the throttle cable is badly worn and will have to be replaced before the bike can be used.

Another feature I am pondering on is the air cleaner assembly. Rob made up his own back in the day using plastic water pipe as original style filters were not available. Unless you look closely, it is not easy to detect but you can now get the correct filters and the rubber hose connectors and I may splash out on those eventually. However, fitting the carbs finally allowed me to fit the tank and the seat and see what the bike looks like. Pictures below:





There is still much to do before it will be a runner, the list includes:

Buy a new inner tube to fix the flat front tyre – 3rd time lucky

Fill the front forks with oil and tighten the fixing bolts

~~Decide how to fill the redundant number plate holes in the front mudguard~~

Get and fit the original speedo drive gearbox.

~~Connect the tacho cable and check it works. Existing cable is tatty and needs work~~

Fill the engine with oil and check for leaks

~~Fit the fuel pipes and the tank link pipe~~

Check fuel tap for leakage and service if there is a problem

Order a new throttle cable

Decide whether to replace the clutch, front brake and speedo cables

Get the carbs ultrasonically cleaned and re-visit the sticking slide issue.

Decide whether to buy new air filters and hoses

Sunday 1st January 2023

Dry this morning so I rode the Meteor to Bitton just north of Bristol for the traditional Bristol VMCC Section New Years Day meet. Good turnout of bikes including my old CB250RS and 4-wheel spectators. I went the long way round via Wick but came home the shorter way via the centre of Bath. Just in time as it turned wet shortly after I got back.

Only a brief time in the workshop this afternoon. First job was first tidying up the ignition wiring including new HT leads; all looks much neater now and it all still works. I have also found all the bits for the drive side engine cover. This includes a new outer cover which links the centrifugal oil filter to the sump. Initially it would not fit but this was due to paint build up when the outer cover was resprayed. Rubbing this down solved the problem. The new cover has quite a rough finish so I have started to polish it. Not very successfully yet, need more practise.

Saturday 31st December 2022

Hard to believe another year has gone so quickly. The last of our festive season visitors departed late morning. It was nice to see all of the family but very tiring and both of us though a bit sad are looking forward to a rest. Out of the blue this morning I had an enquiry about the GN250; by 12 noon the bike was sold.

Finally able to get some garage therapy after lunch so I decided I would tackle an easy job first and fit the rear chain. Typically this turned into a marathon as the chain was marginally too short even with the adjusters as far forward as I could push them; no idea as yet why this should be. I did have a new 1 ½ link extension chain in the spares box but it turned out to be for standard 530 chain and the Honda one was an HD type so it would not line up. In the end I found a chain I had taken off my old Venom and cut this down to size for the time being,

Next job was to fit the timing side cover which also holds the clutch cable operating arm and the kick start mechanism. The k/s on the CB77 is weird as it operates forward and the cover has two gears get the correct rotation. Bit fiddly to get the k/s lever in the correct position and with the right amount of tension but I got there in the end. Adjusting the clutch was easy once I realised that the ball bearing inside the housing had fallen out. Finally I was able to offer up the exhaust system on the RH side. Made a bit of a meal of it to start with but finally figured out the sequence needed to get pipe and silencer in alignment. The LH side exhaust cannot be fully fitted until the drive side engine cover is fitted. However, the pipe is in place and knowing the technique the silencer did slide into place fairly easily when offered up. That's enough for today.



Thursday 29th December 2022

Not much workshop time today but the starter motor is now fitted and works well. The ignition system is also working well once I cleaned the points and tightened a loose connection. I do need to swap over the wires from coil to points though as currently the sparks seem to be occurring on the wrong cylinders.

Work on the front end produced mixed results. The mudguard is fitted though I had to make up new fixing bolts and a special washer to secure the brake torque arm. I also fitted the new front tyre but managed to pinch the inner tube so I still have a flat front tyre! This will have to wait for another day to be fixed. I still need to tighten up all the fixings on the front forks and I am not overly happy about the operation of the speedo drive which is a unit from another Honda wheel I had in stock. It seems to make the front wheel stiff to turn and this was a problem I experienced with the unit when I tried it on another bike. I am hoping the correct speedo gearbox will turn up shortly.

