

## Daily (sometimes) Blogg – Part 2

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

As you might expect, Christmas has rather limited my garage time so not much to report until today. The fuel connector I ordered on Monday arrived today which was a pleasant surprise so it is now fitted to the BK350 and the petrol tank refitted. As far as I can see, all the little jobs have now been tackled so the bike should be ready for a test ride as soon as the weather and road conditions permit.

Late morning I set off to Fitzhead on the edge of Exmoor to collect the blue TS150 which I hope to build into a trail bike. This is now in my garage and will probably form the main theme of my blog for a while. As this one has now reached 50 pages, this will be the last entry – Part 3 will be opened tomorrow.

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

I was not quite as clever as I thought when it came to repairing the BK350 petrol tap. I had cured one source of leakage but it turned out that the sealing rubber was also badly worn so it dripped



constantly even when turned off. The tap itself looks very similar to the ones fitted to later MZs but the sealing rubber is a different so I could not easily repair it. Fortunately the tank connection is the same so I was able to rebuild an MZ tap to fit for now. I have located a correct type of rubber on my preferred German web site and will add one next time I place an order. Despite the Christmas rush the 7/16" studding for the SB snubbers arrived today and I have now made up one assembly – there is enough material to make four. One detail improvement was to put a 5mm bolt in the other end to provide a means of turning the

device for adjustment. The new assembly is at the bottom. The top shows the original rubber snubber which I have drilled 5mm then forced a 6mm thread into. I used liquid rubber to glue it in and bond a supporting washer. I can see no reason why this would not work.

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2014**

Today was the Winter Solstice so from here on the days get longer, always a good feeling; almost makes me feel like going to Stonehenge which strangely enough I have never visited despite living only 25 miles away. We had three visitors today, Brandy Callanan, and his parents Roger & Nancy all from North Carolina and spending Christmas in the UK. Brandy has a long held desire to own an S8 Sunbeam yet has never seen one in the flesh until today. They spent a very convivial hour or so looking at the S8 and my other bikes before departing for Bath to visit the Jane Austen gallery.

Some good news on the trail bike project front; Tony Lock confirmed today that I could pick up the TS150 on Saturday so I look like getting a late Christmas present. Thanks to another member of the Sunbeam forum, I have located and ordered some 7/16" studding which will enable me to make a proper job of the S8 Snubbers. I also order a fuel pipe quick release connector for the BK350 as like the R26, it has a pipe connecting the two sides of the petrol tank which means it has to be drained every time you need to remove it. I had to take the tank of anyway today as the petrol tap was leaking. It turned out to be a very simple fix, whoever fitted the tap last time (don't think it was me) had not aligned the rh/lh lock nut correctly and the tap was not actually clamped firmly to the tank. The tank can stay off until the quick release connector arrives which will most likely be in the New Year. Also on the BK350 I have adjusted the brake light switch so it now works and swapped the neutral warning light for a bulb in place of the LED array I previously made up. This also allowed me to fit the correct green glass cover for the warning light so it now looks standard. While I was working on the headlamp I decided to fit s/s fixing bolts as the ones previously fitted were a bit manky.

Last bit of tinkering was to try and trace an intermittent tinkling noise which seems to come from the LH cylinder area. Its difficult to trace as I cannot always reproduce it and there is a similar noise from the k/s ratchet which confuses the issue. I thought it might be the piston hitting the head so I fitted an extra gasket and initially the noise went away but later came back again. I need a second opinion on this so will have to send for the cavalry.

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2014**

Not a great deal to report so I have not updated the blog on a daily basis for a while. I rode the R26 to Kemble on Thursday and the vibration from the handlebars was blissfully absent. The bike seemed to go quite well then I realised we had a strong partly tail wind and it was not quite so spritely on the way home. The handling did not seem quite as precise as before though I think this was mainly due to the wind as several other riders mentioned problems on the ride over. Anyway I have put one further shim on each clamp to stiffen the rubber bushes. Not yet found time to do the decoke and realistically it's not likely to get done until after Christmas.

I have now fitted a security light on the garage, a CCTV camera monitoring the whole garden area and beefed up the security of the shed which stores a couple of the bikes. This has occupied a lot of my time this week but at least we now feel a bit more secure and I have re-arranged the bikes so that the workshop is a bit clearer. In the process I moved the BK350 to the workshop as it is due a bit of quality time. I did kick it over and there was no sign of the flywheel spinning on the crankshaft so I turned on the petrol gave it a good tickle (there is no choke) and it started after 5 or 6 kicks which was encouraging. Quite looking forward to having a play with it.

My friend Garth came over to collect the rubber snubbers for his S8 and whilst looking at mine he pointed out that the one I glued on recently had dropped off again. Decided that this was a good time to work out how to fit the new ones. With the rubber missing it was easy enough to get the threaded metal plate out of the frame and I used this as the basis for my first attempt. The flat plate at the end was machined down and I then used a 7/16" BSF die to cut a thread along the whole length. One end was then drilled 5.5mm and tapped to 6mm to take a piece of studding onto which the new snubber screws. I also had to make up a 7/16" BSF nut to lock the snubber to the adjuster. This worked fine in that I was able to assemble the whole thing but one snag emerged. The 7/16" bar was simply not long enough to allow correct setting of snubber with enough exposed thread remaining to take the external lock nut.

I could not find any long 7/16" BSF bolts in my spares box so for the moment I used something similar in diameter (non idea what); re-cut the thread to BSF then fitted the 6mm studding. This is now fitted to the bike and seems to be ok as a temporary measure. However I am not happy with my modified bolt and will look out for some genuine 7/16" BSF studding and bolts to make a better quality job. At least I now have a template to copy.

#### **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

Took the R26 for a quick run round the block today and the new rubber mounted handlebar clamps worked fine with no immediate need to firm up the rubbers. The bike itself was desperately sluggish until it warmed up and even then is no fireball. I wish I had an alternate carb I could try on it as I think it needs a choke for starting and the warming up phase. I am also tempted to remove the head and check the condition of the valves as it does still seem very flat. Will decide after a run to Kemble for lunch on Thursday.

Il only had limited garage time today so spent it tidying up and cleaning. An unusual position for me, but there seem to be no immediate or priority jobs to be done in the garage. I need to think through carefully which project to move on to. Obvious Candidates are the BK350 and the Ariel VH500 or of course something entirely new. I was considering an ES175/1 advertised in the MZ Rider recently but was not able to justify the asking price especially as it was a 400mile round trip to collect and not wholly original. However it has wetted my appetite for one of these earlier models though they do not come up often.

#### **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

On Sunday evening after returning from the MZ monthly meeting, I finished the rebuild of the TS125 motor which is now a full 150cc. This can sit on the shelf as a spare in case I have problems with the ETS150 engine, hopefully it will never be needed.

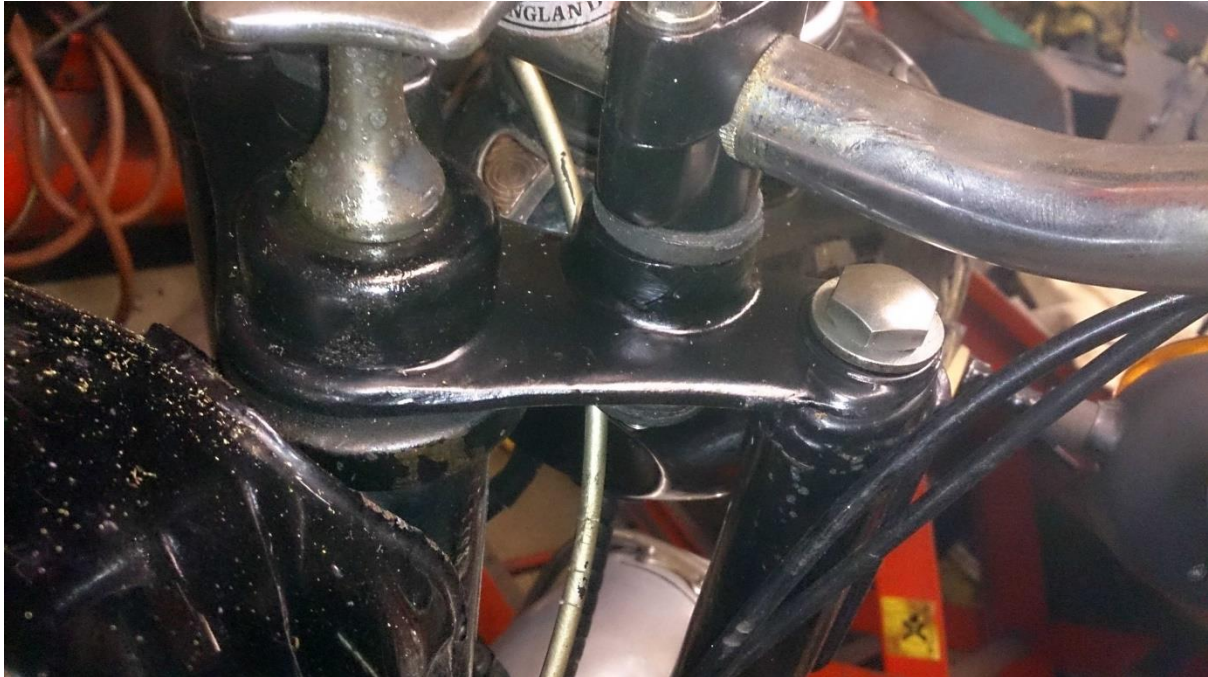


Today I picked up the modified top yoke for the R26 from Terry. He had done the job over the weekend so it was a quick



turn round. Back in the workshop I did some final tweaking to get the spacer tubes the right length and position in the bored out yoke, they were then taken to another friend (Mick) to be welded. He was a bit concerned about the composition of the metals and decided in the end to use nickel rods to avoid problems. Just as well I did not try to do the welding myself.

Once painted the assembly was pretty straightforward as can be seen in the third picture. I will give it a test drive tomorrow. I expect I may have to do some shimming to get the right tension on the



rubber bushes so that they eliminate the vibration without feeling too sloppy.

#### **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

I spent the morning fitting a Powerdynamo system to friend Terry's Supa5. I took with me the R26 top yoke and the new clamps/bushes and showed him what I wanted to achieve. He thinks it's feasible and has the necessary tools to do the job. Part of it he may do over the weekend if time allows but we made a date for Monday morning to finish the job. This afternoon I spent a couple of hours reassembling the TS125 motor. The bottom end is now complete and I have located a 150 barrel which has cleaned up nicely. All being well I will finish the job tomorrow; too cold to spend any more time in the garage today.

#### **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

Not a huge amount of progress over the last two days. Yesterday morning I found that some lowlife has decided to break into the rear garage. Fortunately they don't appear to have taken anything but they did break the locks so I spent most of the day dealing with the police (seems the thieves did sheds along most of the road last night) and then buying and fitting some additional security. I also moved the AJS up to the main garage so now it's very difficult to do any work unless one or more bikes are moved outside – very annoying and unsettling. Today was domestic chores time but the spares from Germany arrived (only ordered on Monday – remarkable) along with the gearbox bearings I ordered separately from a UK supplier. I now have all the bits to rebuild the TS125 engine,

just need some quality time. Unlikely to be before Monday as there are a few other things in the diary until then.



#### **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

Lying in bed last night I thought of a way to modify the top yoke within the capabilities of my equipment and skills and this morning I translated it into action. The end result is satisfactory for now and has allowed me to carry out a test ride which confirmed that handlebar vibration is now virtually eliminated. I now know it's worth going the extra mile to get the job done properly. A picture of the modified top yoke is shown. I

had an email from Meinzweirad to say the bits I ordered are being shipped today so I should be able to complete the TS125 rebuild (as a 150) soon.

#### **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

No garage time on Saturday or Sunday but I did go to the MZRC Bristol Section AGM and Christmas bash which was a pleasant social occasion. By a remarkable stroke of luck Ray Cattle had donated a TS150 con rod kit as a raffle prize and luckily I managed to win it so that made it a very good day for me; thank you Ray. I also won a TS250 rear chain and a rack so the gods were really smiling on me.

Today I have finished stripping down and cleaning the TS125 engine I acquired last week. A selection of new bits for the engine and a couple of items for the ETS150 have been ordered from Germany so it should be ready for reassembly in a week or so – not that there is any hurry other than a desire not to have it in bits for too long. I have also made some s/s bolts for the bottom yoke of the ETS150 and centralised the front mudguard, just minor tweaking really. All being well I will ride it to the salutation next Sunday.

I have now turned my attention to the R26 and removed the top yoke ready to convert it to rubber mounting for the handlebars. In fact the term should be reversion since with the paint removed it is clear to see that this is a genuine R26 yoke which has had clamps welded on afterwards, presumably by the infamous Vic from Taunton. Yet another of his apparently pointless mods – I wonder how many more I will find? You can see where the brackets have been (very neatly) welded on top of what would have been the housing for the original rubber mountings. The second picture taken from below



makes it clearer and my plan is to wholly remove the welded on bracket and bore out the yoke from the bottom to circa 26mm diameter to take the tube shown in the 3<sup>rd</sup> picture. This tube will retain the rubber bushes for the new handlebar clamps. Sadly most of this machining is beyond my skills and equipment so I am waiting for Terry to give me a date when he is free to do the job. In return I am going to fit a Powerdynamo kit to his Supa5.

#### **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

I gave the ETS150 a good clean and polish today and cleaned the paint of a small area of the front nearside engine mount to punch in the frame number. Still needs to be ridden but its cold and the roads are wet and now its clean I don't want to get it dirty so I will be patient. AS I had some spare time I decided to strip the TS125 engine I was given the other day. In facts its mostly quite good; the grinding noises were badly worn main bearings but I have a complete set of the correct size in stock. The flywheels were heavily surface rusted but the big end seems quite sound so I think it will just need a good clean up plus seals and gaskets before being rebuilt as a spare standby engine if the ETS150 motor gives up the ghost.

