Daily Blogg Part 14 started 1st January 2026 - Click **here** to get the Blogg Part 12A

Saturday 31st January 2026

The good news is that the Kymco now starts normally without the need for Easy Start. It was not a flook as I have restarted it successfully several times during the course of the day. Moreover it has lost the fluffiness at low throttle opening; I suspect the efi is now able to provide a richer mixture for cold running. I have put back all the bodywork; it is beginning to look quite smart but a bit more touching up and cleaning required. I have ordered a clutch lever to replace the broken one. Not strictly necessary but it annoyed me and is something that would put of a potential buyer should I decide to sell it. The battery also seem sto have responded to frequent charging cycles as it was able to start the bike without the help of the slave battery today. Progress.

The work on fabricating extensions to the swinging arm to raise the suspension is going well. I came up with a design which seems to work and the prototype can be seen in the picture below.

Its made of ¼" steel plate so should be plenty strong enough. This lifts the bike by 1" which will give clearance for an 18" rear wheel. The second picture shows the amount of clearance – though the 16" wheel is still fitted at present.

I should mention that this bike has a s/arm from an ETZ250 which was fitted with an 18" rear wheel as standard; unlike the later ETZ251's which reverted to 16" wheels like the TS250 models. I chose this s/arm deliberately in anticipation of fitting an 18" wheel eventually. You can just squeeze an 18" wheel into a standard TS250 s/arm but it does not look right and creates problems over chain length and adjustment. The setup is partially reassembled as I wanted to check that the rear chain did not foul the crankcase but all was well.

Now I need to fabricate the bracket for the other side. This will be slightly trickier as theer is not much clearance due to the sprocket cover.

Friday 30th January 2026

Well things are moving quickly on the Kymco front. Tracey decided she did not want to spend any more money on the bike, just get shot of it. So I made an offer which she has accepted and the bike is now registered in my name and is now wholly my problem. The starting is still Ether assisted but it less hesitant at low throttle settings so I am hoping that the injector cleaner is beginning to do its work. In the meantime I am tackling the rust and other corrosion to smarten it up. At some point I will need to order some spares but they can wait until I am sure it's going to be a runner.

In the interim, the Kymco has been moved from the bike lift so I can work on the MZ TS250 project. The major task was to fit the new rear sprocket cover and chain rubbers. I spent a very frustrating Friday afternoon getting the rubbers in place but they are finally fitted. This is always a messy and tedious job but today was the worst I can remember. While the bike is partly dismantled at the back end I am going to fabricate some plates to allow the rear suspension to be raised by an inch or so to

give more clearance for an 18" wheel as I may want to fit one at a later date. This bike may morph into trail trim.

Wednesday 28th January 2026

Last night I sent Tracey an email listing the following that would be needed to get it through the MoT. It needs a new battery, new front tyre, new rear chain and possibly fork seals (or at least gaiters) as the stanchions are very rusty and may well cause the seals to leak. If you add in the value of my time (which I wouldn't charge of course) it is marginal as to whether it's worth it.

Though the bike is superficially presentable, I will also need to spend time derusting and touching up to create a better overall impression to a potential buyer. All of this of course pre-supposes that I can get it starting reliably which is not yet the case.

My feeling is we might get £3-400 pounds as spares/repairs as it stands. What it would fetch as an Mot'd runner is unclear. There are too few VSR 125s around to get a clear picture. You can get a new one still for £2400 yet some optimistic dealer is asking for £1690 for a 2019 model with more miles and no better condition than Traceys. Even worse all you can see are asking prices, no idea what they actually sold for. I told Tracey to expect maybe £7-800 but that would incur spending circa £200 to get the MoT, plus a lot of my time. I am rather hoping she will decide to sell it as a project for whatever I can get as that will be the quickest solution. Bit sad really because I am sure it was a really nice working bike before being left in a hedge for 15 months or so.

Tuesday 27th January 2026

The parcel from TheMZShop was re-delivered on Monday, turned out it needed to be signed for. Seems overkill for £35 worth of spares but I guess Phil Speakman has his reasons. Anyway the sprocket is now fitted along with the new chain and the bike is back together and returned to the bike shed. Probably won't come out again until end February when its due to go to the Bristol Bike Show at Shepton Mallett.

That freed up the bike lift in the workshop for the Kymco; fortunately it has a centre stand. The WD40 I psrayed everywhere seems to have banished the majority of the water and the airline blew most of the remainder along with the dust and cobwebs. The battery did charge up enough to prove that the head and tail lights, brake light, indicators and horn all work; that's a good start. It still needs the slave battery to spin the motor which confirmed we still have a spark though not particularly strong. I could not get it to start initially, but after a squirt of Ether, it did fire up. Somewhat hesitant and boggy but as it warmed up it the revs picked up and mechanically it sounded ok. The engine management light went out which was another good sign and it did restart easily whilst warm

However, once it cooled down it would only restart with a squirt of Ether and this problem still persists. I have put in a new plug as the old one is probably the original and if so has done 6188 miles. I have also put a bottle of STP injector cleaning fluid in the tank as my gut feeling is that the injector is clogged up; possibly from water or ethanol contamination. So far I have not been able to figure out how to remove the tank or the injector so I am hoping that eventually the STP in the petrol will do the job for me. I also put another 5l of fresh fuel in the tank. Really the bike needs to

be ridden for a few miles t allow the STP to wok but its not MoT'd taxed or insured so can't be used on the road and a riding it up and down my cul-de-sac is not going to do the job. Catch 22.