Wednesday 28th December 2022

Engine now back in the frame and the bike is now on the bike lift ready for what I hope is the final fitting out and testing.



Family commitments have limited my garage therapy today but I have knocked a couple of things off the list. The chain guard bracket I made did not line up properly for some reason and to get at it the rear wheel had to come out. This was much easier with the bike on the lift and has now been rectified. The ignition points plate has been fitted and wired up and we have sparks, hopefully somewhere close to where they need to be. Not overly happy with some aspects of the ignition wiring and now that I know it all works, I am going to tidy up some of it. I checked out the other electrics and they all work, including the neutral light.

I have compiled a list of the jobs that remain; surprisingly long but with luck not overly difficult and not necessarily in the order to be attempted:

~~Fit and test starter motor~~

Fit primary drive cover and connect gear change

~~Fit front mudguard and speedo drive~~

Fit new front tyre

Tighten up the front end – all loosely assembled at present

Fit the exhaust pipes

Fit silencers

Clean and fit carbs, air cleaners and cables

Fit timing side cover and clutch cable

Fit tank – service fuel tap

Fit seat

Tuesday 27th December 2022

Rain or rather Christmas largely stopped play over the past few days. I did pass ½ hour making the clips under the carbs to hold the ignition cables and I found a length of new ignition cables as the old ones are very hard. This morning I dug out an old frame on wheels and made a base for it. The idea is to put the engine on this to wheel it in position then put my scissor jack underneath to lift it into position. Eldest son Richard is on his way down from Shrewsbury as I type this and hopefully by close of play to tomorrow, the engine will be installed. It can then be wheeled onto the bike lift for final assembly in a more comfortable position.

Yesterday was Boxing Day and I rode the Meteor up to the annual Tippust Inn meet near Nailsworth. About 80 miles in total and to honest I did not enjoy it overmuch. Though the sun was shining the roads were damp and looked slippery and it was very cold. I met up with a few old friends though attendance seemed lower than previous years in terms of bikes. Most seem to have come by car. Only a small proportion were classic bikes, Harleys seemed to outnumber other makes by a big margin. I left about 1pm and was home by 2pm, just in time as it started to rain quite hard as I was putting the bike away.

Thursday 22nd December 2022

No work on the CB77 today, instead I turned my attention to the Enfield Meteor and fitted the heated grips that were previously on the GN250. Not too difficult, I managed to tuck the wiring under the fuel tank without needing to remove it. Given I plan to use the bike over the holiday period and they are forecasting a return of the cold weather, it seemed a sensible move. An added benefit was that I found the missing 3mm screw for the Honda badge, it was just lying on the bench and must have fallen out of one of the boxes.

Wednesday 21st December 2022

Hooray, the Winter Solstice so from now on the days will get longer and the nights shorter. The big freeze has finally gone as well. A few small tidying up jobs today. I unwrapped the tank and checked over the side panels, knee grips and tank badges. The tank has a fantastic finish, the sidepanels are the originals and the chrome is pretty good, certainly not worth

replating. They were a little rusty at the back so I rubbed this down, then sprayed it with waxoil. Panels with the rubber knee grips re-fitted. The only minor issue is the screws to fix the tank badges. I could only find 3 and though they look to be 3mm, none of my stock 3mm screws will fit. I think Honda must use a different thread pitch to the norm on its smaller stuff as I had a similar problem with the 5mm screws fixing the headlamp rim though I did find some of the correct pitch in the end. I am sure I will find one, worst case, I have to buy some from David Silver. The petrol tap was offered up to make sure it fitted ok and has been left in place for now. It will probably need a new rubber gasket. The badges were not brilliant but I polished them with Brasso then sprayed them with clear lacquer. One is now pretty good, the other marginal as you can see in the picture. I think new pattern ones are available but they can wait for now.