#### **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014**

The ETS150 lives! I finished the last few jobs of today took the picture below to prove it. I have run the engine but not actually ridden it yet as it needs damper fluid in the front forks. I also have problem with the dip switch which sometimes causes the fuse to blow. For now I have simply pulled the lead out of the switch as I doubt I will need to ride it at night and I don't want to blow the fuse by accident. One pleasing result is that you can now put the bike on the centre stand without it toppling over. Compare the top picture which was how the bike came with the lower picture taken today and you can see how much further forward the front forks project. (hard to believe I have only had the bike for 7 weeks – seems much longer). You can also clearly see the bend in the top of the frame. I cannot



believe that I did not notice it immediately.

## **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014**

Started the reassembly of the ETS150 today and made good progress until I put the engine back in the frame. At that point I found that MZ in their infinite wisdom had clearly modified the rear engine mounting lugs on later engines by making them 20mm wider. The rear frame engine mounts were of course correspondingly wider so the engine looked a bit lost. Fortunately it was easy to fix by making up four 10mm spacers and finding some longer bolts. Just as well I was not trying to fit a later engine in the original frame. Something else new learned about MZs. Everything else went back together ok though getting the brackets to fit the air cleaner box lined up took a couple of attempts. I have used the later s/arm with its rubber bush pivots rather than the original which uses greased (or rather oiled) metal bushes. The later frame lacks the locking bolts to secure the pin. I will hang in to the s/arm and maybe re-visit this at some time. I plan to drill and tap the end of the pin now fitted to take a dummy grease nipple for now.



The electrics as always were the time consuming bit as I managed to pull the Lucar connectors off several leads and then could not remember where everything fitted. Eventually everything worked but I still have one spare lead with no obvious home. It's a duplicate of the lead that goes to pin 61 on the regulator. I suspect it's something to do with the emergency start position on the switch. Nothing for it but to consult the manual as I have no idea which pin it should go to on the switch. At close of play it only remains to fit the tank, seat, headlight unit and the tricky one – the centre stand spring.

During the afternoon John Rayment came over to pick up a battery and dropped of an old TS125 engine which he bought for a fiver at a Shepton Mallet a/j a few years ago and never found a use for. Obviously a later type engine as it has the wider rear mounting lugs. Perhaps having to change the frame does have some benefits even if the bike is now far from original. I doubt many people would ever notice and it will be easier to keep it running in later years.

## **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014**

Plenty of distractions today so not a great deal of garage time but I have managed to totally strip the ETS150 and it is now just a heap of bits scattered round the garage. The frame and swinging arm are in the spare bedroom hardening off as the paint was slow to dry in the cold garage. Tomorrow all being well should see the bulk of the bike reassembled – in truth there are not a lot of bits to an MZ.

## **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Today was mostly spent cleaning up the frame and swinging arm. In fact it was mostly oily dirt and with only a modicum of rusty bits – more on the s/arm funnily enough. I decided that it would be waste of money to have the parts shot blasted and powder coated so I de-rusted and brush painted the worst bits with black Hammerite smooth then when it was tacky sprayed the bulk of the frame

and s/arm with the Hammerite spray. This combination gets a thick covering where it's needed and the spraying takes all the brush marks out. Otherwise you can easily get through a whole can of Hammerite smooth to get the same results and it's not the cheapest of paint. I also cleaned up and sprayed the bottom yoke with Hammerite Silver. Now comes the boring bit, I need to be patient for a couple of days to let it all cure.

Strangely enough Andrew who donated the frame was visiting friends in Bath for the weekend and popped over on his early TS150 so he was able to see work in progress as well as looking at my other bikes. When I showed him how I had modified the tank mounting he pointed me to his bike which was a 1976 model with chrome 32mm forks. This frame had both types of tank mounting so the frame must have been shared with other models (ES150?) around that time. Something else we had both learned about MZs as until today he had no idea what the tube in his frame was for.

Tomorrow if the painted bits are dry enough to be moved I can get the ETS150 on the bike lift and complete the strip down ready for the rebuild into the new frame.

### **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

I got the location of the TS frame from Andrew on Thursday evening and was able to visit his Mother-in-law on Friday to collect the bits. It was a near 300 mile round trip and fortunately Terry came with me for company. The drive up using motorway was quick and uneventful but the return



was the journey from hell. I decided to use the A5 and the old Fosse Way but the former was log jammed and the latter had a road closure necessitating a lengthy detour. Anyway I got all the bits I needed – what a treasure trove of MZ parts Andrew has stored in mum-in-laws loft. I think she was a bit disappointed with the small amount of stuff I took away. Charming lady who gave us a very nice lunch as well.

Today I have been examining the parts and assessing how to fit it all together. The first and unexpected challenge was the petrol tank as the front mounting on the newer TS frame is totally different to the ETS. I had to cut off the TS mounting spigots and drill two holes to fit a large diameter tube for the ETS mounting rubbers. The picture shows what was required. Next task was to cut off the projection for the steering lock as this is not compatible with the ETS yokes –

possibly the easiest task of the day.

The remainder of the day was spent trying out various options for the yokes. I could have used the pair from the ETS with minor adjustment to the top adjuster nuts (basically swapping them over). However this would have meant cutting of the flange which limit the travel of the bottom fork yoke and fabrication something suitable for the rather different ETS system. I could have used the TS top and bottom yokes and this would have required no work at all. However, one of the distinctive features of the ETS is its top yoke which is completely different to the TS type. The omission would

have been obvious to everyone and a constant aggravation to me. Fortunately there was a third option which I was able to take using the TS bottom yoke and the ETS top yoke. This required bushes to be made to make the ETS yoke fit the TS stem and bushes in the bottom yokes to reduce the stanchion hole from 35 to 32mm. I had already done a preliminary assembly to make sure that the yokes did actually line up which thankfully they did. Making the bushes was a tedious business of trial and error to get the bushes to a perfect fit. If I was a better machinist and had more faith in the accuracy of my lathe it would be a quick job. Instead I tend to make things slightly oversize initially then iterate a fitting with taking a bit more off until it fits properly. Slow but I got there in the end so now the major modifications to the frame should be complete. Next task is to clean it up and decide whether to have it powder coated or simply paint it myself.

#### **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Wednesday was a non-garage day so nothing to report for the blog apart from the fact that the handlebar clamps I purchased on ebay arrived and look very good. They will get their turn in due course. Today was the turn of the S8 to address a number of small issues. The primary one was to check and re-torque the head nuts to reduce any oil leaks that might be coming from that area. There were signs of this but equally it could have been the copious amount coming through the distributor – a small amount of oil seems to go a long way - externally anyway. Most of the head nuts are easy enough to get to though only accessible with an open ended spanner. However, there are two at the back which can only be accessed via an inspection plate under the dizzie and nee the rocker box removed to be able to see what you are doing. One is quite easy to reach though it's unlikely that it would cause much of an oil leaks anyway. The other is much more critical as its the only one securing the centre of the head and close to the feed to the camshaft. Mine was loose so very likely it has contributed to leaks, just hope that it has not trashed the head gasket. Tightening it was difficult as there is very little room and I had to make a spanner to do the job. I am not overly confident that it's as tight as it should be but it is certainly significantly better than before.

With the rocker cover off I decided to check the tappet clearances but these were all pretty close to the specified 18thou – which seems a lot. Next job was to replace the cork petrol taps ( which were still leaking despite my best efforts) with the all metal ones originally fitted. At the time I thought they were also leaking but since then I had found and cured other problems with the fuel feed. I thought it was worth a try and indeed they seem to be working well. Final job was to put some more rubber packing around the headstock as the tank had been rubbing on something in that area. Pleased to say that the bike started first kick once it was all back together and sounded very healthy. Something of a war of attrition but slowly I am getting the S8 to a state where it can be used with confidence. What we need now is some dryer and milder weather to give it a test ride.

Still waiting for news on when I can collect the TS150 bits so the ETS is still on hold.

#### **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Picked up the magneto from Paul Lydford this morning and had a long chat with him about things motorcycling. Turns out he has joined us on one of our runs to the New Forest last year and we had a number of friends in common. Back at the workshop I had to move the monowheel ETS150 from the bike lift and stack it in the corner out of the way. The AJS was then retrieved from its hiding place and took possession of the bike lift. Fitting the mag and retiming it was very straightforward as I had

done it several times and all the nuts/bolts and spacers were now spot on. Bike started easily but seemed reluctant to run properly as I advanced the ignition. Then the penny dropped. I had timed it with the piston in the full advance position and the mag on full retard. An issue quickly resolved and the bike now runs perfectly.



Apparently there should also be a guard to keep protect the mag so I am researching this to see if I can make one. I also need to repair the choke which fell apart the other day though the bike started easily enough with just a tickle. Bike will then go back into storage pending good clean & polish for the Bristol Show.

Another piece of good news is that I should shortly be taking possession of a TS150 which I originally rehomed about 6 years ago when I was Bristol Section Rep. Tony Lock picked it up but has never done anything with it so has kindly agreed to let me have it for my TS based trail bike project.

#### **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Quite a positive day. First piece of good news was that the AJS magneto is repaired and ready for collection. Too short notice to go get it today but I shall be off to Shaftesbury tomorrow first thing. What a remarkable service and only £129 with new armature and two years warranty. Andrew Long has confirmed that he still has the TS150 frame, the only slight drawback is that it is still in the Midlands and he now lives in Exeter but we are working on that. In the interim I played around with the ETS frame and yokes trying out journal bearings, There were a couple of possible snags but in the end I was able to make it all fit so I now have some confidence that I will be able to use the ETS yokes in the TS frame. As it could be a while before I can start the rebuild, I have put the more delicate bits of the ETS in the loft of the garage where they won't get knocked over or have spanners dropped on them. Even when I get the TS frame it will doubtless need powder coating or at least painting. One other useful thing was that the frame will likely come with a centre stand and swinging arm. This will make the transfer and rebuild a lot easier as I won't have to remove these bits from the old frame until the very end.

The postman also delivered some other goodies. DVLA confirmed that the ES250 Trophy is now legally taxed as an Historic vehicle and in a separate envelope the new V5C arrived so that's one

worry out of the way. The small pot of touch up paint I ordered for the S8 also arrived. It's a little darker than my current paint but near enough and a lot better than the silver I had been using to cover up the odd chip & scratch.

### **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2014**

With the AJS now going to be my entry for the Bristol show there was no real reason to defer getting the frame of the ETS150 sorted. So this afternoon I put it up on the bike lift and stripped the front end. With the tank off it is easy to see the extent of the damage and I am now concerned that it will not be possible to actually straighten it without some damage which will probably need welding. It was hard to get good pictures but this head-on shot shows how far out of true it is in a vertical plane. The other picture was taken after the frame was stripped and clearly shows the major bulge at the bottom of the headstock (on both sides) where it was pushed significantly backwards in the shunt. In fact the bulge is so wide that the tank has rubbed paint from the frame. You can also see where the top section has squashed inwards.



The bottom bearing was also very rough and noisy. Though once it was apart I could not see any obvious reason for this as the bearing tracks and balls all seemed to be in good condition. However, the top cup was cracked and had clearly been abused at some time as bits were missing from the outer edge. I suspect this had once been the bottom cup. Not enough to affect the bearing in operation but



evidence of some trauma. However, things looked up when I offered up a journal bearing of the type used on all later MZS. It fitted the ETS stem perfectly and with a shim, would have fitted the frame. This was a pleasant surprise; what this means is that it may be possible to use the later TS150 frame as a replacement. I have the offer of one

which I am now following up and I think this may be the way to go.

### **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2014**

I went to Shaftesbury today to deliver the magneto to Paul Lydford. I wimped out and took the car as it was wet and cold. The AJS has now been put away pending the return of the magneto. The S8 bits did not arrive in the post so that too is still on hold. I took the opportunity to tidy up part of the workshop and threw out a wheelbarrow full of odds and ends, mostly bits of wood I had hung on to in case they were useful. Amazed just how much there was and still plenty left. I also relaid the top

of the bench which is made up of 3 scaffold planks. Over the years a big gap had opened up and nuts kept falling through into my personal black hole – never to be seen again. Anyway the gap is now sealed and in the process I found the insulated washer I had dropped when stripping the S8 dizzie.

I am waiting for John Lawe of BEMW to confirm if he has an R26 top yoke but in the interim I have made a successful bid for a pair of Yamaha handlebars clamps including the rubbers which I should be able to adapt to BMW yokes. The correct BMW 'P' clips are hideously expensive and very restrictive on the types of handlebar you can fit. The Yamaha ones are a much more sensible design and since the bike is already very non standard in this area it matters not a lot.

Last night I had to get into the loft and came across a box of old magazines, brochures etc which I plan to sort through tomorrow.

### **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2014**

On Thursday I took the R26 up to Malmesbury for a VMCC run. It went pretty much the same with a BMW silencer as it did with the Burgess – though a lot quieter so the theory about the restrictive exhaust is now trashed. By ringing its neck I just about managed to keep up with a Model 50 Norton except on long uphill drags but the vibration through the handlebars is giving aggravating the arthritis in my hands and shoulder. The priority for the R26 is rubber mounted handlebars and I am investigating several options at the moment.

The a/r cable and the correct pickup for the AJS magneto arrived this morning – good service as I only ordered them about 11am on Thursday. They fitted fine but the whole mag is now off the bike and packed up ready to go to Paul Lydford in Shaftesbury for a checkover. I spoke to him this afternoon and he has kindly agreed to look at it as soon as he has finished the mags ordered for Kempton. Good excuse for a ride if the weather is ok tomorrow.

Since all the other bikes are on hold at present I decided to tackle the S8 distributor. Its now in bits awaiting parts from Stewart Engineering. No wonder it was leaking oil, the oil seal was simply not present nor was the thrust washer. Stewarts were amazed it ran at all so it was a good job I decided to tackle it rather than simply leave it. In the end the strip down was quite straightforward but since I was unable to find any useful literature on the subject anywhere, I am writing an illustrated guide to help other novices in the future. This will be on my web a site once it is finished with a link from here as well.