In the interim, I have changed the oil and certainly has not been changed for a good while. Its supposed to be done every 1100 miles but the last service recorded was at 3000 miles in 2022 before Tracey even owned the bike. I have asked her about this but suspect she has never had it serviced either in the circa 1000 miles she owned it. I also checked the tappets as the exhaust sound a bit slack but they were both fine.

At the moment I am compiling a list of things that need to be done for the MoT to cost them and see whether its worth spending money on it to get a good price, or simply sell it as a project as is. May well come to that anyway if I cannot get it starting reliably.

Sunday 25th January 2026

And now for something different. A while ago a friend of mine from my diving club mentioned she had a motorbike which she bought 3-4 years ago to take her CBT. She did pass but sadly she was not able to ride much as she has MS and the bike was unused for some time. Eventually sitting rather forlornly under a hedge in her brothers garden albeit covered in a tarpaulin for about 15 months, maybe longer. The last time she looked at it the bike would not start so I offered to collect the bike and see if I could get it running so she could sell it at a better price. So today I went over to Hinton and picked up what turned out to be a 2019 Kymco VSR 125. These bikes are made in Taiwan rather than the Chinese mainland and seem to be entirely their own design though closely resembling the GY6 based bikes in China there by the million.



The first picture shows it as found this morning, the other two were taken when I got it out of the van later. From a distance it looks quite tidy but the pictures disguise a lot of the corrosion, In hindsight I suspect that the tarpaulin simply promoted condensation which was then trapped and festered; everything was ringing wet. Its now in the workshop to dry out and the battery is on charge, though I suspect it's toast.

Initial impressions are mixed. The tyres were quite firm and no more than half worn. The only obvious damage is a broken clutch lever probably from being dropped but enough remains to make it usable for now. The paint on the top of the tank is bubbling though elsewhere its quite good. All the plastics are present and good. The chain looks as though its never been greased and will need replacing, not looked at the sprockets yet. It does have two keys and the owners handbook but unfortunately not the toolkit. Exhaust looks sad but appears very sound. However, a quick test of the

exhaust pipe nuts suggested they are seized which might be a problem. With a slave battery hitched up the starter operated and there was a spark. I did a compression test which was a healthy 170psi. However, this bike has EFI so no idea yet if that works but the pump could be heard running which was hopeful. There seems to be plenty of oil according to the sight glass but this will be changed as I don't know when it was last done, possibly 3000 miles ago.

I have started cleaning the bike up a little looking for any obvious issues but it was put away running so any problems are likely to be due to water ingress to the electrics and maybe the fuel system. I had a quick look in the tank and there was no obvious sign of rust which is hopeful. We'll see what tomorrow brings.

Saturday 24th January 2026

Bit of a frustrating day, the parcel with the TS125 sprocket should have been delivered today. However, I assume it needed to be signed for and Mrs F did not hear the doorbell so all we got was a card saying they would try again Monday. Don't you hate it when that happens but I gues another couple of days are not really of any consequence except that I could have finished the TS125 and cleared the workshop for the next project.

Speaking of which I did take a couple of pictures of the TS250 'project' I mentioned yesterday. As you can see its fairly complete and does actually run, just scruffy and not totally original.

The main things wrong are:

1. Rear mudguard is plastic, partly from an ETZ 251 and partly from an old trials front mudguard. This is eventually intended to be fitted to the trail MZ in exchange for its steel mudguard.
2. There is currently no plastic chain cover. I now have one and a pair of new rubber gaiters but there are issues in getting the gaiters to fit the cover. I also need to sort out a matched pair of speedo drive gears correct for a 16" rear wheel.

3. It has a Honda 7" TLS front hub laced into an MZ front rim so the fork legs are swapped. You will note that it also has the later alloy front forks as the correct steel type don't lend themselves to fitting the Honda brake easily. Something I am working on.
4. It's missing the chrome cover for the airbox though you cannot see that from this picture.
5. Also not obvious is that the electrics are a mishmash of Vape powerdynamo and Chinese components – see below

The electrics deserve explanation as I am quite proud of them. I acquired a non working Vape system from a friend a while back and it revealed two problems. Firstly the coil, which is also the cdi was duff as was the AC charge coil on the stator. However, the trigger coil was still working. It occurred to me that I might be able to convert the bike to use a generic DC cdi with separate coil for ignition driven by the Vape trigger coil and retain the battery charging from the Vape stator and regulator/rectifier. Long story short, I could and I did using cheap Chinese components from eBay. Total cost was about £20 compared with circa £90 for a Vape coil alone let alone cost of a new stator. The engine appears to run fine though I have yet to try it on the road as this bike is not road legal and possibly never will be – its mainly a test bed. The 4 pin cdi with its wiring is shown above, the coil was originally bought as a spare for the Serow but works fine in this application.