I checked over the RH outer engine cover mainly to work out how to fit the kickstart lever. This is a very odd arrangement as the lever actually kicks forwards so there are two gears within the cover that correct the rotation. The kickstart spring is combined with one of these gears and I could not see an obvious way to tension this whilst replacing the kickstart itself. The latter is brand new by the way and the outer cover has been nicely sprayed in the correct cloud silver. Anyway, all the bits are present and correct including the clutch operating mechanism; plenty of time to read up on tensioning the kickstart.

Last little job today was to investigate the loose baffle in the RH silencer. I wanted to remove it completely but it that was not possible to get it out as there were flanges which made it overall wider than the access hole. I suspect it was originally welded up in sections with the outer cover being added last. In the end by brute force, I managed to jam the baffle in place so it no longer rattles and still allows free passage of exhaust gases. Don't suppose it will survive long once I start riding the bike but it'll do for now. Superficially the silencer looks good with only minor scratches and no rust visible once fitted.

Monday 19th December 2022

Pleased to say that the gearbox and kick starter issues have gone away as I hoped. To test the change action properly, I dismantled the drive the side of the engine to expose the external change linkage and the drum. Just moving the drum with a spanner proved that we had 4 gears and a neutral so I then put it back together piece by piece testing as I went along. All proved to be well and the kickstart now works as well. What I did to fix it I don't know but it now works as does the neutral switch.

With that out of the way I resumed building the rest of the engine. Mainly straightforward but a couple of hiccups some things I will need to look at later. The hiccup was the placement of the long studs that secure head and barrel. They are all different lengths and two of them were in the wrong place so the top cover would not fit the correct way round. I managed to unscrew and swap then round though I had to use heat to get one out. One of the waisted studs on the nearside front (the waisting provides the oil path to the head) was much longer than it needs to be. I tried screwing it down further but it would not move and I did not want to risk breaking it so I left it alone for now and fitted extra washers. At some point this will have to be investigated and at the same time I will helicoil two of the threaded holes for the cam chain tensioner. All the remaining engine components can be fitted when it is in the frame so will be left for now – it's heavy enough already. Eldest son Richard is visiting just after Christmas so he will be roped in to help.



For the first time I looked over the silencers and externally they look quite good. Rob made new baffles in s/s so I have fitted these and drilled & tapped them for fixing screws. I found all the relevant bolts to fit the silencers as well. The only slight concern is that there is something loose in one of the silencers; something to look at another day. I was browsing the David Silver website this afternoon and he is now stocking replacement silencers for the CB77 - £175 each so will try and fix the original first.



Sunday 18th December 2022

We were out on Saturday so nothing got done but today was quite productive. The rear mudguard with its tail light assembly is now fitted and wired up. The other problems I was having boiled down to earthing issue. The CB77 electrics rely on earthing through the frame and/or the engine and it's a double whammy. Lots of nice new paint is stopping bare metal contact, and the engine is still on the bench, the main earth cable runs from the engine to the battery -ve terminal. I have fitted proper earth cables to the headlamp and the tail lamp assembly and a temporary earth wire to the frame and now everything works.. There was one broken wire in the sidelight connector but that was an easy soldering job. The ignition side is only tested as far as power to the coils, the rest can only be tested once the engine is in the frame but it should be ok. It occurred to me that I had never looked at the starter motor so that was bench tested and spins over nicely. This is about as far as I can go with the cycle parts for now. I don't want to fit the front mudguard until after the engine is

in the frame as it will get in the way and might get scratched. Tank and seat should just drop straight on and are best kept well away from the workshop for now.



Not heard anything from Rob yet but I have been studying the workshop manual and the spares book for inspiration. I also found a useful YouTube video which showed the gearbox internals working. In a separate video I read that someone else found the cam chain quite difficult to join up so it looks as though that is normal and not indicative of a problem. Tomorrow the arctic weather is being driven out by wet weather from the Southwest so it should be a bit lot warmer in the workshop. My plan is to strip out the primary drive side so that I can check the actual gear change mechanism which is hidden behind the clutch. I have a theory I want to check out. Fingers crossed, I may have a solution.