### **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November**

Took the S8 for short spin to the spares shop to get some bits for the AJS. Centering the engine has certainly reduced the low speed shakes to the point where it is usable around town. I am seeking advice over the oil leaks, particularly the main one through the body of the distributor. Seems there is an oil seal which can be replaced but there are a few horror stories on the web site about tinkering with the dizzie. Since Stewarts list a new one at £750 I am not in a hurry to start work until I am sure I know what I am doing. So far I have not found any exploded diagrams or other useful pictures to show exactly how they are constructed nor an instructions on overhauling them. I can continue to use the bike for shortish journeys; just need to keep a rag under the dizzie to soak up the oil and keep an eye on the oil level. I also need to remove the tank and rocker cover to access the inner head bolts and check the tappets. Will do the dizzie at the same time.

As the S8 is on hold I am working on the AJS to convert it to magneto ignition. My first attempt at an assembly indicated a number of minor issues. The slots in the mounting plate had to be elongated a little to get the magneto chain line correct. The adjuster for the exhaust valve lifter fouled the back of the new timing case so I had to make up smaller diameter locknut. There was insufficient clearance on the new exhaust camshaft so it was binding when the case was tightened. Making and fitting a gasket (which should have been used anyway) solved that problem. With these things resolved the magneto could be fitted, chain tension adjusted and the timing set. Everything looked good with a reasonable spark when I kicked the engine over but not a peep or a cough when I tried to actually start it. Checked the ignition timing and made a small adjustment but still no joy. In the end I stripped everything off and started the whole assembly from scratch including timing the new exhaust cam. Found nothing wrong but when it was all back together, the engine did fire up and run - very strange. During this process I managed to pull the nipple of the choke cable and the top of the carb body both of which will need attention. To complete the job I need to order the correct magneto a/r cable and the correct angled pickup. The vertical pickup presently fitted fouls the exhaust pipe. With these things in place I will be able to try a test run. The condition of the magneto itself is unknown and it was something of a bonus that it actually worked at all. IF it gives me any concerns on test, I will have it overhauled.

Quite a successful day really.

#### **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

I took the S8 for its first real outing today over to Neston to visit a friend and then back home – about 22 miles in all. A few teething problems but in general it went well. Likes revs rather than plodding but this is no issue as the motor is very smooth and does not sound at all distressed running up through the gears. The gearbox is quiet and the change good and the brakes now work really well. The ride is excellent on good and average roads but a bit harsh if there are potholes or a broken surface. The whole plot shakes at lower revs a bit like a BMW with unbalanced carbs. The oil warning light did come on at a very slow tickover when I got home but went out as soon as the revs rose in the slightest so I think that ghost is laid. There were oil leaks which I was rather expecting and which I will need to investigate further as by the time I got home it was difficult to be sure where it had originated from. Some is clearly from the head gasket area and I have tightened all the head nuts as the gasket beds down. I think the majority of oil is coming through the distributor and I think this is a known troublespot with S8's – time to get the manual out.

One of the things I had noticed whilst in Neston was that the engine was not central in the frame. Back in the workshop I investigated and found it was easy to adjust this fault. In doing so I noted that the engine had actually been rubbing the frame on the near side and this may well have been at least part of the reason for the low speed vibes. Certainly when I started the bike up later it was noticeably smoother on pickup. I also found the offside fork top nut was only finger tight so this has now been corrected and probably accounts for some front end clonks I had noticed during the ride. All sounds horrendous but in fact mostly trivial stuff and I was well satisfied with my first test run. If the weather stays dry I will take it out again tomorrow to see if I have improved the beast.

#### **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Life got in the way of motorcycling for the main part of the day. It was still raining when I finally got into the garage so I decided to sort out the front wheel alignment which was quite easy in the end. 2.5mm shaved from the offside spacer and a similar thickness washer on the other side and everything lined up perfectly. As the rain had finally stopped I took it for a quick spin down the road. Handling and steering seemed fine and the brake certainly works well. In deference to the wet and greasy roads I did not try anything too extreme but looking good. The Honda brake is not intended to be a long term solution and I plan to re-install the original wheel and brake eventually. To that end I made up a mandrel to hold the S8 brake plate in the lathe with a view to skimming the linings. However, this hit a snag in that the brake plate is very heavy and has odd bits welded to it which make it unbalanced when spinning in the lathe - to such an extent that the lathe shakes about. Partly this is because its running too high a speed for this job but I am currently stumped on how to gear the thing down. Turning it by hand with the cutter lined up seems to indicate that the linings are not actually far out of truth so perhaps I did a better job than I thought with the emery cloth trick. I might even go back to that method. Parked this job for now as it's not urgent.

Having nothing better to do after dinner I decided to strip the Supa5 engine I took in p/ex from Steve Hook. Just as well because contrary to what Steve had been told, this engine would never have run satisfactorily. It has the thick circlips so is clearly an early Supa5 engine and the piston is 70.5mm (max is 71mm) so its done a lot of miles. It is missing the selector shaft washers, the rubber grommet between the crankcase halves and there are signs of oil leakage from a core seal. The major problem however is the clutch centre which is badly worn and which has damaged the crankshaft. I barely needed the clutch puller to get it off the shaft. On the positive side gearbox is not showing any signs of 3<sup>rd</sup> gear damage so we may have salvaged something. Not sure quite what to do with it, overall its in such poor condition it's not really worth spending any money to rebuild – disappointing but not really surprising.

### **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

We had a lunchtime meeting at the Woodbridge Inn which is about 22 miles away so I took the R26 for its first longish ride. It went ok but still seemed a bit flat and the vibration was quite fierce at times. When we arrived it ticked over quietly and smoothly and no tarce of oil leaks so all good in that respect. I had a ride on an R27 which someone else had brought – what a difference it just felt more lively than my bike and was much smoother thanks to the rubber mounted engine/gearbox . In truth it did not go much faster taking its time to get up to 50 or so but there were no hills on the route I took so it was impossible to say how well it would hang on to top gear. R27s are about 3bhp up on R26s (18 against 15) so the liveliness may well have been that plus the smoothness allowing higher revs in the gears and of course a proper BMW silencer. Strangely enough it went a lot better on the way home cruising close to 50 even on slight gradients. It seems to go much better when it's really warmed up. On the positive side the ride and handling are excellent, the MZ speedo seems to work perfectly I clocked 43 miles and google made the round trip 42 miles so not much wrong with that. The plug was a nice chocolate brown so the carburetion is obviously pretty good although it does hesitate a bit on pickup from a closed throttle. I May be able to sort this with needle settings and the pilot air screw. I plan to re-fit its original silencer tomorrow to see what if any effect this has on performance.

This evening I turned my attention to the S8 and fitted the Honda front wheel. As I expected, some tweaking with the spacers was needed to get the wheel central. It's still about 5mm adrift but one of my spacers now needs lengthening so will need more time to sort. However 5mm is considered acceptable for an MoT so it should be ok for a test ride. I had to make a tube spacer for the brake cable as the inner was too long but this was easy enough and the torque stay used on the MZ fitted perfectly. The pictures show the result – fingers crossed for a successful test ride tomorrow.



#### **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

In some ways a lot in other ways very little achieved today. Klauss turned up exactly as promised to collect the G5 but it was very much a flying visit as he had not realised that UK time was 1 hour behind European time and he was booked on Eurostar this evening. Very nice guy and he has offered to help with sourcing bits from Germany for me so I think we will be in contact again. He is still on the case for a frame for the ETS. Anyway we are now down to nine bikes with the future of the Ariel still to be decided.

I brought the R26 up to the workshop for a checkover for tomorrow's run and decided it was time I did something about the scruffy rear number plate. This was originally a nice pressed aluminium plate but is now full of holes and is yellow with black numbers. I have made up a temporary number plate for now and the original is undergoing renovation. All being well it will transform into a black plate with polished alloy numbers.

Addendum: Before and after number plate – the extra holes have been filled as well replacing the inner part of the number 8 which had vibrated out:



## Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Quite a productive couple of days. The trophy has been put away in the back garage for now and the AJS 37/12 has been brought into the workshop so it's a British bike period for the moment. There were two things I wanted to address on the AJS. The first was a creaking noise, more of a clack really which could be heard when the front brake was first used and also to find out why traces of grease could be seen on the wheel flange. The former turned out to be movement of the back plate which had some play in the stop. I made up a tapered shim which should cure that. Getting the wheel apart it was evident that someone had been a bit over enthusiastic when greasing the front wheel bearings and it was beginning to spread everywhere. I gave the whole area a good wash down with thinners and buffed up the brake linings which were obviously new. I also adjusted the wheel bearing as they were a bit slack even for taper rollers.

The other task was to fit the magneto assembly,. First job was to clean up and paint the mag platform which I did on Thursday and left it overnight to harden off. Not a difficult job just time



consuming as I had to make up all the spacers and studs. The mag and its platform are now fitted as can be seen below. Next job will be to remove the old coil ignition timing cover and exhaust cam and fit the magneto versions of these components. I discovered two new things today; I need a magneto specific a/r cable and fittings and the magneto pickup will have to be swapped for an angled type otherwise the plug lead will be touching the ex pipe. A parcel also arrived from with a replacement coil ignition type exhaust camshaft following my advert in the Jampot magazine. If the magneto conversion is successful I won't need it but it good to have in the spares

stock and is in much better nick than the one currently fitted.

Last night at our VMCC AGM, Garth handed over a Sunbeam front wheel spindle which he had obtained from a friend. Neither would take any money for it so that was a pleasant surprise. I have now turned down the spindle to 15mm and it fits the Honda wheel perfectly. All being well, tomorrow I will be able to finish this job and have a sunbeam with a working front brake. I don't plan to make this a permanent change as I hope to be able to get the drum skimmed and linings trued up in the lathe. However if the Honda brake is the success I hope it will be then there is no urgency for these tasks.

## Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Trophy road test was quite successful apart from the fact that I forgot to replace the dynamo cover but this was soon rectified. Mot was carried out this afternoon and the tester actually commented how good the front brake was. This must be a first for an MZ wearing the standard 6" stopper!. Once back home I filled out all the paperwork to get the bike taxed and reclassified as an Historic Vehicle and its now winging its way to DVLA. This seems to be one of those things you cannot do on-line unfortunately.

## **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Wet all day so a perfect excuse to work in the garage without a guilty conscience. I had one more go at the rear suspension checking out the rear wheel spindle and its bush as there was a theory that this could bind and make the plunger stiff – sadly a theory is all it was as my spindle and bush were perfectly free. However, as the bits were apart I took the opportunity to do some zinc plating of the very small number of items on the bike which had not been chrome plated or painted. This included the back mudguard pivot bolt, the end of the rear wheel spindle, the nut & bolt which clamp the offside plunger to the rear drive housing and the spindle I made yesterday for the Honda brake conversion. I also fitted a 1" extension to the foot of the sidestand and replaced the hook down rod on the centre stand. Final job for the day on the S8 was to fit a near side mirror.

Over a cup of tea I pondered what other jobs needed doing and the ES250 Trophy came to mind. This now qualifies for historic tax as it was first registered in 1973. However it has to be MoT'd and taxed normally before it can be reclassified something I have never bothered to do up till now. On the rare occasions the bike has been ridden it has worn the number from the ISDT bike which of course is going to its new owner on Saturday. So it was retrieved from the back garage and moved into the workshop for a checkover. First job was to investigate why the engine was apparently seized. This was a puzzle as I had started it up the other day when I was experimenting with the ES250 head. Then I remembered that I had returned the dynamo cover to the ISDT bike where it belonged. In its place I had fitted the very slim cover from the later ISDT bikes. Sure enough it was a bit too slim and was pressing against the alternator flywheel so it was removed and I will have to use a TS250 cover until I can find an ES250 type. Next I had to make up a number plate which was easy enough and fit the nice new VIN plate which Roger kindly made for me a while ago. I had been running it without a battery but for the MoT I decided it was best to fit one and the small 5ah jobbie I bought at Shepton Mallet in October fitted the tray nicely. Thankfully the lights, indicators, horn etc all worked.

Final job was to decide what to do about the top end of the engine. I now have all the bits to convert it to a fully ES250 Trophy top end but that would mean replacing the current Supa5 barrel/piston and a fair amount of easy but tedious stripping. In truth the only reason I started down this route was because initially the Insurers wanted to load the premium for a non standard engine. Since they have now agreed to allow the replacement of 4 speed engines there is no compelling reason to revert especially as the Supa5 barrel has just been bored and fitted with a new piston. So for now I have refitted the modified supa5 head but ultimately, I will fit the TS250 4 spd head I got from Terry a few days ago purely to get a more original look. This needs the stud holes drilling out to 12mm to take the sleeved nuts needed for the short studs now fitted to this engine. It's not a difficult job but does require the lathe to be re-configured as a mill/drill and figuring out how to clamp the head under the drill. I need to be in the mood for jobs like that – better yet wait till Terry comes back from

holiday and ask him to do it as he has a dedicated drill rig. Anyway, all being well the Trophy will get through its test ride tomorrow without significant issues and I can book it in for an MoT.

### **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

I was poorly on Friday night and Saturday so took the car to the MZ club meeting at Ham on Sunday. Just as well as I came home with a number of goodies thanks to Roger and Ray. Pondering over a green lane bike and horrified by the prices of Serows and suchlike, I decided I might have a go at building one using a TS150 as a basis since this would be light and already has 18" wheels. Putting feelers out to see what I can find.

Talking to Bob Arnold at Ham he showed me a mod to the front brake on his TS250 which he found rather heavy; he had moved the pivot point on the lever with encouraging results. I tried that today on the Sunbeam clutch using an old clutch lever for now and it worked like magic. I doubt anyone would notice if not told.



I took the 'beam out for a run between showers and the clutch action was delightful, the front brake was a little better but not yet good enough so I am going ahead with the Honda brake conversion. A friend in Devizes has located a spare front wheel spindle and this evening I made up the necessary spacers. The only fly in the ointment is that I cannot pick up the spindle until Thursday and Terry who has promised to machine it down for me is on holiday until 25<sup>th</sup> November. However, I guess it's not urgent. I have also been investigating the lack of movement in the rear suspension of the 'beam. I have been assured that Sunbeam (or rather BSA) never provided sidecar springs for the S8 but that does not mean that some previous owner did not find some elsewhere or pack the springs out to stiffen them. Since there seems to be no other obvious cause, I will have to strip the rear suspension at some point and check – but it's a back burner job.