Thursday 22nd January 2026

Whilst I am waiting for bits for the TS125and the Serow thoughts are turning to the TS250 project I have been working on for about 4 months as a background activity. It started because I was looking for some parts for the trail bike project and visited Rob Holusza's emporium which was then near Dodington. He has since moved to a huge barn near West Kington, but that is another story. I found some of the bits I needed, but also came across some old frames he was getting rid of. One of them still had the 32mm chrome forks from the early TS250s and TS125/150s like my green bike. These are hard to find today so I decied to buy the complete assembly just to get the forks. I stripped of the forks and cleaned them up but then agonised over what to do with the frame. It was the early TS250 type (as you would expect given the forks) and dates from 1974/5 but has no V5 or any indication as to its original regn number; but it was staright and not horribly rusty. In the end I decided to clean it up and paint it dring the latter part of the summer when working outside was pleasant.

The next step was predictable; I couldn't resist screwing on all the odd bits and pieces I had lying around the sheds to see how much of a bike I could build; the results was surprising. The process has continued to the point where it's not far off being a complete bike but with some non standard parts where I had to improvise. I need to take a current picture of it. I have some more parts to add and I will give a fuller explanation about it in future posts. The major issue remains; what to do with it should it ever get completed. To get it on the road will require dating certificates and the DVLA for an age related number, not something I really want to repeat after the saga with the Trail MZ.

Tuesday 20th January 2026

I have now ordered a new chain on eBay for the TS125 and a 16t gearbox sprocket from Phil Speakman at TheMZshop.co.uk. Hopefully they will be here by the end of the week. Whilst tidying the workshop I found a serviceable dipswitch/horn button that probably came off my MSS Velo. I have now wired just the horn function and connected this directly to the Vape coil cutout wire in the headlight unit. The main benefit is that it's a bigger button and can be accessed by either hand. The headlight flasher button I originally used is tucked away a little and not so easy to access.

I rode the Trail MZ to Lyneham (about 20 miles each way) for a coffee morning meet up today. It started ok but seemed reluctant to rev. I fitted another plug and this seemed to cure the problem as I got to the venue without any further issues. There was a very strong headwind which meant the engine was reluctant to hold top gear if the revs were below 4000 which is about 50mph. I suspect it's a function of the tuning done to this engine meaning there is even less power at the lower end of the rev range than normal for an ETZ. It absolutely flew when I ran a 17t gearbox sprocket but the fuel consumption was pretty horrendous as it was constantly running at over 5000rpm. However, the 19t now fitted may be just too high to keep the engine in the power band at normal road speeds. I'll see if I can find an 188t sproecket as that may be the optimum.

Still waiting for Roger to come back from holiday so we can progress the Serow. Also thinking about doing some work on my other TS250 project.

Friday 16th January 2026

The TS125 is now on the bike lift for a series of upgrades. The first was to remove the 6v dynamo equipment and replace it with a Vape Powerdynamo system which I have had on the shelf for several years. Can't even remember which bike I bought it for, possibly the yellow TS150 I bought from Ian Young. Getting the old system was tougher than I remembered, the cables were hard to get out from under the engine and some things are inaccessible when the bike is on the centre stand. However eventually it was all removed. Fitting the new alternator and main wiring was easy enough. Fitting the new coil, regulator and battery more tricky. I had to make a bracket for the coil and drilled/tapped new holes for the regulator and fuse block. The battery presents a problem as it's a 12v system and the bigger battery too large for the tray. I need to research for a smaller battery but once testing is over I will probably run it without a battery; just a smoothing capacitor.

That raised the question of how to stop the engine without a battery to operate a cutout relay. I agonised for ages over this and finally decided to repurpose the headlamp flasher button for now. This requires minimal changes to the wiring and easy to reinstate if/when I find a better solution. The weird thing I have never got to the bottom of is the fact that when switched on the headlight, all four flasher bulbs lit up. So far as I am aware I had not changed any of the bikes original wiring which had been working perfectly when I last used it. There is no obvious connection between headlight and flashers but somehow it seemed to be linked to the rear end. Couldn't find anything wrong but I did remake all the connections and re-seated the bulbs. Somehow that got rid of the problem but no guarantee it won't recur. Anyway, I put some fuel in the tank (it had been drained when I derusted and resealed it), and the engine started 2nd kick. All the electrics worked fine without a battery, the alternator has enough power to run the headlight and flashers without issue.

The next task was to fit a rear carrier, the one I removed from the yellowTS150; not too difficult. The final task was to fit a 16t gearbox sprocket. This threw up a problem. What I thought was a 16t TS150 sprocket was too wide, probably 428 chain rather than 420 and was less dished. The chain also looked tired. Time to find out what a new chain and sprocket will cost and decide whether to replace or just put it all back for now.

Thursday 15th January 2026

Researching the Transmic product line has identified 3 possible solutions.