Friday 16th December 2022

It has been a bit of a 1 step forward, two steps backward couple of days. I previously mentioned that I had trouble getting the cam chain linked up and this got me worrying that it might be too tight as there was so little slack a chain tensioner seemed superfluous. It made me wonder if this was the correct chain. So thought it prudent to fit the tensioner to check; only it would not go through the slot in the back of the barrel. The pictures show the design of the device and the pivot pin with its lock nut were simply too wide. There was clearly an issue as both sides showed signs of previous filing. I checked with Rob and he

confirmed that both the chain and tensioner were original to the engine. He did remember that getting the cam chain link out was difficult, though not why. He did not remember a problem with the tensioner nor having to file it to fit but he had only dismantled, not tried to refit the assembly. So we agreed that I could turn down the pivot pin and locknut a little . I have now done that and the tensioner will go into the barrel. Why the pivot pin is cut away on one side is a mystery.

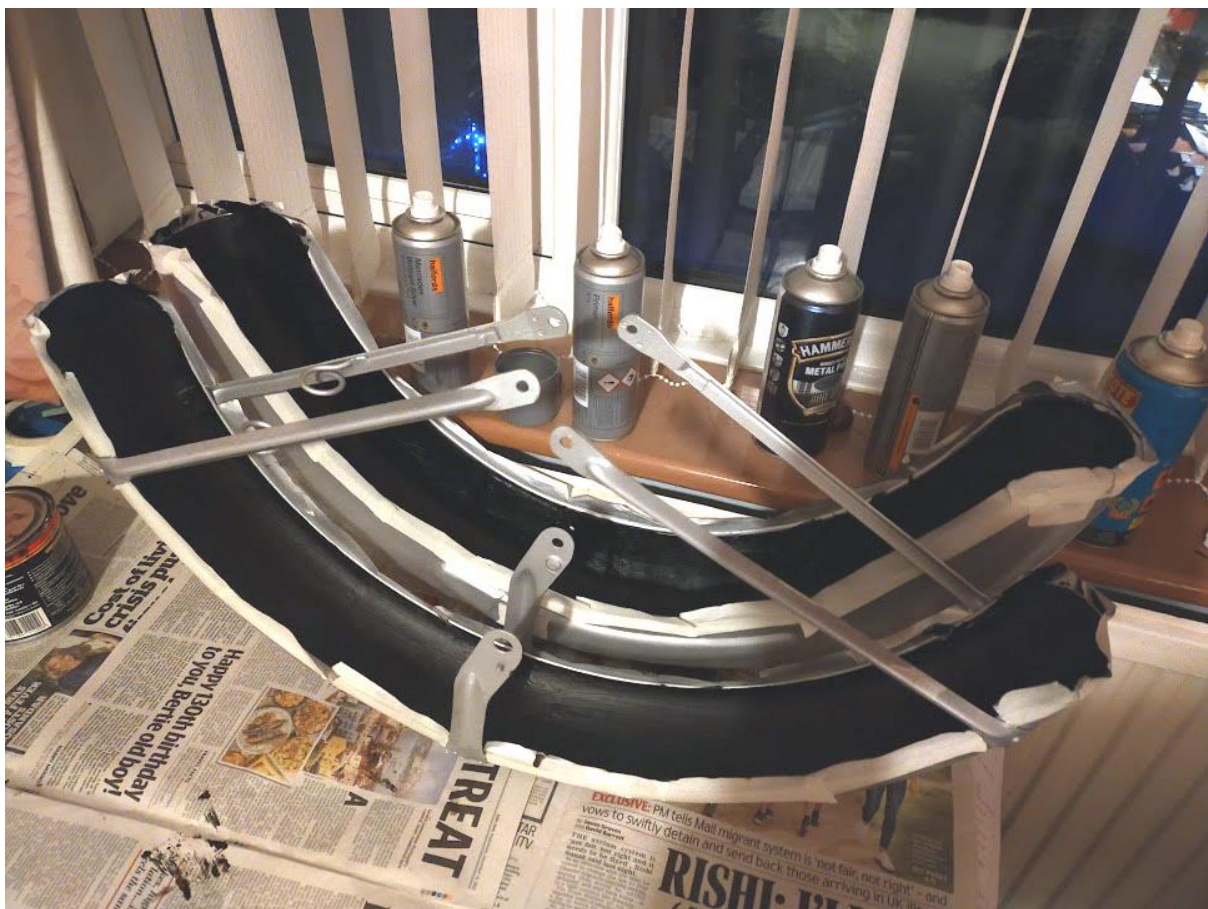


I had another think about the tight cam chain. The cylinder head was only resting on the barrel, I had not got round to fitting the top cover and torquing it down. It was highly likely that doing this would squash down the gaskets and this would in turn put a little more slack in the chain. For reasons I will come to later, I did not want to fit the top cover so I used spacers and tightened it down and this does indeed seem to have created a little slack, enough to let the tensioner work properly – phew.

Having put most of the wiring harness in place, I wanted to check that the neutral switch was working. First issue was a broken connector on the switch. The wire is quite short and very stiff and its somewhat inaccessible. So I decided to remove the switch from the engine to attend to this –and hit my first case of Japanese seized screw syndrome. One screw came out easily, the other showed signs of previous attempts at removal and even with the impact driver I could not shift it. I did manage to solder the nipple back on but then hit the next snag. The engine was in gear when delivered and I have not given it much thought until now but I was unable to get it to change gear either up or down the box. Whilst wrestling with this I found that the kickstart was jammed as well; finally hit my first show stopper. Talked to Rob again and he assured me that he tested gear selection when he rebuilt the