I also removed the tank and adjusted the engine mountings and snubbers. The top ones were way out and when corrected, the bottoms ones needed adjusting as well. Hope a road test tomorrow shows some improvement in low speed vibes/shakes.

## Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Wonder where the last 4 days have gone. Had to think hard about what if anything I have achieved since Tuesday. Steve wants to leave the engine I fitted for testing in the red bike despite the weak 3<sup>rd</sup> gear so I have finished the rebuild of the seized motor. Steve picked up bike and engine today so I have a bit more room in the workshop. At some point I will strip for examination the spare engine which came with the red bike. I have now fully stripped the ETZ250 engine which Ray kindly donated to my collection last Saturday. I have a feeling I have seen this engine before, certainly the alternator cover has a distinctive mod which is familiar. Thinking back, I gave Marcus a load of ETZ bits several years ago and I think this engine may have been part of that hoard; anyway it is now in bits. The crank is marginal as it has clearly suffered a spinning clutch, on the other hand it was a b\*\*\*\*\*r to gegt of the shaft so may be useful to someone. The gear cluster shows no obvious signs of a 3<sup>rd</sup> gear problem though the 1-3 slider gear has marginal undercut. I will keep the bits as donors for other engines.

The Transalp was collected today and a chap from Germany has committed to buy the ISDT bike and plans to drive over next weekend to collect. Simon from Frome came to look at the Ariel on Wednesday and is keen to have the bike but needs to sell his 2006 Indian Enfield first. We have agreed a two week period to see how he gets on. I was a bit tempted to do swap for the Enfield but wiser counsels prevailed.

The Sunbeam oil pressure problems seem to be over as a test run on Wednesday with the new pressure switch fitted was very satisfactory. No glowing oil light even at a very slow tickover which had the dynamo light glowing brightly. I can now turn my attention to some of its other less desirable features. It would appear that a heavy clutch is common on these bikes. You can fit weaker clutch springs grease the pegs in the pressure plat but both require the engine out to fit. There is also a kit sold by Stewarts which modifies the clutch arm to lighten the operation. However this is £72 and I don't want to spend that sort of money until I know the bike will be a long term resident of the garage. For now I have adjusted the clutch cable so that it only bites when much closer to the handlebar and used a chain spring link to bridge the gap. It means my hand is more fully on the lever improving my grip. The travel is reduced but being a dry car type clutch it does not need much to free. We will see when I take it for the next test ride.

I have now removed the front wheel and the cause of the poor front brake is obvious – the linings are only making contact over a 3-4" patch at the centre. I have tackled this in two ways, firstly with a file to dress down the centre of the linings (which appear to be new). Secondly by glueing some emery cloth inside the brake drum and then gently rotating the wheel with the brake lightly applied. Periodically the brake plat was removed and the lining chalked until finally I got a contact patch over most of both linings. Probably still not perfect but enough such that linings will now bed down in use. No real evidence of an oval drum but I suspect it may have been already skimmed and what I may need is oversize linings.

While the wheel was out of the forks I offered up the Honda 8" TLS wheel I bought for the MZ. This could be made to fit relatively easily and without the need to swap the fork legs. What I will need to source is a spare S8 front wheel spindle which will need to be turned down to 15mm. The rest is just spacers which I can make up myself. Now I have this in reserve, perhaps the mdos I have already done to the original brake will make it unnecessary.

## **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Busy until after lunch today so not much time to play bikes. However, the postman delivered the new oil pressure switch from Stewarts so I fitted that. Seems to work ok but the acid test will be a long enough run to get the oil really warm. The switch is marked 13-14 which I presume is the pressure cutoff point. Keith came round with the deposit for the Transalp as promised and plans to collect it at the weekend. He wants to fit the new front tyre before riding it and as he has no garage I have agreed that we will do this together on Friday morning. Nothing much on the telly tonight so I rebuilt the seized Supa5 motor. I had to use the circlip from the dynamo side for now but that apart, the bottom end is now all complete. I will wait a while before fitting the top end. If it is going back into the red bike then it can wait until the engine is in the frame as it makes it much lighter and easier.

I did put an advert in Gumtree for the ISDT bike but no response yet; in fact it had not even been viewed when I looked it up a while ago which is strange. Simon a friend from Frome is coming over tomorrow afternoon to look at the Ariel. He has already said he would need to sell a bike before he could take delivery so I suspect it's a long shot but it will be nice to see him anyway.

## **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014**

I finished off the engine installation in Steve Hooks new red Supa5 and was able to give it a test ride. The engine itself started easily and even ticks over so all must be well in that department as well as confirming the bike electrics and carb are ok. Initial results were very encouraging. I took it gently round my test route and all the gears stayed selected so I went shopping on the bike and it behaved perfectly around town. However, I took the bypass route home to give it a more stringent test and found that under heavy acceleration it would jump out of third gear. A few more laps of my test route confirmed that driven sensibly and changing up at around 3500rpm, 3<sup>rd</sup> gear would behave fine. This behaviour is far and away better than before so I think I have found and cured the original gremlin with this engine (the oversize spacer) but the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand bits I used in the rebuild were already too worn. Anyway I think the bike is perfectly usable for now with this engine so have left it in place for Steve to try.

In the meantime I fully stripped the seized engine and my caution was justified as swarf and bits of the circlip were present in the gear chamber. I also found a some minor problems which make me doubtful about the knowledge and ability of the person who the rebuild. The rubber insert in the oil gallery was missing and the selector shaft was extremely tight in cases showing evidence of being forced in. I had to carefully clean the cases up with an 8mm drill and polish the shaft in the lathe. It now fits perfectly. There was also neat fuel in a closed compartment in the crankcase indicating that the cases had not been sealed properly. Though this engine has clearly been rebuilt recently judging by how clean it all is, it still has all the original DDR bearings. The crank is engraved with a date which I cannot decipher so has obviously been rebuilt at some time. Though the bearings seem ok, I know that I would have automatically replaced the lot as the cost is minimal compared with the peace of mind knowing everything inside is new. I carefully checked the gear cluster and it shows no evidence of a 3<sup>rd</sup> gear problem which is good. I have found in my spares stock good 2<sup>nd</sup> hand primary drive gears and a circlip so it could be rebuilt without the need to strip his spare engine. I need to discuss with Steve how he wants to proceed with the rebuild.

There has been no further interest in the Transalp or the ISDT bike even though I put it on the ISDT Forum on Yahoo as well. However, the guy who came to view the Transalp on Saturday rang last night and is coming round this afternoon to put a deposit down. Hopefully he will be as good as his word. I may put the ISDT bike on Gumtree just to see whether it gets any attention.

### **Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014**

Busy day today with a lot of visitors. A guy came round to see the Transalp and was still here when Steve Hook turned up with the Supa5 he has just bought which seized its engine whilst he was viewing it; he bought it anyway as you do. Bike itself is very tidy and obviously someone has spent a lot of time and money on it. While we were unloading and chatting Ray cattle turned up with some 125/150 spares which he wanted to dispose of. By the time we had everything moved into my workshop you could not swing a cat. Steve saw my ISDT bike while we were putting things away and was very taken he would like to buy it but needs to sell another bike first. Anyway they departed and then I had to go to Melksham to collect some bunk beds I had won on eBay. They are still in the van and will be tomorrow's project whilst SWMBO is away at a dog show.

First task after lunch was to sort out the various parts (including a spare engine which came with Steve's Supa5) and make room for them in the back garage; just as well I tidied it the other day. I then spent the remainder of the afternoon removing the seized engine and fitting the engine I rebuilt for Steve the other day. This is now in the frame and another hour or so will see it all up and running – fingers crossed that I have finally fixed the rogue gearbox.

I was curious about the seized engine so could not resist a preliminary examination. In fact the reason for the seizure was obvious as soon as I removed the primary drive cover. The circlip behind the clutch which is supposed to hold the crankshaft oil seal in place had come loose and jammed the primary drive gears after mangling a few teeth along the way. The oil seal itself was askew and I don't know if it was simply put in badly, or crankcase pressure pushed it (and the circlip) out of position. Sadly it will be necessary to strip the whole engine firstly to make sure there are no other rebuild errors and because there may well be swarf from the large drive gear in the gear chamber itself. Oil is actually circulated between primary drive case and gear chamber on these MZs. Better to be safe than sorry.

### **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014 (Halloween)**

Started cold this morning the maximum oil pressure was around 35psi, much the same as when I was measuring it warm yesterday. I am not sure yet if this is good or bad. Anyway I decided to make a



better job of attaching the pressure gauge so that I could ride the bike with it fitted on longer journey to get the oil really warm. Not elegant but it was the only place I could safely fit it and still be able to read it whilst riding along.

I found that even after 3-4 miles the oil pressure stayed around 25-30psi at a cruising speed of 25-40pmh. Back home on

tickover it dropped to around 10-15psi. Obviously I don't know how reliable the gauge is and it may be telling me lies but on the face of it the oil pressure is probably ok but I may need to look at the pressure relief valve which is may be set a bit low. Mechanically the engine sounded fine at the the end of the test. If I did have seriously low oil pressure I reckon the big ends would have been rattling long since.

#### **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

Today is the turn of the S8 and it has been not without challenges. First job was to check over all the nuts and bolts and replace a few with s/s where I had the correct sizes in stock. The only ones I found loose apart from the top yoke bolts I fixed yesterday, were for the front stand. These now have lock nuts as well since they are meant to be slightly loose to allow the stand to pivot. Tyres were pumped up a little harder (22 and 28 respectively) which made it a bit easier to wheel around and all the oil levels were checked and found correct (did an engine oil change a few weeks ago). Finally ran out of excuses so it was off for the first test run. No major snags, the engine is very lumpy at low revs but once above 25-30mph is remarkably smooth. Back in the garage I adjusted the controls and mirror to my liking and took it for another ride during which the oil warning light came on as the revs dropped to tickover. It was not accompanied by any unusual or particularly alarming noises but obviously a cause for concern. By the time I nursed the bike back home the warning light would barely go out even when revved though still no undue mechanical noises.

Having talked it over with my friend terry I made up an adapter from an old oil pressure switch and fitted my oil pressure gauge. This came out of a car many years ago and I have no idea how accurate it is but it showed just over 30psi with the engine running and did not rise or fall much whether revved or dropped to a tickover. I then went through a series of tests swapping the gauge for the pressure switch before finally concluding that the oil warning light was coming on at anything less than 20-25psi. There are no markings on the switch which is new (according to the previous owner) but the old switch was marked as 3-10psi so maybe I simply have an incorrectly rated switch. I have since looked up the manual which states that the pressure relief valve operates at 35psi and normal running pressure is 15-40psi so perhaps I am worrying about nothing. Just to be sure I have emailed Stewart engineering, the Sunbeam specialists for their opinion.

In the interim I have left the gauge in place and will run the engine tomorrow to see what maximum pressure it delivers when the oil (SAE50) is cold and thick.

No real interest yet in the ISDT bike or the Transalp. I have mentioned the Ariel to a friend who may be interested.

One piece of god news is that both problems with the ETS150 frame can be fixed by David Davis should I decide to go down that route. My present intention is to do nothing radical with the bike until after the Bristol Bike Show in February as it is likely that it will be exhibited on our VMCC Section stand and I don't want to risk having it in pieces until after that date. Also gives me longer to find a spare frame as an insurance policy.

#### **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

On Monday I decided to give the rear garage a tidy up as I had lost the plot on what bits I still had stored away. Whilst doing this I got to thinking yet again about the number of bikes that I was

presently giving a home to. Overnight I reached the conclusion that 11 was simply too many and after several attempts and some heart searching I concluded that there were 4 contenders for disposal. In no particular order these were. The ISDT MZ, the Transalp, the Ariel VH500 and possibly the Sunbeam S8 which I have yet to ride. Reasons as follows: The ISDT bike is only practical for short journeys, great fun but since I re-commissioned it in 2010/11 I have only ridden it once a year to the MoT station. They are sought after bikes and perhaps it's time to let someone else have a go with it. Likewise the VH500, I have not ridden it since the Castle Combe display in October 2013. It still leaks oil from the gearbox despite my attempts to fix it and I simply have not had the interest to try again. Difficult decision as it was left to me by my old friend Mike Blake but I think he would rather it went to someone who would use it rather than fester in my shed. The Transalp has been a super bike and I have enjoyed every one of the 3000 miles I have done since buying it in June. Trouble is I also have the Revere which I like just as much and is an easier bike to live with as well as being comfortably inside the VMCC 25 year rule whereas the Transalp is only 19 years old. It's also quite tall and climbing of it after a run when my legs are stiff is getting harder. Finally the Sunbeam, its fate will depend on how much I enjoy riding it when I finally get it on the road. Right now it just seems a handsome but very heavy lump to wheel around the place.

I made a start with the Transalp by offering it back to Rick Carter at a fair price but after thinking about it overnight he decided he is most likely going to give up bikes when his present insurance runs out. So I gave it a clean this afternoon and its now on Gumtree.

The ISDT bike was a bit more complicated as it is presently running with the Supa5 engine I fitted a few months ago. I decided to leave the bottom end in place and simply pass over the now rebuilt G5 engine rather than try to swap the engines. However, I fitted the original barrel/piston/head so the new owner will get the performance (even though for all practical purposes it went better as standard engine). This did have a spin-off benefit as it freed up an ES250 barrel/piston which can now be used to make my ES250 Trophy more standard. The bike was given a cleanup after this work and is now advertised on the MZ Club Website. Final act today was to bring the S8 up to the workshop for a checkover before its first run. I had noticed a few loose nuts and bolts so want to make sure everything is shipshape first. I also remembered to tax the bike and promptly got my wrist slapped by DVLA because its SORN ran out in August. I may be hearing from their enforcement department apparently which will be interesting.

At the same time I tried to tax the ETS150 whose tax was cancelled at change of owner under the new vehicle taxation rules brought in from 1<sup>st</sup> October. What a performance; I tried using the new keeper form V5C/2 but it told me the vehicle did not exist under this number. As it happened the new V5C arrived later in the day so I tried using the reference number on that and got nowhere, only when I used the reference on the V5C/2 part was I able to tax the vehicle. The logic of this escapes me. I expect we will get to grips with the new system in time.