The AC-CDI v14 which as the name suggests is an AC cdi that is specifically programmed for a range of Yamahas including the XT225. Minimal programming, just select the bike you want from a list accessed through wi-fi. This costs circa around £150 with postage but of course also requires the charge coil to be rewound (£98) or a DC2AC inverter (£60). My previous experience with the latter makes me nervous about this option. The coil rewind though more expensive would mean the bike was not dependant on a battery. This solution would retain the existing trigger coil and ignition coil.

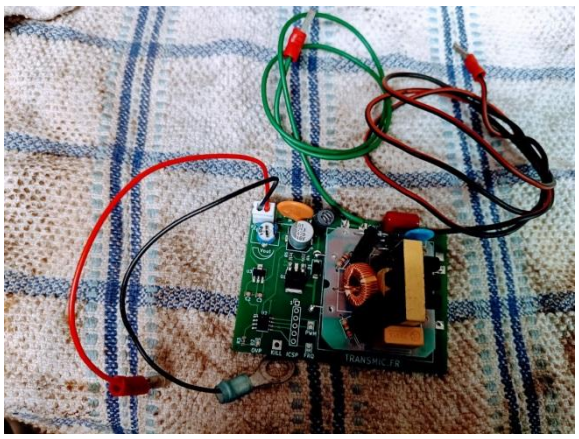
The DC-CDI v14 which as the name implies is a DC cdi. This is a programmable device and the programming looks a bit daunting, but Roger has received the setting for an XT225 from Transmic which will help. The cdi costs around £170 with postage but no other parts are needed as it will use the existing trigger coil and ignition coil. The drawback is that it will be dependant on a serviceable battery.

The TCI v14 which is a different animal and something I was unaware of but is the solution that Transmic recommend; though I am not entirely sure why. This still uses the trigger coil to time the spark and is DC powered but uses the TCI box to fire a normal coil. It's a sort of glorified coil ignition system but without points or a capacitor. These functions being provided by transistors, hence TCI. This system would likely cost circa £200 as it will need a new coil as well. A suitable type that is also small enough to fit won't be cheap. The programming of this is almost identical to the DC-CDI.

Roger has some of these items in stock and has ordered the others parts from Transmic but he is about to go on holiday and won't be back for a couple of weeks. The current plan is for me to take the bike to his garage in Marlborough some time early February and we'll try them out to see which gives the best result. ordered . I have made up the wiring loom to fit all 3 of these devices and spliced it into the bikes existing loom. The bike is now in the van waiting to go. So time to work on another project.

Tuesday 13th January 2026

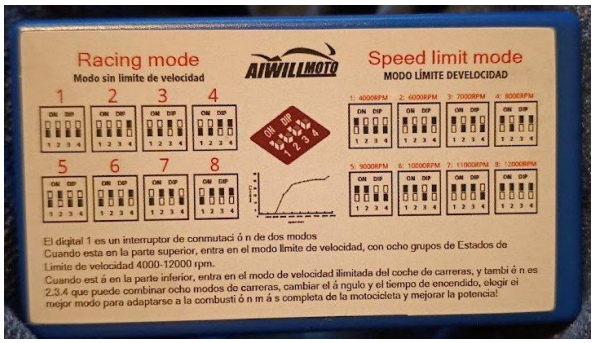
Well things have not gone to plan at all. Roger is able to rewind the charge coil but not until February as he is busy and about to go on holiday. However, he did point me to a possible alternate solution which is to use a device that produces AC voltage from a 12v DC input. Such a device is marketed by a French company with a website at transmic.fr. This replaces the AC input form the charge coil on the stator but otherwise uses all the Serow's standard cdi etc. In fact he had one in stock so this afternoon I went to Marlborough and picked it up. Wiring it in was easy enough and I know that it works because I made the mistake of touching the HV output with my bare hands whilst the ignition was switched on; won't make that mistake again. The end result however was disappointing in that there was no spark produced when I span the engine. Tried swapping the leads in case that was an issue and swapped the trigger coil leads – nothing. So I put the bikes electrics back to standard and as I suspected I still had no spark even though the cdi had previously worked but with too weak a spark to start the engine. B****r I must have fried the cdi somehow though I don't understand how.



So now we are back to the drawing board and I am studying the other products on the Transmic website. They have at least 3 possible solutions each with it own benefits and disadvantages. Roger is friendly with the owner and has offered to discuss the XT225 with him to see what he suggests.

Monday 12th January 2026

The new cdi was waiting for me on Sunday afternoon after I got back from the MZRC meeting at the Salutation. Installing it was fairly easy as the pinouts for 6 pin DC cdi's are well documented. I was able to find a matching set of male connectors to make it tidy and robust. Patching into the trigger connector was a bit more complicated but I eventually found some pin connectors that doa good job. The 12v battery power was taken from the live feed to the horn for now so that it was ignition switch controlled.



The result was initially encouraging, the bike started after a couple of spins. However, the timing is obviously way out, almost certainly retarded and it will tickover very lumpily but not rev up. I was not too bother at first as I had deliberately bought a cdi that was adjustable, you can see the dip switch in the picture and the settings provided are on the back as shown above.