engine to re-shim the gearbox. At his request, I have sent him pictures of the relevant pages of the spares book and to refresh his memory and he is then coming round to look for himself. No point in continuing with the top end rebuild until the problem is solved. It may mean a total engine strip to identify and rectify the cause – I really hope not.

However, there have been two bright spots in the project. Yesterday the underseal that had been stuck in the Evri courier system finally appeared – after the supplier put in a chaser. No apology or explanation given. Both mudguards have now received two coats of the black gooey stuff and will be left for a few days to harden off. The rear mudguard will be fitted straight away so that I can fit the rear light unit and test that part of the wiring. You will note that I did the job in the warm, just hope Mrs F does not notice – fortunately she rarely comes into my study.



Today the long awaited key arrived and hooray, it fits. The lock action is quite stiff not sure if it's because the key is not quite right or its wear in the barrel, probably a bit of both. Also the key can be removed from any of the three positions – something I shall have to sort before it goes on the road. I connected up the battery using a temporary earth lead and tried out the electrics; I would put the result as 50:50. The switch has 3 positions; off is pretty obvious, in the next position I had power to the coils, the horn, starter relay and stop light but no other lights head or tail. In the next switch position only the taillight worked as far as I could tell. One odd thing I previously noted was a sidelight bulb in the headlight

reflector, but nowhere obvious in the loom to connect it. I suspect the 3rd switch position is for parking light and position 2 is normal running. The light switch on the headlight also has three positions and as yet I don't know which is which. I ran out of time today but I am hoping it is just a loose connection in inside the headlight.

Wednesday 14th December 2022

One of the things I have been doing is keeping a list of the missing bits. At one time it was quite long, mainly specific sizes of fasteners. I want this bike to look right, it uses 14mm head sizes on 8mm bolts rather than 13mm as used on most modern bikes. Some of the larger bolts also use 14mm head sizes so you could dismantle quite a lot of the bike with just 10mm and a 14mm spanners. Some of the threads were also metric fine rather than metric standard and the boxes contained a mixture of all types. Just to confuse matter, Rob had remade a lot but not all of the fasteners in s/s. So it was a process of trial and error but gradually the right fastener was found for most locations and mostly shiny s/s. The result is that the missing parts list is now quite short thank goodness, remarkable really.