### **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

Had a good run with my VMCC group to the Forest of Dean today on some roads I had never ridden before. Weather was cloudy and cold but dry apart for a tiny amount of drizzle as we went through Chepstow. Took the Transalp which went well as usual and handles a whole lot better after I checked

the tyre pressures and found 24psi in the front and 26psi in the rear (should be 32 & 36). Gave it a blast down the motorway to get home as it was getting dark. Runs lovely at 80 or so until I remembered that the tyres are due for replacement after which we dropped to a more sensible speed.

Funny how you miss the obvious. The ETS150 is my current screen saver (same picture as included for 15<sup>th</sup> October) and it suddenly struck me that the forks were not quite at the right angle. This inspired me to download the picture below which confirmed my impression so I dug out the tech spec for the bike. The wheelbase is listed as 1305mm, mine is 1255mm and the front mudguard is about 80mm from the frame. Crude scaling of the downloaded photo suggest that it should be near 130-140mm which would coincide with the shortened wheelbase. If my trig is any good after 60 odd year, pulling the forks back by 50mms would raise the bike by around 30mm given the current triangulation (good old Pythagoras). This is pretty close to the amount the centre stand needs raising to get the wheels to clear comfortably. So my theory about the bike having the wrong forks is almost certainly incorrect and the problem most likely lies with the frame being pushed backwards. Hopefully David Davies will be able to correct both items if my search for a spare frame is unsuccessful. Actually I may not try to get back to the original wheelbase as I always found the steering of the ETS250 Trophy Sport I used to own a bit slow and ponderous and this uses the same forks and 63 degree headstock angle. I guess the shortened wheelbase must have increased the



headstock angle which and reduced the trail which would quicken the steering. I will try to work out what it currently is out of interest. I do like those continental style rear carriers and will see if I can locate one.

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

The pillion footrests arrived today and as promised they are brand new and shiny, well worth the money. I fitted them and took the picture shown. Other than that I have not done anything to the bike as I was too busy on other things. One thing I have established is that David Davies is still in business so the option to take the frame to him for straightening is available.

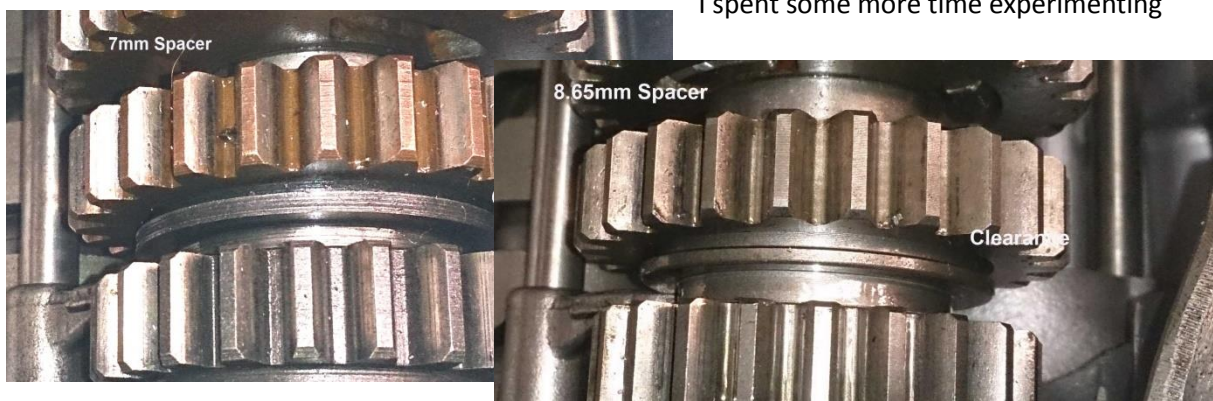


However, there is no rush so I will let my advert for a frame run for a while yet.

I think I have finally cracked the cause of the Supa5 gearbox problem. The extra wide spacer was only part of the problem, there was a difference in the dimensions of the pattern 1/3 slider gear that had been used as well and the combination of the two faults was enough to prevent 3<sup>rd</sup> gear engaging sufficiently. I have documented the full detail separately and put it on the web site. The layshaft cluster was reassembled using a combination of bits to give the correct engagement and the engine itself has been rebuilt. Now I need to find a bike to test it in.

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014**

I spent some more time experimenting



with the Supa5 gear cluster today including installing it in my sectioned crankcases. The two pictures below show how much further the sliding gear will engage with 3<sup>rd</sup> gear using a 7mm spacer than with the 8.65mm spacer. The difference is over 1mm. may not sound a lot but it is over 25% of the width of the dogs. More importantly, with the wider spacer there is constant pressure on the selector drum and O10 selector such that the layshaft will not spin easily. With the 7mm spacer, everything spins easily and there is still a little slack allowing the undercut to pull the gears tighter together. All I am waiting for now is confirmation that the standard spacer width is near 7mm. If I get that then I am pretty confident I have found the reason why this box kept on failing. The next step will be to decide how many parts I need to replace before rebuilding.

Took the ETS150 for a ride to a friend's today to use his facilities to check the wheel alignment. Not a pleasant ride, the bike went fine but it's so light it was being blown all over the place by the gale force winds. The rear wheel turned out not to be properly aligned, my fault as I played around with it whilst checking the chain tension and got it wrong. However, this was soon sorted. More worrying was the fact that the forks are not vertical in the frame and it looks as though it may have been involved in a shunt at some time. The bottom of the front tyre is about 1" to the right of the centre line; you can just about see in the picture that the forks are not parallel to the down tube. Not a huge problem on a low powered lightweight but it probably accounts for the brake pulling to one side when firmly applied and the oddness in handling I felt when I rode yesterday. I did not notice it today but due to the strong winds I doubt I went over 40mph and often much less. Will not stop me using the bike which is delightful in all other respects but I will do some research on the frame to identify a possible replacement – hopefully the more common ES125/150 shares the same basic frame loop but even so finding one in perfect condition will not be easy. The alternative will be to have the frame straightened assuming the damage is not too severe.



### **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

Took the ETS150 for its first ride today and managed to get it wet as the sunshine turned to showers while I was out. Did over 20 miles visiting various friends and it did not miss a beat. Started first kick every time pulled well and ticked over reliably. Engine is a little rattly but certainly nothing to worry about and I would say performance was well up to standard. Handling however was a bit odd and the front brake seemed to pull to one side if used firmly. Not sure if it's the forks or just wheel alignment that needs checking but it was not enough to spoil the ride. Will investigate if it persists. The only adjustment needed was to lower the gear lever by one spline to make changes more comfortable



With rain stopping play I had another go at the Supa5 gearbox this afternoon and I may have identified the reason for the problems. The photo shows the selector drum and two spacers (called distance pieces in MZ speak). The thicker one (8.6mm) came from the suspect gearbox, the thinner (6.9mm) from another gear cluster. My suspicion is that the thicker spacer is a home-made item which in theory would help to push

3<sup>rd</sup> gear more fully into engagement with the slider gear dogs. Unfortunately it is too thick and pushes the retaining circlip and thrust washer so far forward they prevent full engagement by about 1mm. I am seeking guidance via the MZ forum over what is the correct thickness for the spacer. The drum itself does have some damage around the projection which operates 3<sup>rd</sup> gear but this does not appear to be sufficient on its own to cause the jumping problem, It could however indicate that the selector is being pushed backwards against the projection because of the thick spacer. Well it's a theory anyway and might even be correct.

#### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

On Saturday we took the car and the dogs down to the New Forest to do a recce on an Autumn Leaves Run I was organising for the following day. I was using a previous route but decided it would be sensible to drive it to make sure there were no surprises. We had a picnic at the Castle Hill viewpoint and the dogs enjoyed their day out. When I got back I partially stripped the Supa5 gearbox to see if I could spot anything wrong. The undercut on the new 1-3 sliding gear was already well worn and the 3<sup>rd</sup> gear was not firmly located on the shaft. The thrust washer and circlip not being located in the groove on the layshaft. However, I presently fail to see that this would cause the jumping problem as engaging 3<sup>rd</sup> gear would push it back in place. I have been referred to an article in the MZ Hints & Tips booklet on 3<sup>rd</sup> gear issues which I am studying.

On Sunday we did the Autumn Leaves run proper with 20 bikes. The previous days recce paid dividends and there were no real surprises though the roads were a bit greasy under the trees. One chap on a C15 dropped out part way down to Woodfalls as the bike was nipping up. He decided to turn for home. However he then found that provided he rode the bike gently at his own pace, it went fine so he turned round. When we got back to the lunch stop, Tony was waiting for us with a big grin on his face. Overall a very nice day out and we were very lucky with the weather, dry, mostly sunny and not too cold. Tomorrow we are promised a hurricane or the tail end of one anyway.

#### **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

Thursday was a day for riding and socialising. We visited several of the white horses for which Wiltshire is famous collecting photos to be used as backdrops for our stand at the Bristol Bike Show in February 2015 then we met up with other VMCC members at the Westbrook Inn for lunch and a natter.

Friday was mostly occupied doing things for other people. Firstly David and his daughter Megan came down from York to collect the TS250 and by the time we had loaded the bike, had a look at my bikes and a general natter it was near midday. Just after they left, Steve arrived with the engine from a Supa5 he had recently bought which was jumping out of 3<sup>rd</sup> gear. This was a disappointment as it turned out that I had not long ago rebuilt this engine with new parts to cure the very same problem. We stripped the engine but there was no obvious reason for the gearbox problem, everything looked normal. To get him back on the road he has borrowed my spare engine and his engine ( in bits) remains in my workshop for more investigation.

Finally my friend John from Bristol turned up with some bits from a TS125 he is rebuilding. We sorted out the rubbish, found a couple of usable bits in my spares and compiled a list of parts he would need to buy. After a cup of tea and a natter he left by which time there was just enough daylight left to cut the lawn. There goes another day but tomorrow is my insurance policy renewal date so the ETS150 and the Sunbeam S8 both become fully road legal!!!

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014**



Well it finally stopped raining long enough to get the ETS150 out for some pictures. Far cry from the sad wreck below. Bike will be insured from Saturday so all being well I will be able to have my first ride soon. Timing now checked (doubt there was anything wrong with it but it had to be done) and I traced a droning noise which initially sounded like a worn gearbox bearing to the tyre rubbing on the bottom part of the mudguard. This is a plastic item (the guard is in three pieces) and it was being pushed inwards by the rear brake cable. To fix it properly need the wheel out but a couple of cable ties will do the job for now.

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

Still raining but not quite so hard so managed to rearrange the garage to get the bike lift in position and unload the ETS150 for a checkover. Looks lovely, Ray made a really good job of the bike and it even has s/s spokes so one job I will not have to do. Not much needs doing but of course that did not stop me from tinkering. Most (probably all) of the nuts/bolts are s/s and most have polished heads



but I found a few that had not been done so gave those the treatment in the lather and polisher. The chrome cover for the rear light was not aligned properly so that was attended to as well. The stop light bulb is an LED as is the front parking light. Helpful with a 6v system though Ray has addressed a lot of the issues by fitting a relay to minimise voltage drop to the coil and a Velleman transistorized points gadget in place of the

condenser. These minimise the current through the points and with no arcing they last virtually forever. I fitted a similar unit to my old TS150 and it worked fine. In point of fact I have not yet removed any of the covers to inspect the electrics though I will tomorrow as I want to check the timing and have a nose around. Alongside is a picture of the bike when ray first bought it. Tomorrow if the weather improves I will take some new pictures.

I did find a couple of things which I sorted, trivial stuff but I knew it would niggle if I did not attend to them. The kickstart lever was bent slightly (must be a common fault as I had this on the TS150 as well) but a gripped in the vice and using a long steel pipe soon sorted that. The kickstart spring is also not wound tightly enough so the lever has to be helped return. To fix it requires the outer cover removing which means draining the gearbox so it can stay that way for now. I made the same mistake when I rebuilt my TS150 engine and it was still like it when I sold it. The other thing was the front brake cable which was clearly intended for high bars not the low bars now fitted. I swapped it for the correct cable as it looks neater (though looking at the picture above the bike did have high bars when purchased and I am not sure now which is correct). The picture also reminded me that the pillion footrests are missing; Ray is on the hunt for them.

The other thing that needs sorting is the centre stand which does not lift the back wheel sufficiently and is not safe unless a board is placed underneath. Cannot as yet find any reason for this so its just as well it has a side stand.

#### **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

It poured all day so getting the ETS150 out of the van was not feasible. I did however put some more thought and effort into fitting the ES250 head onto a Supa5 barrel. I did manage to get it to fit onto my Trophy in the end but it took 7 shims totalling 2.36mm to get the squish band setting correct.

The engine actually starts and runs fine with this setup but it's not really desirable and there must be a high risk of blowing the head joint – though having said that it is perfectly normal with an MZ to fit several shims of various sizes. Anyway I found a piece of 2mm alloy plate going spare and have now made thick shim out of this. Sandwiched between a couple of genuine .2mm shims it could well do the trick until I have sourced the correct ES250 barrel. At least for the moment the Trophy looks completely original so that I can take a picture to show the insurance company if they ask.

### **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

Mission accomplished, I collected the ETS150 Sport from Ray this morning and it is currently still in the van pending creation of suitable garage space. It may well have to remain there until Friday when the TS250 is being collected but I expect it will come out to be admired, polished and photographed. Looks just as good as I had hoped. Whilst in Yate I was also able to return the AJS camshaft I had on loan so that is something else off my conscience. We had a good turnout at the MZ meeting in Ham today and a good natter with my friends. Mike D came with me for the ride and found a fellow car enthusiast in Roger Badding including the fact that an old acquaintance now lived only a couple of doors away; small world again. Ray was not able to come today so I did the attendance sheet and circulated some info and pictures of two other bikes he has for sale – a 4 speed TS250 and a Saxon Fun 301. Bit tempted by the TS and am pondering whether I should add it to the stable. Though they have dreadful gearboxes, the 4 speeders in other respects are rather pleasant and somehow seem to have more torque than the 5 speeders. The early ones will also be tax exempt next year assuming the government keeps to its word over the rolling 40 year issue. Then again its election year in 2015 and if Labour gets in they may well reverse the whole thing as they did last time they were in power.