Sadly there is no other documention I have been able to locate so far and given there are only 7 options for 'racing mode' it was easy enough to try each in turn but none made any acceptable difference, indeed any difference I could detect. The issue is probably that I bought the wrong cdi. This one was marketed for a Honda CG125 which I naively thought would be near enough. I suppose it could be faulty but more likely it's not matched to the pickup trigger on the Serow. However, the fact that the bike now starts easily does confirm that the original problem was a weak spark cuaed by the failing AC charge coil. So the obvious solution is to get the charge coil replaced and I will be discussing this with Roger Lovelock in Marlborough as he can rewind coils.

Saturday 10th January 2026.

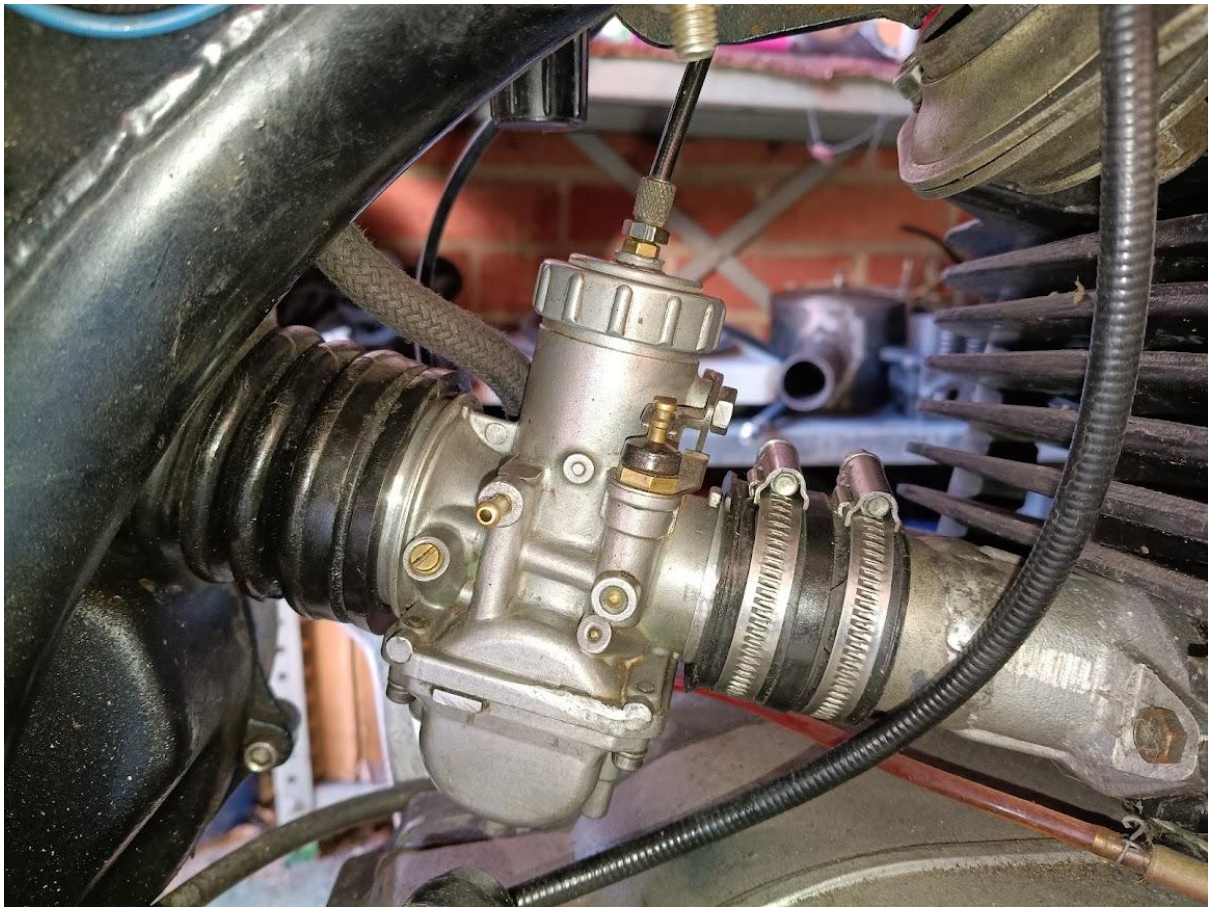
No progress with the Serow, still waiting for the new cdi. The Mitas tyre for the Viper arrived yesterday, remarkable service from Demon Tweaks. Less than 24 hours from order to delivery wish other suppliers were as quick. Tyre now fitted and the wheel is back in the bike. I also re-fitted the petrol tank which is now dry and hardened along with the taps. The only slight snag is that for the life of me I cannot find the filler cap. It should be in the workshop where I did all the derusting but I have yet to find its hiding place. Not a problem for the moment as the tank is empty anyway and I can always borrow one from another of my Velos. Looking at the pictures the Viper needs a good clean and polish. One thing I forgot to mention was that for some time I had noticed a problem with

the Viper carb. Often when you operated the twistgrip the slide was either very stiff or even stuck and needing WD40 to free it off. While the tank was off I stripped it down and some parts were covered in a sticky green coloured film. I suspect that this was the old sealer dissolved into the fuel. Anyway that problem should now be a thing of the past.