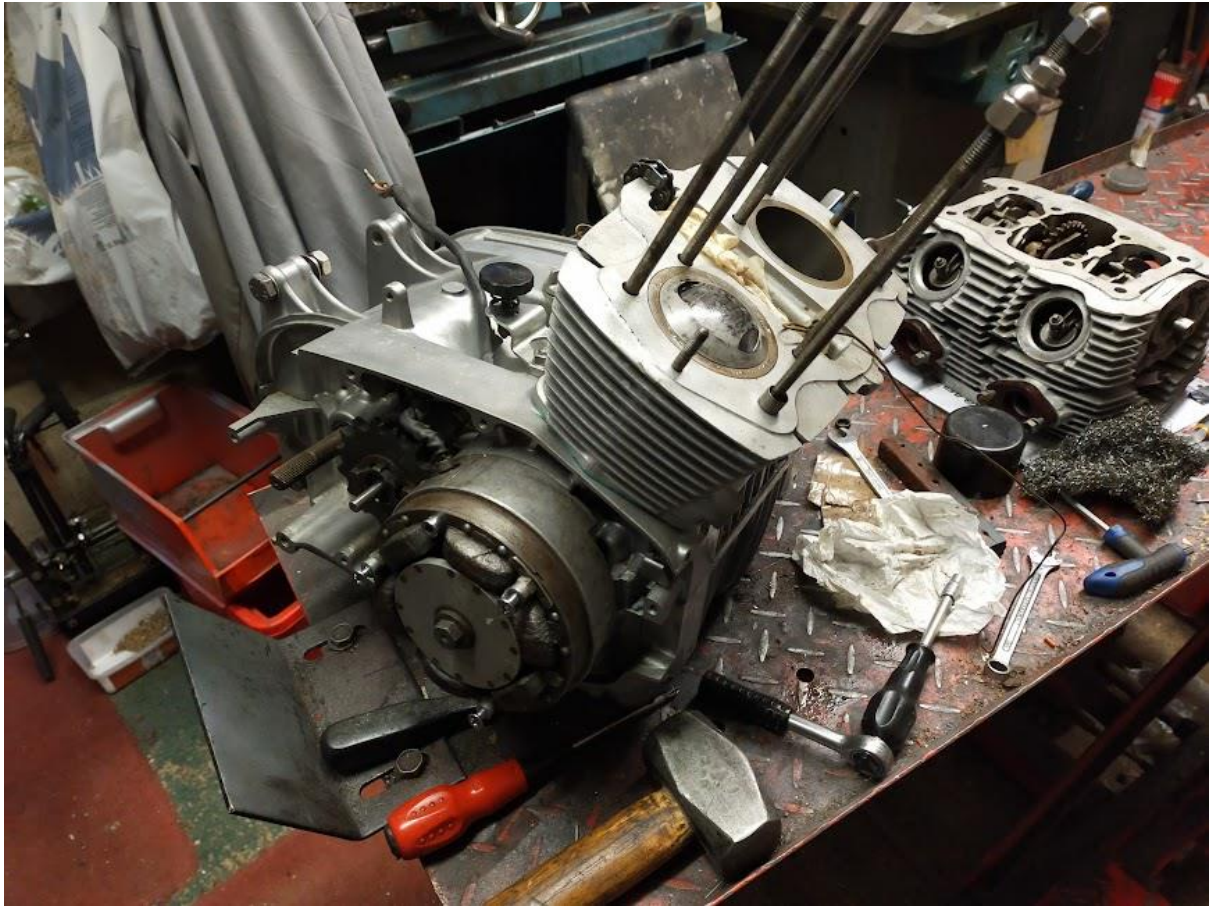
In these notes I have not mentioned any snags that cropped up along the way, there were a few but none insurmountable and nothing show stopping, provided the key turns up. Some things will need to be revisited like one of the shock absorbers which I could not get apart to fill with oil, the alignment of the wiring harness and fitting the new front tyre as the one fitted has now gone flat; I probably pinched the tube. The speedo drive is also missing but hopefully will turn up by the time the front wheel is out to replace the tyre