I have also been wondering how to make my ES250 Trophy look more original in the engine department to counter the insurance premium loading business. The obvious way is to fit the ES250 head but I have today established that these do not fit comfortably on the Supa5 barrels. These have a lip to locate the compression shims whereas the ES250 barrels have a flat top. The Supa5 head is machined to clear this lip and provide an adequate depth of squish band. The ES250 head sits on top of this lip which is only 1mm wide (not enough to provide a gastight seal) and anyway the squish band depth with head touching lip is under 1mm. It was possible to add shims to give a suitable clearance of 1.5mm which also lifted the head above the lip. However, I am not sure this would work as the number of shims needed would likely lead to a blowing head joint over time. Grinding the lip off was obviously not an option as the top of the piston would then protrude very slightly above the liner so the same number of shims would still be required. If the head or the shims moved it could allow the piston to hit one or the other. The correct answer is clearly to find an ES250 barrel/piston so the search is now on for one of these.

### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

On Friday I put the Blue Supa5 back to standard and checked it over. Still does not want to start but I have simply advertised it as a non-running project and priced it accordingly. By Friday evening I had 4 responses, 3 from Gumtree and one from the club website. I have a firm offer and all being well it will be collected next Friday so that still leaves me with a storage problem for a few days as I am due to pick up the ETS150 on Sunday. At a pinch I can get 4 in the workshop or the sold bike can go back into the greenhouse.

Today I finally took the R26 for a 20 mile ride to return his battery and pick up the AJS battery which is now fully charge again. The bike went really well, its still not a racer but pulls well from anything above 25mph in top gear. On the country lanes to Neston it's not possible to do much more than 40mph anyway but the engine now seems very willing. When warm the tickover was far too fast but this was easily adjusted. I plan to do a longer run on the R26 next week surveying the white Horses of Wiltshire so that will be a good test. The milometer is still not working on the speedo so I removed it this evening to investigate and hopefully make a repair. Out of interest I tried an MZ TS250 speedo and this fitted perfectly. The ratio is marked 1,60 which is the same as the BMW speedo and a quick test ride round the block suggests it about right on speed. The milometer is working but I will need a longer run to figure out if it's accurate. This seems to be a viable short term solution and gives me time repair the original.



**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

I had one of my periodic reviews of the bikes in my stable last night and decided that with the imminent arrival of the ETS150 accommodating 12 bikes was going to be a problem as well as the expense in cash and time to keep them all on the road. I have also been having trouble with my insurers who are getting very fussy about non-standard features on bikes. In fact I am now in dialogue with the underwriters trying to establish what sort of changes they will accept and which they want to charge additional premiums for. Initially they wanted £80 but when I bleated they reduced it to £20 but would not be precise about which of several modified bikes was attracting the loading. I am doing this partly for personal reasons but also on behalf of the MZ fraternity as some mods are quite common e.g Honda or ETZ disk brakes on pre ETZ models and five speed engines in place of 4 speed motors etc. I will publish the results when I finally get a sensible response.

Anyway the review of the stable concluded that the only bike I wanted rid of was the Blue Supa5 which I bought earlier this year as a rolling chassis. Until today it had been housing my Hybrid TS/ETZ motor but now has its original Supa5 engine and by tomorrow will be completely back to standard.

The engine still does not run, no idea why as the carb and electrics worked fine for other engines I have tested in the chassis. However, I cannot be bothered to spend any time on it and have advertised it on the club web site as a non-runner project at a price which hopefully will move it on quite quickly.

### **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

Bit of a disappointing week so far. The incident with the flat battery on the AJS caused me to look more urgently at the bits I picked up at Shepton Mallett. Turned out that the 250 engine I had brought home was really only fit for parts as it had some damage and a lot of bits were missing. However, it did give me a chance to experiment with fitting the magneto timing cover and the



magneto and it seems like I have everything apart from the outer cover and some screws to do the conversion. Even the magneto sparked though it will need a proper checkover before I can depend on it. I arranged to visit Sue on Tuesday to return the bits I did not need and try to find a timing cover. In the end I came away with a timing cover (borrowed from another complete engine for now) and what appeared to be a substantially complete 1939 model 26 AJS 350 engine.

Today I partially stripped this engine and sadly it is a complete mongrel which has been assembled from a range of bits. Even the crankcase halves are from different engines and many of the threads are stripped. I guess it could all be repaired but somehow it does not

seem like a very good starting point especially when I found out that the 1939 onward crankcases were different and will not fit straight into a pre 1939 250 frame. In fact though the result was a bit disappointing I learnt quite a lot which will help me to identify the correct parts I would need to make my AJS into a 350. I am hoping Sue will let me have another hunt through her garage to see if I can find the correct parts or another 350 engine which would be a better starting point.

Also today I received an email from Ralph at Powerdynamo suggesting a revised setting for the dip switches on the R26 advance controller. These should give more retard at low engine revs. We shall see if it helps.

### **Sunday 5th October 2014**

I rode the 37/12 to Castle Combe in dry but chilly conditions. This was its first outing since I replaced the inlet cam so I was a bit apprehensive but in fact it pulled really well. I think the new cam must be a bit 'hotter' than the one I had on loan which I think may have been an exhaust cam with milder timing. We had 20 bikes on display all pre 1973 in fact most were pre-WWII and they attracted a lot of attention. The weather remained dry and warmed up so it was a cracking day out. Slight problem when I found I had left the ignition switch on and flattened the battery. Mike D swapped the battery

from his Velocette which still has magneto ignition and that got the bike running fine. Bit of a relief as I was afraid I had burned the coil out as well. Converting the 37/2 to magneto ignition has now risen up the priority list.

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

I went to the Shepton Mallet A/J on Saturday mainly to help out and did my usual stint on the gate from 9:30 to 11am. My shopping list was very modest, some nitrile gloves and a few s/s items and I was not really looking for anything special. I was delighted therefore to find on the stall of a friend a collection of pre-war AJS/Matchless parts. Sadly Dave Skinner died about 2 years ago and Sue his wife is bravely trying to recycle his large collection of parts. She kindly let me take home some bits to see if they were the correct ones to convert my model 37/12 to magneto ignition. I have also been invited to look through the remaining spares to see if there might also be a 350cc motor or enough bits to build one. An unexpectedly good day and the torrential rain during the morning faded away to a really pleasant afternoon.

### **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014**

Ten days gone in a flash and not a word written on the blog. Actually it's been quite hectic and I just haven't had the energy or commitment to write anything up until today. From Friday 26<sup>th</sup> - Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September I was doing the Cornish Weekend an excellent annual event organised by the Somerset section of the VMCC. Great 4 days riding and socialising, marred slightly by the need to buy a new rear tyre for the Revere on the Saturday, in fact of the four West Wilts riders on the event, 3 suffered punctures – weird.



On the Tuesday after I got back the window fitters arrived to start the replacement of all of our windows and keeping tabs on them has been a full time commitment severely limiting my motorcycling and any other activities away from the house. However, it did give me the opportunity to fit the Powerdynamo kit to the R26 (this arrived on Monday). This took nearly two days partly because of all the interruptions

and partly because the instructions were



a bit vague on exactly where to site some of the components. The alternator assembly itself is a well made unit with its own housing and fitted perfectly and very quickly. Finding a home for the external coil, regulator and electronic advance/retard unit too considerably longer. In the end I mounted the coil under the tank where it is well protected from the wet and the other two units on the frame under the seat. For the moment I have retained a battery (12v) though in fact the ignition system is self-energising so it can be run without but a large capacity condenser is recommended to smooth the current if you want to use indicators. I was able to remove a number of surplus wires from the harness, partly those replaced by the new Powerdynamo wiring and partly because there just seemed to be a lot of duplication in the harness. Anyway everything now works fine and the charging problems are hopefully a thing of the past. The top left picture shows the new generator housing which is a direct replacement for the entire original dynamo etc. The picture to the right shows the finned regulator box and the black ignition control box which controls the advance curve. The coil is attached to the frame by a bracket under the tank. Not a lot to see really and though a little obvious, they will at least keep cool.

One other job was to fit the fuel connector I had bought into the pipe which link the two sides of the tank. These seem to work fine and it means I no longer have to drain the tank each time I need to remove it. The bike fired up immediately once I had it back together and sounded very crisp. I have not been able to take it for a test ride yet as the garage has been blocked in by the builders and by the time they have gone I lacked the energy. The only problem I have encountered is a fierce kickback when trying to start the bike. My first thought was that I had not set the timing properly but today I was able to borrow a strobe and this showed the timing was spot on at full advance. There are some dip-switches on the advance unit which are set correctly according to the instructions but which can be used to vary the advance curve. I have emailed Powerdynamo.de seeking advice.

The other piece of good news (for me at least) is that Ray Cattle has decided to sell me the lovely ETS15 Trophy Sport which he rebuilt a few years ago. If all goes to plan I will pick it up on 12<sup>th</sup> October on my way to the MZ club meeting.

Tomorrow I am going to Shepton Mallet for the VMCC autojumble and on Sunday we have an invitation to display our bikes at a Classic Event at Castle Combe so a busy weekend ahead.

## **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014**

Email today to say that the Powerdynamo kit will not be shipped until 6<sup>th</sup> October so that job is on the back burner for 2-3 weeks. Not a problem as I can still ride the bike provided I don't go out at night and remember to charge the battery from time to time. I did do a couple of small jobs on the R26, tidied up and painted the side stand and touched up a couple of small scratches on the front s/arm where they had started to rust. The Revere got some attention today to make sure its ready for the Cornish trip on Friday. Oil checked and found fine, cover found and tied on to rear grab rail and the security strap was wrapped round the handlebars. Tyres seem fine but will be checked again on Thursday. Not a lot to do really compared to the older Brit bikes.

I also recovered the TS250 I use for engine testing from the greenhouse and put it in the rear garage now that there is space. Battery was flat so it's now on charge and I hope to give it a run tomorrow. It will make a useful hack for the winter.

## **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014**

Things are looking up with the R26. I adjusted the slide needle by dropping it two notches and took it firstly on a shopping trip then the on my test route including the test hill. It romped up pulling an easy 50 to the top. The performance is nothing like as sparkling as the TS250 but its comfortable, holds the road, corners well and has excellent brakes and best of all it settles down to a quiet steady tickover even after a thrashing. The plug colour was just about perfect after this run so now I plan to stop fiddling and start riding the bike. I have now ordered the Powerdynamo kit as I now feel its worthwhile. I also ordered one of the quick release fuel connectors so that removing the tank will no longer require it to be drained. What a saga and who would have thought a new silencer could cause so much trouble. Just in time to get the Revere ready for the Cornish weekend which starts on Friday.

## **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2014**

I collected the silencers from Frome this morning and was back home by 11am. Firstly I took the bike for a lap of my test route which gave me a measure of the current performance. I tried the original R26 silencer first, this had been replaced by John because it was seriously rusty underneath presumably where water had collected and rotted it out. Strangely it was little if any noisier than the new silencer I had removed. A lap of the test route suggested some improvement; it was noticeably quicker downhill and on the level but not much difference coming up the test hill where it topped out at 45mph or so. I then fitted to Burgess silencer though this required a bit more effort as it



needed a new rear bracket and an insert for the front which was of a larger diameter than the exhaust pipe. The Burgess is virtually a straight through silencer and I was expecting really rorty exhaust note but in fact it was only louder than the BMW silencer and not unpleasant. On the road the bike definitely felt livelier and would cruise at 50-55 with something in hand. I checked the plug when I got back and the mixture is now clearly too rich so next job is to drop the needle 2 notches to see how that affects performance. I don't think we are quite there yet but the bike is now more useable so I will leave the Burgess in place and run it as my shopping trolley for a few days.

## **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

On Thursday I rode the R26 to a lunchtime VMCC meeting at the Quarryman's Arms near Box. Since the previous ride I had raised the needle to its highest setting and given some attention to the manifold-cylinder head joint in case there was any air leaking in. No real change in the performance on any sort of incline it settles down to 40-45 though it did run easily to over 50 going downhill. When I got home I took another picture of the plug which does now seem to be a rather more acceptable colour. On Friday I partially stripped the engine and checked the valve timing, tappet setting and the amount of lift in case I had a badly worn cam. Everything was spot on! I also refitted my original dynamo as the one I had on loan was not charging anyway and I knew that my original had a new coil, new points and spot on ignition timing. I even checked the cylinder compression which was around 100psi, this seems a bit low but not desperately so.



Another test run and still no real improvement in performance. Talking it over with a friend I realised that one thing I had not considered was the exhaust system. The silencer was a new one fitted by John so I rang him to see if he could recall whether the fitting of the new silencer had coincided with the drop in performance. He could not really be sure about this but he did have the original silencer still and a small Burgess silencer both of which he would take with him on Saturday and give to a mutual friend who lives in Frome.

#### **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Took the R26 for a shopping trip today with a blast up my test hill on the way back. Runs ok in a pedestrian sort of way and 45mph seems to be its happiest speed almost regardless of road conditions or incline. I took this picture of the plug after it had cooled down (it was a new NGK B7HS)



and you can see how lean the mixture is. The side electrode is silvery grey as is one side of the outer body. The centre electrode is brilliant white. I am now totally bemused and unsure what to do next. I will ride it to a VMCC meet on Thursday as I think Ian Clarke my BMW guru will be there and maybe he can throw some light on the problem.

As a bit of light relief I tackled a couple of issues with the AJS today. The first was to mend the centre stand this needed a new central bolt which I had to make from a piece of 8mm bar as I had no suitable bolts. I used locked nuts on one end and a self locking nut on the other to prevent a recurrence of the problem. The bike

now sits square on its stand instead of leaning like a drunk. Next job was to replace the inlet camshaft I have on loan with the replacement I bought recently. Everything went well until I tried to start the bike. It would only run on full choke and very badly. Then I realised I had timed it 10mm ATDC instead of BTDC cos' I had turned the rear wheel forward rather than backwards. This was soon spotted and fixed and the bike then started easily but stopped again almost immediately and refused to restart. I retimed it again and this process repeated itself a number of times. The timing kept slipping as soon as the engine was started. Eventually I stripped the ignition system and cleaned all the oil from the taper and the inside of the cam. I then reassembled with some Loctite bearing fit and this seems to have done the trick as the bike has since started and run successfully a number of

times. I think it's possibly not quite advanced enough but I will leave it alone for now and see how it goes when I ride it to Castle Combe on 4<sup>th</sup> October for their Classics day.