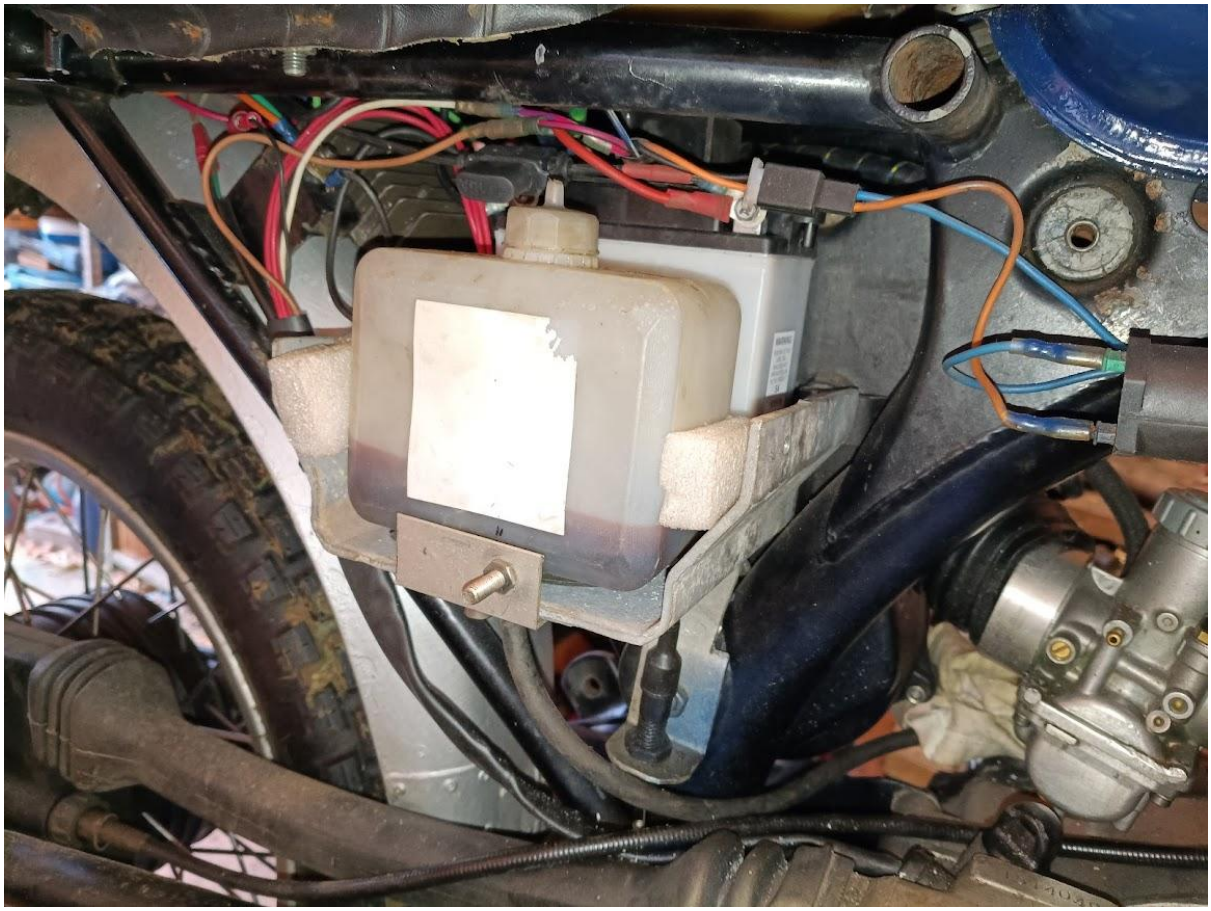
Thursday 8th January 2026

One thing I noticed when I was working on the Viper was that the front tyre, a 3.25 by 19" Avon Speedmaster was at or even marginally below limits. Though I have not used the Viper itself foa long time, I did swap its front wheel into the MSS in October 2024 when taking that bike to Colombres. The MSS's original front brake was quite poor and certainly not up to the demands of the Picos mountains. We did about 800 miles that week so I guess that trip finally wore out the Viper's tyre. I obviously did not notice or more likely care when I swapped the wheels back but now having seen it I had to do something about it so I ordered a new tyre. In years gone by I would have automatically gone for an Avon replacement. Partly because they are very good tyres but also because they were made in Melksham just 5 miles away. However the company was sold to Cooper Tyres (an American company a few years back) who in turn sold it to Dunlop I think last year. Tyre manufacture was then switched to somewhere in Europe and Avons are now very expensive. I opted for a Mitas H06 tyre which I used on the Honda CB400 successfully. It should be here in a couple of days. In the meantime I have removed the wheel and the old tyre ready for its replacement.