Earlier this week I turned my attention to the carbs, which had also been partially dismantled to allow the choke levers to be zinc plated. Reassembly was a tricky job as at first sight it looked to be impossible. It seems that this was a job that Honda did not expect anyone to attempt as it is not covered in the workshop manual nor was it mentioned on any of the many YouTube videos I watched about dismantling and servicing CB77 carbs. Fortunately all the bits were found, not all in the same box nor necessarily with the carbs but recognisable anyway. Eventually I found a plate on the side of each carb which had been lightly peened over. Gentle filing released the plates and reassembly of the actual choke mechanism was then straightforward. Getting the plates back into place was anything but easy but finally achieved. I could see no evidence that these plates had been removed before so how Rob got it all apart I still don't know. I have not done much else to the carbs other than make sure they are complete. I would like to get them ultrasonically cleaned. Though both slides are a good fit one still has a full chrome finish whilst the other is practically an all brass finish. They were not fitted when I got the bike so I do not know which slide belongs to which carb. I did notice that both slides had double return springs which is unusual and the spares book shows only one. I suspect there may be an issue with the carbs but that is something I will talk to Rob about and deal with later. Worst case is they may have to be replaced with something modern from China.

I also checked over the rear light unit and fitted it to the number plate. There is no separate earth cable so it must be via the frame. With all the new paint this could be problematic and is not a good idea anyway; I rather expected better from the Japanese. I have provided a separate earth wire but not yet worked out where to terminate it. The lens was missing one fixing screw, very long and very small at 3mm. So I laboriously made a very neat replacement on the lathe, only to discover the missing screw in a totally different box of bits yesterday; I should have waited.

Yesterday I finally started on the engine. First job was to bring together all the parts. I already knew I had the major components, it was the various smaller items I needed to locate. The bottom half of the engine is pretty much assembled. What remains to be done is the fitting of the barrel, the head and the top cover. The timing chain was already fitted with some wire to prevent it falling into the crankcase. The final result was a complete set of special copper top washers, 5 new s/s 8mm head nuts and one old head nut. They are domed for neatness and I need 8. I can probably complete the reassembly using ordinary nuts but they will be visible, though not necessarily accessible, when the engine is in the frame so this needs to be sorted quickly.

That apart I seems to have everything needed to re-build the engine I made a start by fitting the barrel after giving it a honing to remove some surface rust followed by a good clean. The piston rings also had a little surface rust but this came off easily without breaking any thank goodness. Getting the barrel on was tricky without ring compressors but since it is a 180degree crank you can do one piston then the other. Several false starts but got there in the end. You can see the paper I stuffed down the cam chain tunnel to stop anything falling in – don't ask me about this. For the record, the pistons are standard size running their original rings and there are no wear ridges at the top of either bore. I did not risk removing the rings to check the gaps. The mileage according to the odometer is only 10k so fingers crossed it will be fine.



Being so cold, I left fitting the cylinder head until today and as the picture below shows it is now in place with the valve timing set and the cam chain in place. Its not a difficult job but for some reason the cam chain always seemed to be one link short so I had to fiddle around to untrap it then of course lost all the timing settings. Eventually it all fell into place and everything seems to turn over correctly. I have set the tappets but a visitor arrived at that point so fitting the valve covers, the top cover and the timing chain tensioner will have to wait. I also noticed that the neutral switch wire is broken or short. Tried to remove the switch so I repair this and found one of the screws was immovable and the head damaged. I shall have to revisit that later. Still we are making progress.



Saturday 17th December 2022

The footrest plates have now been fitted and the rear brake cable connected up. I am using the original cables for now as it will help with getting things set up correctly. You can see on the s/arm a s/s plate which I have fabricated as the second mounting point for the chain guard. The original had obviously fractured and fallen off long ago. I did not want to run the paint job by welding the new bracket so it is drilled/tapped. When the guard is fitted it will barely be visible. Both mudguards are in excellent condition, any repairs having been well executed and the top paintwork is very good. However, I did not feel the undersides of either had sufficient thickness of paint so they both now have several coats of Hammerite Smooth Silver and a tin of car underseal is on order to finish the job. Though the outside of the toolbox and the LH side panel were nicely finished the insides of both were bare metal which had surface rust. Both have now been cleaned up, primed and painted, silver in the case of the side panel and red in the case of the toolbox.