### **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

On Sunday I rode the Honda Revere to the MZ club meeting at Ham. Suppose I should really have ridden the TS250 but I wanted to do a few miles on the Revere before taking it to Cornwall at the end of the month. Pleasant ride and a nice crowd of people at the meeting including Paul Griffiths who is now back in the UK after riding across Russia. Look forward to reading about his trip when he gets round to writing it up – he had a few hairy moments. There was also a list of bikes being offered for sale by Ray Cattle including a very nice ETS150 Trophy Sport which I have always fancied. Ray was not actually at the meeting so I have yet to get in contact with him – just hope no one else gets to him first.



Today I stripped the carb on the R26 and compared the components firstly with the Instruction manual and also with the parts that John had replaced which fortunately he kept. In terms of the manual, the only thing I could positively confirm was the main jet size as there were no markings on the needle or the slide. However, as can be seen in the picture there were significant differences between the old and new parts. The new slide has a much smaller cutaway which in theory should make it richer from tickover – ¼ throttle. The main jet and the needle jet are one piece and the new one is a 120 (correct

according to the book) whereas the old one is a 125. More significantly the jet itself sits about 5-6mm lower, both differences should also make the engine run richer. On the basis of only changing one thing at a time I refitted the old main/needle jet. On the road I fancy it is a bit crisper than before but it still seems to bog down at 40-45. A plug chop at the end of my test ride showed the plug still very weak; in fact no different to the 120 jet. Not really sure where to go from here as the needles look to be identical though there must be some wear on the old one. The only thing I did observe was that the revs are slow to die back after operating the throttle. This could indicate an air leak somewhere.

### **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September**

Very little time to play bikes today due to helping my wife with her dog club show. I did find the original float needle and it did indeed have two grooves. However the one which would have provided the higher float level (and richer mixture) was at the same level as the single groove on the new needle. I changed it anyway but as expected it had no noticeable effect. Now that the speedo is working I can see that the bike runs up to about 45 reasonably quickly (nothing like the MZ) but thereafter it only very slowly gains speed and is reluctant to rev hard in the lower gears. Keeping the throttle wide open on a long slightly up hill straight it gradually crept up to the high 50s. Mechanically it seemed fine and the vibration was tolerable despite all the scare stories and lack of rubber mounting for the handlebars. The plug was still a light grey in colour after this treatment. I

guess the next thing to try is the original carb needle and perhaps check the main jet size but this will have to wait a day or two as I am off to the MZ club meeting on Sunday.

### **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Bit more progress with bikes. I have done a couple of shopping trips and a ride to my local VMCC Section on the TS250. On the way home last night I found that the RH indicator was not working, indeed the lights dimmed as well. Today I investigated and found that the problem stopped if I removed the rear bulb. Nothing obviously wrong with it nor indeed with the actual wiring. Curiously when I swapped the bulbs over the problem went away; very strange. I had also re-fitted the carrier and a TS250 and the handling was definitely skittish with a few things loaded. I moved the spare oil bottles back to their old location on the frame and took out any heavy objects which served no useful purpose. I also wrapped the security chain and padlock round the instrument binnacle to get some weight forward; have not ridden it since. Other than that it goes well.

Checking the paperwork for the Transalp I could not find any record of servicing. However, I have done near 3000 miles since I bought it so I gave it an oil change today. Mileage is now 30141 slightly more than the Revere. I did not change the filter at this point because I am fairly confident that Rick mentioned doing this not long before I bought the bike and the oil/filter change is only due every 8k miles. What came out was very clean. As I am going to start using the Revere, I checked its service record and found I had done less than 1k since oil & filter were done so nothing needed there at least until I come back from Cornwall.

I finally took the R26 out for a ride today, just short trip to the petrol station then round to the shops. It went ok, the ride was good and the road holding & braking confidence inspiring. The downside was that it has stopped charging and the battery died so I had to switch over to the spare which fortunately was still in the top box. The performance also still feels very flat to me. It pulls well but just won't rev and I doubt we got above 45 up my test hill. It didn't slow down, just wouldn't go any faster; even the 150 MZs fly up there at 50+. Not sure of actual speed because the speedo was not working. Not surprising really as the inner cable was still in the garage having fallen out when I was fixing the airbox. That was easily fixed and I also had a look at the plug which is still a light grey. Raising the needle has had not improved the matter at all. I talked though the matter with John Hill the previous owner and he confirmed that he felt the performance was flat as well. Thinking back it looks as though the problem started after he rebuilt the carb with new needles, jets etc. Later he remembered that he had changed the float needle because he felt this had been hacked around. Then I remembered noticing the old float needle had two grooves for the float securing spring. A weak mixture could well be caused by too low a fuel level so I think my first action will be to compare and perhaps swap the float needles to see what effect this may have. My time is heavily committed this weekend so it may have to wait until next week.

### **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Hard to believe another week has drifted by. The combination of the grandchildren staying and my dodgy leg has meant little progress on anything let alone the bikes. I did take part in the Vale of Glamorgan Run from Llanharry just north of Cardiff on Sunday. Unusual version of a time trial event. Normally you follow the route trying to maintain your chosen average speed with the marshals recording actual times as secret control. In this case you were free to ride at whatever speed you

chose and when you arrived at a secret control you had to estimate the distance travelled and the average speed achieved. On the morning route there were a couple of mileage points which you could use to verify your estimates but none in the afternoon. I did better than I expected and came second in the PV class only a couple of points adrift. In fact I would have one but for an unfortunate misunderstanding with the marshall which meant my mileage and speed got transposed. Lovely weather and the AJS went very well but I had to keep stopping to rest my leg. Needless to say we took the bikes to Llanharry in the van, too far to ride on a girder/rigid bike especially if you wanted a non-motorway route. The only thing I noticed when we got home was that the bike sat a bit drunkenly on its centre-stand. Seems to have lost the long bolt which secures it in the frame and only the bushes are holding it in place at present; lucky I did not lose it altogether.

The only other thing I have done is work on the Sunbeam fuel system. Though the tank is now well sealed petrol was still oozing out. I replaced the new metal/metal taps as they were the first obvious source of a leak. In the spares which came with the bike were some new but long unused cork sealed taps which were very slack. I put these in boiling water and left them overnight and by morning they were good as new. Just to make sure I left them soaking in a pot of petrol for another couple of days and they were still fine. Fitting these cured the worst leaks but then I found petrol oozing out of the joint between the tank and the adapter on one side. The good side had a fibre washer, the leaking side a copper washer so I changed this and all the other washers for fibre ones. Still I had a leak this time from the joint with the copper petrol pipe. The pipe was a nice shiny new one but eventually I concluded that its taper was not quite the same as that in the tap. The old one was still in the spares box so I fitted that and finally the leaks stopped (at least none for the last 24 hours). What a saga.



During this testing I had cause to run the engine several times and I noticed that when it got warm the oil light started coming on and eventually even revving the engine would not extinguish it. The oil was very black and smelly so I have now drained it and refilled with SAE50. Bit puzzled by the dirty oil as the bike is supposed to have hardly been used since it was rebuilt and the speedo is only showing 63 miles. Just hope that this is not an indicator of more problems to come. When running the engine sounds smooth and quiet so I hope the new oil is enough to solve the problem. I did find

that a number of the nuts securing the sump were far from tight. These have been attended to but I must go over the whole bike checking the fasteners.

Sad to say that yesterday my daughter and grandsons flew back to Germany but at least it means I have more control over my life. I made a list last night of the outstanding tasks around the hose and in the garage – quite daunting.

### **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014**

Zero progress for the last few days. On Sunday I took part in the MZ Club Run from Old Sodbury organised by Janet Wilson. I had ridden up on the Blue Supa5 which was going really well and looking forward to a nice day out; the weather being warm and sunny for the first time in ages. Ian Young had trouble starting his TS150 so along with Ray cattle I tried to push start it. Not entirely sure what happened but after a couple of tries my left leg suddenly gave way and I finished up in a heap on the floor. I managed to get the bike home but getting on and off was very painful as was trying to kick start. Not sure quite what damage I have done but my leg is still very painful 3 days later and I doubt I shall be riding anywhere for a few more days. Ian and several others have rung up to express sympathy but for the moment all I can do is rest the leg and let nature take its course. Means I will miss our Mid Week Run on Thursday and possibly the Vale of Glamorgan trial on Sunday. However, some good news to end the day, the Sunbeam tank is now done and ready to be collected. All I have to do is find someone to drive me.

### **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

Not really a lot to write up from the last 5 days as I seem to have spent most of my time as an unpaid taxi driver for my daughter and the grandsons. I bought a few s/s nuts to smarten up various bits of the R26. Some I was able to get at my local shop, the others I had to buy on the internet. Most of the threads on the R26 are metric fine (of which there are several flavours) so my existing stock of s/s nuts and bolts is only of limited value. Cannot say it has made a huge difference but at least they will not go rusty if it gets wet. Partly due to the wet weather but mainly due to inertia on my part, I have yet to take the R26 for a further test ride.

The most positive things I have done were to take the Sunbeam tank to Andy Rowett for epoxy lining to cure the leak and to tax the Honda Revere from 1<sup>st</sup> September so it can be used on the Cornish weekend. This afternoon I brought the Supa5 up to the workshop and gave it a clean and polish ready for an MZ club run on Sunday. I also managed to find the phone number for a chap called Tien Kho who I met at the Calne bike day. He owns an R27 and an R25/3 and is very knowledgeable about the single cylinder BMWs. He is coming to look at my bikes on Monday and may be able to help identify the other non standard features and possibly sources of parts. Nearly forgot, I finally got round to ordering some new tyres for the Transalp as the front is only just legal. I have opted for Avon Roadriders as these cured the white-lining on my BMW R75 and I hope will do the same for the Transalp. I did check with the Avon technical department that they would be suitable.

### **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

A wet August bank holiday and the grand children were quite content to play indoors so I was able to repair to the garage with a clear conscience this afternoon. I abandoned my original idea to try the MZ mechanical regulator in preference to finding out if the one I had on loan actually worked.

Getting the old stator assembly off was quite easy once I had established that the points cam and A/R unit bolt was a rh thread. The hardest part was unthreading the cables and for once I remembered to pull the fuse at the battery as one of the leads is permanently live. I decided to leave my rotor in place for now as it was clearly working (just too well). The new unit went on easily enough and the wiring was soon in place though not correctly threaded for now. Initial results were disappointing – total absence of sparks. The problem was basically corroded points and it took several goes before I got a results. The engine did then start but was very flat and would only tick over; any attempt to rev made it cut out. This was cured by a further clean of the points and setting the gap correctly but I then found there was no charge at all from the dynamo. After re-checking all my connections I remembered the corroded points so cleaned all the contact on the regulator and this time we got 6.7v charge and the ammeter just showing balance with the HL on. Obviously the unit is a bit down on power but at least its working and not boiling the battery. I contacted Ian Clarke and he has kindly agreed that I can have the dynamo on indefinite loan or until he needs it. That being the case I will take it off to fit new points and give it a better clean on the bench. Access on the bike, even with a ramp, is a bit cramped. This will also give me a chance to compare the wiring against my own dynamo to see if I can figure out what is wrong with mine. With a working charging system I can be more confident about using the bike to complete the fettling. It will also give me a chance to either get my dynamo repaired or to go for the Powodynam kit.

Overall quite a productive day.

#### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

Despite diversions to pick up my daughter and grandsons from the station and the return of my wife from a dog show in Scotland and our terrier (who now has something called a challenge certificate which my wife is very pleased about), I managed most of my objectives for the day. The airbox is now painted gloss black and in place on the bike. As I had hoped,



most of the repaired part is not readily visible so there is no immediate urgency about locating a better replacement. The back wheel now has s/s spokes and the ali rim is much shinier though not yet quite as good as the front. While it was out I removed and painted the centre hub cap as well. I



was never very happy with the rear tyre on the bike, it's a practically new Pirelli but the low profile did not look quite right on the R26. I had a Mitas 3.50 x 18 tyre in stock with a more classic profile so this has been fitted. The silencer has also been relocated and now runs parallel to the line of the bike rather than sticking out at the back end. It will need a road test to make sure everything clears

but it is looking hopeful. Tomorrow I will have another go at the bikes electrics. I am first going to try an MZ mechanical regulator. If that does not work then I will fit the dynamo assembly loaned by Ian Clarke.

### **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2014**

Quite a bit of progress today. Ray Wilson came to collect the 500R and we spent an hour or so looking at my other bikes and chatting. He is obviously very keen to have one of these bikes and went off a very happy bunny; his plans for the 500R include a repaint in MZ red. What did surprise me when I checked the paperwork was that I had done over 1200 kilometres on the bike in the 6 weeks I owned it. I also did some research on tank sealants for the Sunbeam and contacted Andy Rowett a local bike classic specialist who did Mike's Velocette tank. He keeps some stuff called Slosh in stock which he has used successfully for about 4 years and which is safe up to 100% Ethanol. He quoted £75 for doing the tank which would include cleaning it out properly; tempted by this as it's not a job I like doing. Anyway the Sunbeam tank has been drained of fuel and it is now in the back garage whilst I make up my mind how to deal with the tank. There is no immediate hurry as I don't plan to insure it until my bike policy comes up for renewal in a month or so.

The workshop was now clear so I brought the R26 up and spent the remainder of the day fitting the parts that had been powder coated and tidying up the wiring. The back wheel is also out ready to have its new spokes. With the battery carrier in place I was able to offer up the rebuilt airbox. A little gentle panel beating and it now fits on its original mounting lugs. It lines up correctly to the carb and clears the speedo cable. In place a lot of the repair work is hidden so it does not look too bad, much better than I expected. Anyway with the panel beating and fitting done I cleaned it up and gave it a couple of coats of primer. If the weather remains ok I should be able to complete the painting tomorrow.