About 18 months ago I embarked on an MZ based trail bike project. It started when I bought what appeared to be a substantially completed project based on an ETZ251 frame with a tuned ETZ250 motor. Long story short, the project was never viable for a variety of reasons so I obtained what I thought was a usable Supa5 frame with an existing DVLA registration. That turned into another saga as the VIN number on the frame did not match the DVLA registration details so months were spent sorting this out and eventually getting it registered under an age related plate. In the interim I gradually built up the bike going through a number of iterations of tanks, seats, wheels and engines before it morphed into what is shown above, now legally on the road and going quite well. There are still problems, or rather things I am not totally happy about so no doubt it will change again over time. One of thos things was the carburettor which is a 30mm Mikuni I bought from Reg Eyre. This generally works very well, starts easily and gives a reliable slow tickover. However, someone had fitted a collar on the air cleaner side of the carb which was too large to fit the standard MZ intake hose. The result being that some unfiltered air could enter the carb. Not ideal and certainly something I needed to fix before using it seriously under dusty conditions. So today I removed the carb and fitted it into the lathe. I was expecting to find I needed the 4-jaw chuck (as you do with the BVF carbs) but in fact the intake and output stubs on the Mikuni are concentric so it spun true. I then dismantled the carb to remove anything loose inside like the floats and needles; didn't want to damage anything while it was spinning around. It was then easy enough to turn down the collar to 51mm which made it a snug fit on the air filter hose. Job done.



Another small outstanding job was to connect up the oil pump cable to the throttle. I had been running this bike on 50:1 petroil mix but being an ETZ250 engine it was fitted with a pump. I figured out how to make and fit an oil tank as shown below a couple of weeks back and it was connected up to the pump. Howver the bike had a full tank of petroil so I have been running it without the throttle cable connected to avoid an excessively rich oil ratio. The tank was near empty so I filled it with neat petrol and connected the pump cable to the twistgrip so it now ruins pumped oil only. I subsequently did a 30 mile run with no issues. Sorted. I had also made a new cover for the oil tanl which you can see on one of the pictures above. The hole is to allow sight of the oil level without needing to remove the cover.



Wednesday 7th January 2026

The Viper tank is now pristine inside and even better there was no sign of any leaks whilst it was full of the Deox-C solution. I washed it out thoroughly with some special water based degreaser I had lying around then fresh water and finally dried it with the hot air gun to stop the rust re-forming. Final task is the hardest one, re-sealing the tank but this time with POR15 which is ethanol proof. Its difficult to get it to spread evenly and my arms were aching by the time the job was done. The tank is now a spare bedroom to keep it at a reasonable temperature. The workshop is still around 5°C.

The rest of the day was spend putting the Serow engine back together. No major problems were encountered though getting the oil control ring in place was harder than I expected. Cam timing is spot on as are the tappet clearances and everything torqued down. I was then able to spin the motor to check the voltage output of the cdi charge coil. This was around 18v. I don't have a specific value for this item but a Google search suggests it should be at least 50v at cranking speeds so further confirmation that the coil is suspect. Further research established that the alternator on this model is long obsolete and the later type which can be sourced won't fit without changing flywheel and the cdi plus some of the wiring and possibly the regulator which is now 3-phase. There do seem to be a couple of places offering to rewind the charge coil but the cost will be over £100 plus two lots of postage. The question of whether its worth it arises, especially given that I don't know for sure if it will actually fix the problem.

However, another option seems feasible and that's the rout eI am exploring. As the trigger coil seems ok, it is possible to replace the original cdi (AC type) with a DC type which uses 12v battery power instead of the charge coil. I have ordered one to try this out so the Serow project is now on hold till it arrives in a week or so.

Tuesday 6th January 2026

Whilst the engine was apart and all the wiring was exposed I took the opportunity to check the ignition wiring. The Serow using as AC cdi system with a trigger coil fitted outside the flywheel and a charge coil inside. You can see these in the picture below:

I checked all the wires for continuity and any signs of damage but none was evident. The only manual that exists for the early Serows is actually for the post 1991 models with different electrics so I have no definitive information on the wiring or against which to test the various components. However, the trigger coil measures 568 ohms against and this part does seem to be the same as later models. The book gives a range of 656-984ohms at 20°C. As my garage was around 4°C at the time I reckon its probably close enough. The charge coil is another matter, It was giving 221ohms and it seems likely that it should be closer to 600ohms. So this may be a clue to the bad starting and would also explain why it has got progressively worse in the last 12 months. Something I need to investigate.

Monday 5th January 2026

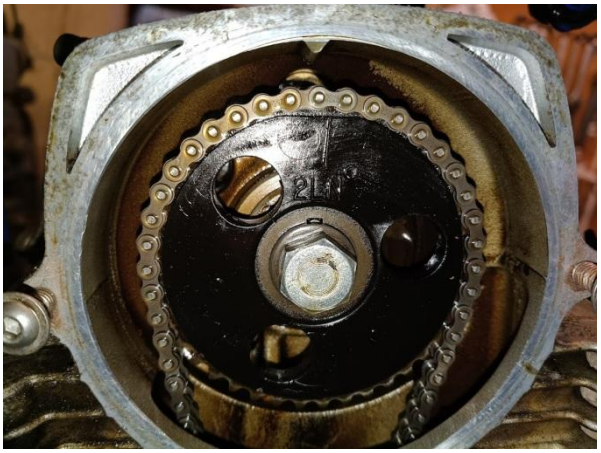
The Viper tank is now clear of the old sealer but has a lot of rust which seems to have built up under the old sealer. Looks to me like the tank was not properly cleaned internally before the sealer was installed. The tank is now filled with Deox-C deruster and will be left to soak for a few days.