One of the things I did not get with the original delivery was the ignition key. As the lock was an integral part of the harness, I took the whole box of electrics back to Rob so he could try out any keys he found in his house. By Tuesday I had pretty much got as far as I could with the cycle parts and wanted to leave the engine till later. Time to move on to the electrics as they were a big unknown so I collected them from him on Wednesday. Sadly the key had still not been found but I needed to survey the electrical items to identify if anything else was missing.

It took me four days to sort the electrics longer than it took to get the bike on its wheels. Always a fiddly job, not helped by the fact that the handlebar switches had been totally dismantled and even the wires unsoldered. Miraculously all the bits (even the tiny pieces) were found and they are now both back together and tested as far as I am able. I don't want to tackle that job again but worth the effort though as they are the originals and are designed such that the wires run through the handlebars, emerging behind the headlight bowl. That was a fiddly job but got a lot easier when I warmed the cable up to soften the outer sheath. Looks neat now it's done. The bulk of the wiring was in reasonable condition just needed the odd connector re-soldering and cleaning to identify the colours. I was lucky to find a colour wiring diagram on the internet which was a boon. So as off today all the wiring is in place but none tested as I still do not have a key! The lock has a number on its barrel and I placed an order for a key to be cut to this code last weekend. The key has been cut and is now stuck somewhere in the postal system which is in chaos due to repeated

strikes by the postal workers. The underseal is stuck somewhere in the delivery system as well.

The picture sequence show how far I have got. Still a few things to be done. The coil wiring is attached to the point plate so cannot be completed until the engine is in the frame. Likewise the starter motor wiring and indeed the starter motor itself which is still on the shelf. Being heavy it is best fitted once the motor is in the frame. The tail light wiring will have to wait until the rear mudguard is fitted. You will notice I have a battery installed and this was a pure flook. A few weeks ago someone in the section offered a newish 12v battery surplus to his needs. I had no need for one like it but thought it was a bargain so bought it and then forgot about it. Until today when came across it, offered it up to the CB77 and found it was a perfect fit. Sometimes things do go right, if only I had the d*mn key.







Saturday 10th December 2022

This is how it looks today



Pleased with the way the wheels turned out, took me several goes to get the lacing correct and the wheels round. The rear tyre is a NOS one I had available in the correct size, the front is an old one pending arrival of the new one just ordered. What you see is mostly loosely assembled at the moment but at least it can be moved around fairly easily. No major snags so far just a couple of Honda specific nuts&bolts not yet found but I have several boxes needing a more thorough look and some things turn up in boxes you would not expect so always hope. Couple of slight disappointments, The lovely s/s wheel rims turned out to be the WM2 for the front and WM3 for the rear when in fact they should be WM1 and WM2. Clearly I could use the WM2. Rob has no receipts and no memory of where he bought the rims and s/s spokes so unlikely I will be able to do a swap. Luckily, the original DID rims had been re-chromed, the back is excellent and the front acceptable so that is what I have used for now. I can easily rebuild the wheels if/when I get a WM1 s/s rim. The battery supplied, though new is actually 6v and the bike runs 12v. I have a small 12v one which I can use for testing when I get to the wiring stage but it will not be man enough to operate the starter motor.

Saturday 3rd December 2022

Wow another month gone by and its 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 it's 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 last 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 his loft in bits for 10 years as he lost interest in bikes but only recently decided to sell it. I hope to have it ready for the Bristol Bike Show in February 2023. At the moment I am slowly working through the boxes to establish exactly what I have and whether any major parts are missing.

Research on this bike revealed that Elvis Presley owned one, or at least the advert implies he did. This is what mine should look like if all the bits are present.