The Serow cylinder head is the next job. I tried using heat and mole grips to get the remains of the bolts out without success.Even welding nuts to them did not work, they were really corroded in place so the only opition is to drill them out. Cutting the nuts of flush and centre popping them was easy enough but mounting them in the pillar drill needed more thought. In the end I found an old angle plate which someone gave me years ago that I had never previously found a use for. I was able to mount the head in this at the correct angle and bolt the whole assembly onto the pillar drill plate. I didn’t take any pictures of this process but the picture below shows the mounted head after the

drilling was completed and new s/s studs had been fitted. Made a botch of one so used JB Weld to make sure it was secure. The studs are ¼" whitworth as I was not confident 6mm studs would hold.

Sunday 4th January 2026

Well the head and barrel are now removed, the head causing some difficulty as the exhaust pipe bolts were badly corroded so they had to be removed together. In fact the bolts were so badly corroded that that had to be cut of with the angle grinder. Sadly I have found no mechanical smoking guns from this exercise. There was some wear present which you would expect from an engine that has done 25k miles but nothing obvious to explain why it would not start. The cam timing does appear to be one tooth out but if so it has always been like this in my ownership and yet it used to start ok and even now runs fine once started. So I don't believe that is the cause. The exhaust valve and seat were quite coated but again not enough to explain the bad starting. After all it was giving 120psi which should have been plenty. Before I can reassemble I need to order some valve seals and a new cam chain and to figure out how to remove the remains of the exhaust pipe bolts. The crank appears to be fine as does the small end bush.

Saturday 3rd January 2026.

The Viper tank is still being de-linered (if there is such a word) with actetone soaking. Bit like watching paint dry so I have turned my attention to the Yamaha Serow. This has been an enigma for nearly a year. I actually sold it to a VMCC friend back in May 2025 as I had built an MZ based trail bike that made it redundant in my garage. There will be more about this MZ project later. Anyway, the new owner had considerable trouble getting the bike to start and eventually I bought it back because I felt so guilty about it. The bike then spent a couple of weeks with Matt Young. The intention being to swap various parts between his Serow and mine. Initially this worked to the extent that using my carb on his bike proved that there was nothing wrong with my carb. And using his known good carb on my bike did nothing to help it start. But we hit a snag when it came to swapping electrical bits. Mine is a 1990 model and there was a significant change in the electrical early in 1991. Matts bike is one of the later models and has a different alternator and cdi system so none of the parts are interchangeable. However, we did manage to get it running without finding anything else obviously wrong apart from a weak spark. However, Serows are notorious for having a weak looking spark. So I brought it home around June and just parked it up. Every now and again I tried to start it sometime succeeding, after which it then ran perfectly well. More often failing to get it to start. Even when it did start it was usually only after churning the starter for ages risking burning out the starter and frequently flattening the battery. The last couple of times prior to Christmas I could not get it to start at all.

So it was brought into the workshop for another checkover. Still nothing obviously wrong, fuel was present and there was a spark (still weak looking) at the plug but compression had dropped from circa 140 to 120psi. The decision was made to strip the top end of the motor to check everything and to fit a new barrel/piston assembly that cam with the bike when I bought it. The stripdown starts today.

Friday 2nd January 2026

Prior to Christmas I had been derusting a number of MZ petrol tanks with satisfying results. For no particular reason I decided to check over the Velocette Viper which has not turned a wheel since I did the oil/filter change back on March 2024. I removed the battery which was still vaguely alive and took it to the workshop for a bit of intensive tlc – where it remains on periodic charging. I also decided to drain the fule from the tank as it must by now be very stale. However, I found that nothing was coming out of either tap, not even when I tried blowing through them. When I looked inside the cause was obvious. The tank had clearly been lined with something that was not ethanol proof and it looked horrible. No option but to remove the tank and start the clean up process.

Consulting the internet Acetone was recommended as the way to dissolve the old liner so I bought 5 litres and started the process. It took a couple of days of periodic soaking, draining, washing out and soaking again. I also found another useful tip on Youtube about using the pressure washer to help the process and this is working well.

Thursday 1st January 2026

I used to maintain this diary regularly often daily to record what I was doing, mainly in connection with my motorcycling activities. However for a variety of reasons I stopped up updating around January 2024. Not sure why really, possibly lack of interest, too many other distractions and also because arthritis in my hands made writing and even typing painful. However, I decided it was time to resume the blog. I am not going to try and catch up with all my activities over the past two years but at times I will fill in some of the blanks. Curious really as the last entry in blog 12A concerned the Viper and this will shortly get a mention again.

Saturday 30th March 2024

Serviced the Viper today with oil and filter change at 5358 miles.

Earlier in the week I sold the AJS 14CSR to a friend in the VMCC. I decided I really had too many bikes (10 at that point) and really the AJS did not fit in my future plans.