I also had a look at a couple of other items which have been concerning me. The first was the silencer mounting which presently makes the thing stick out too far. This is mainly because it's the wrong silencer (probably from a twin) with a central fixing bracket. It should really have a side bracket. I was able to relocate it to the inside of the frame lug but will not know if that is viable until the wheel is replaced. The other thing was the rear off side shock absorber. This seems to clunk and I wanted to remove and service it. I got stalled on two counts with this. Firstly the bottom fixing is a bolt with the nut hidden inside the bevel housing which means you can only get at it when the wheel is removed. My plan had been to reverse the bolt and have the nut on the outside. No chance, the bolt has a 10mm shaft tapered to 8mm for the threaded part. The top mount was even more unobliging; I managed to find a C spanner to undo the aluminium decorative cover but the lock nut underneath would not undo; it simply turned the whole shock absorber with no way to trap it. I checked the other one in case I was doing something wrong and this came undone quite easily. Rather than persist and damage something I abandoned this job for now. My guess is I will have to drill out the existing nut but before doing that I will have to find a replacement as it is a metric fine thread for which I carry no spares and have no source at present. Nevertheless quite a satisfactory day.

### **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014**

On Wednesday I got a call from Steve at TPCS suggesting I came to examine one of the bits I had left for powder coating. The pictures explain why I had so much trouble identifying the airbox.

It was in fact an original slim airbox that a previous owner had modified for reasons we shall never understand. I have now dismantled it and reassembled it as near as I can get to the correct shape. About 60% is the original tinware, the rest new metal. Not a brilliant job but it should suffice until I can get a replacement. They fetch about £80 on Ebay.de and I am still reluctant to spend money on this bike until I am sure its worth it. Steve rang this morning to say the other R26 bits were powder coated so I had a ride on the Transalp to collect them. All being well Saturday will be devoted to reassembling the R26. Ray also rang from Cardiff to say he would be collecting the 500R on Saturday morning so I have spent a while collecting all the bits that will go with it together.



In between times I have been playing with the Sunbeam. The cover for the air cleaner is now fitted as is the cover for the plugs. This was a bit more complicated as first I had to locate and fit the correct oil pressure switch housing as the switch currently fitted got in the way of the cover. I also had to make some mounting studs as these were missing. I think my solution is actually better than the originals. I failed to fix the horn, it works perfectly when tested



on the bench but just clicks when on the bike. I

will need to investigate deeper but for the moment I have fitted a cheap modern horn which at least makes the bike legal. The bigger problem has been the petrol tank. Originally it was thought that the taps were at fault because the corks had dried out from standing for so long. In fact it seems that there was a hole in the tank caused by someone using a securing bolt that was too long. Examination showed that three of the four fixings were bolts when they should have been shouldered studs so I made some new ones to make sure that problem did not recur.

Hopefully I have managed to seal the leak for now, After I made the repair I left the tank for two days with no signs of weeping. It is now back on the bike which finally gave me a chance to run the engine. First however, I stripped the carb as the previous owner had told me there was a problem and the bike would only run on choke. The carb is a new Amal concentric provided by Stewart engineering and reputedly set up specifically for the S8. In fact I found nothing seriously wrong with the carb but I did give it a clean and blew through all the jets with the air line. The only fault was a missing O ring for the manifold face but the gasket was intact and I don't think this is causing a problem at present. However, I will get a new one as soon as possible. Once back together the bike started quite easily but the tickover was far too fast. I left it like that to warm up then adjusted the

mixture and idle speed to get a reasonable tickover. For me the engine ran perfectly well without choke so maybe a clean was all it needed. Just when I thought I had cracked all the problems I noticed a slight weep of petrol. However, it seems to be coming from the tap not the repair. This will have to be investigated.

### **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

Well what a difference a day (or rather 2 days makes). I made up my mind to sell the 500R and offered it to Ray Wilson whom I met at Carrog and who had expressed an interest in the bike should I decide not to keep it. He responded with a yes immediately and will collect it when he gets back from holiday.

My researches in the Sunbeam S7/S8 marque did nothing to dampen my enthusiasm to own one of these quirky bikes but it did identify a number of others for sale and one in particular that was much more to my liking than the one originally offered by Bob. I went up to Kent today and came home with the 1956 S8 in gunmetal silver shown below. It was extensively restored mechanically and cosmetically about 10 years ago but never really finished as the owner then worked abroad until recently. When he came back he had lost interest in the bike. It looks very nice and sounded healthy enough when run. However, it still needs a little tinkering to get it totally right.



### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

Not a lot of success over the last few days which was partly why I did not feel like writing up the blogg. When I checked the Ariel on Wednesday morning oil was leaking from two different places on the gearbox. One was plainly from the area where I had replaced the oil seal, the other seemed to be from the speedo drive connection. I double checked the box oil level and found it was overfilled so I left the plug out to let it drain to the correct level hoping this was the cause. No chance it is still leaking from both locations 3 days later. They say things come in threes and I had also noticed a

stronger than normal smell of petrol in the garage; turns out there are rust pinholes in the petrol tank! This is now off while I investigate ways to repair the damage. The only good thing to come from the drama was draining the Ariel tank gave me enough petrol to top-up both the 500R and the Transalp so I will not need to buy any fuel this weekend.

The one ray of sunshine during the last couple of days was the arrival of the spokes for the rear wheel of the R26. However, this reminded me to ring the powder coater to enquire about the bits he is painting. Seems they should be ready by Tuesday so doing the wheel will have to wait because one of the bits being painted is the centre stand without which it's not really possible to get the wheel out. Reverting to the Ariel, the rolling chassis is now in the rear garage and I have attempted a repair of the tank from the outside using some special glue I bought to repair the R75/5 tank. After 24 hours the patch has shown no signs of seepage so I am hopeful it will work as a stop gap. I guess the long term solution will be to seal the tank from the inside. The introduction of Ethanol in petrol has caused a lot of problems with tank sealants so this is something to be carefully researched as the older version of Petseal was definitely not Ethanol proof.

Today I rode the 500R to Verwood to attend Ian Clarke's annual open day. He has a wonderful collection of classic BMWs which I spent some time drooling over – in between making a pig (horrible pun) of myself at the Hog Roast. Two things emerged from my visit, one positive in that Ian has loaned me a complete dynamo for the R26. I plan to fit this in place of my own to see if that sorts the charging problem. The second was definitely not positive as I have found several more features of my bike which are non-standard. These include the silencer which I had worried about as it seemed to stand away from the bike more than I would have liked. Most likely mine is from a BMW twin as it has the same central fixing bracket. The correct style should have an offset bracket to allow it to fit inside rather than outside the frame. Not life threatening but annoying considering how much John was charged for this silencer by a 'reputable' dealer. Second observation was that the way the handlebars are clamped on mine is wrong. They should have a rubber mounted single bolt clamp, mine has a two bolt fixing and no rubber mounting. Looking at the other bikes on display I could see nothing remotely like mine on any other BMW. The lugs to hold the tyre pump have also been cut off my bike and it's missing the alloy plate which protects the battery cover from damage when operating the kickstart.

I already knew about the incorrect air cleaner box, the mystery is what did it come from as this type of air box seems to be unique to the R26/R27 and yet it is unlike either. Equally I knew the rear mudguard was incorrect but it is now clear that the stays are also wrong. None of these things are individually serious but collectively they highlight that it is a bit of a mess. It makes me reluctant to spend any serious money on the bike until I have established just how much it will cost to get it back to standard.

The 500R continues to be reliable and seems at its best when conditions allow a cruising speed between 50-60 where it smooths out somewhat. The vibration is making my right hand go numb making braking a little snatchy as I lose 'feel'. However, this was much less pronounced on the trip home when I took the Salisbury road which allowed longer periods of 50+ cruising. I still like it in many ways, the handling, road holding and riding position are good as is the economy and the electric start is a boon. There is something about a big single but in truth it's a crude piece of kit, still too young for VMCC events. This means I will have to tax the Revere (which is 1988 and VMCC

eligible) from 1<sup>st</sup> September to use on the Cornish Weekend or take the TS250. I fancy that its days are numbered and if I do decide to sell it I may well look for a Skorpion as this is one MZ I have yet to try. A chap turned out for Mike H's funeral riding one which he has owned from new and it sounded much smoother and more refined than the 500R.

On a totally different tack, I had a call from Bob Arnold on Wednesday to tell me that his Sunbean S8 was for sale. He posted me a picture (does not do email sadly) plus some brief notes about the bike. We later had a chat and this has re-kindled a long held desire to own one of these bikes. I have now started researching the marque prior to going up to Worcester to view and test ride.

## **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

No chance to write up the blog or indeed do a great deal as we had the whole family here for the weekend and a BBQ on the Sunday to celebrate my birthday as it was one of those with a nought on the end. It was nice to see them all and very kind of them to arrange everything so I just had to sit back and enjoy. On the Monday it was Mike Hotchkiss's funeral so that took up most of the day riding to Coalpit Heath to join the funeral cortege to the crematorium and then on to badminton for the wake. Never feel like doing much after attending a funeral.

On a more positive note, the cams arrived and look to be correct and in perfect condition. The inlet can go straight in but the exhaust is intended for a magneto equipped engine and has a threaded extension for a nut to hold the sprocket. On my 37-12 with coil ignition there is a threaded hole for a screw to hold the point cam. I believe I can get the spindles swapped over but am getting this confirmed via the forum. I will also need terry press to carry out the job and he is away until next week. As the bike is going well, I am not in too much of a hurry to do the job anyway. On my todo list fixing the oil leak on the Ariel VH500 has reached the top so I started the job this morning. To say it has not gone well would be a gross understatement. Getting access to the output shaft took forever as I progressively removed more and more bits to gain access. In the end even the back wheel had to come out. The stripdown was also incredibly messy as the chaincase was full of liquid grease. I shall not be using it again as it did not really work anyway. There was masses of the grease behind the chaincase, in the chainguards and all over the bottom of the bike so it did not stay inside any better than the oil did.

According to my research, it was a simple job to change the oil seal from the outside once it was exposed. That may well be so if the seal to be removed is fitted the right way round. Mine was incorrectly fitted and the lip which would have made it easy to hook out was tight against the bearing. In theory the oil seal fits in a carrier plate held in place by a circlip. After a struggle I got the circlip out but the carrier was stuck fast and even heating the shell would not shift it. In the end I had to grind a specially shaped chisel to force the oil seal out and then make good the damage to the carrier plate. The circlip then took 40 minutes to get back in place. Things seemed to get better for a while in fact I had it almost fully rebuilt when I found that the clutch had far too much free play and virtually no movement when this was corrected. In fits and starts I stripped the whole thing apart twice but could not find anything I had done wrong but I did manage to break one of the clutch spring retaining studs which took another hour to fix. The final conclusion was that the push rod was simply not long enough and I was able to achieve a working clutch by packing out the thrust bearing with a thick washer. Why this should be was a complete mystery. Apart from the oil seal then only other thing I changed was the spacer ring which fits inside the seal and locates the gearbox sprocket.

I roughly compared them and they looked identical but did not actually measure the new one and perhaps it was a little wider than the original. By now it was nearly 9pm so I called it a day.

One other thing, during the afternoon I had a phone call from a chap called Klaus in Germany who apologised for not sending my R26 spokes and that they would be in the post today. Later I got an email from Ebay.de confirming they had been posted. Must admit I wondered why they had not turned up but frankly I have enough on my plate at present for them not to be a priority.

### **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

Busy few days. On Wednesday afternoon I put the ETZ250 on Gumtree as well at a slightly higher price and had several responses which was encouraging though only one person wanted to view and that not until the weekend. Was not prepared to hold it as I was not that convinced he was really looking to buy so suggested he rang on Friday evening to arrange a visit. On Thursday we had a VMCC mid week run starting from Acton Turville to visit the Dean Heritage Centre in Soudley, Forest of Dean. Weather was perfect and we had a really pleasant ride to the Rising Sun at Moseley Green for lunch then on to the Heritage Centre. I had been feeling pretty stressed for a variety of reasons and in truth I probably would not have gone but for the fact that I had promised to deliver a carburettor to Acton Turville. By the time I got there I felt a bit better so carried on with the ride. Must confess that all I saw of the Heritage Centre was the café where we sat and drank tea until it was time to ride home. We sorted out all the club and world problems in no time flat. The carb incidentally was a replica BVF 30-N3-1 the late type with spring clip on the bottom which was bought from Germany at £65 delivered. Don has now fitted it and is delighted so I may well treat one of the other bikes to a new carb in due course.

On the run I used the 500R which has become the bike of choice for the past few weeks. I like it in many ways but it is mechanically noisy and quite harsh if you let the revs drop. On the other hand it is comfortable to ride and is still doing over 70mpg even ridden quite hard by my standards. I have posted a note on the MZ Riders web site to see if there is anyone locally who has a Rotax engine bike so I can compare my engine with a lower mileage example known to be in good condition. I suspect that my reservations will exceed my likes eventually and it will move on; I wonder what the Skorpion is like? On Friday morning a friend who lives a mile or so away, rang about the ETZ250 having seen the advert on Gumtree. He came round and I gave him a run down on the various MZ models and he took the ETZ for a ride. Came back with a grin on his face and the deal was done. So now I have space in the garage and some money burning a hole in my pocket. A Powerdynamo



system for the R26 is a distinct possibility and maybe having the Honda front wheel rebuilt. Late in the day I had a phone call from Peter Barrenger a VMCC friend. He had seen my advert in the Jampot magazine for an inlet cam for the AJS. He has a pair of cams which he believes came out of a pre-war Silver Streak (the sports version of my bike) and is posting them to me to see if they are of any use. Pity every day is not as productive as today has been.

### **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

Daughter and grandsons arrived from Germany on Monday so not much opportunity for working on the bikes other than cleaning the AJS and the 500R both of which had collected a fair amount of muck from the trial and pre-trial rides. Tuesday was better and my blue TS250 now has both an MoT and road tax so is street legal. First time I have ridden it for 3 years and I had forgotten just what a nice bike it is. So much smoother and torquier than the ETZ250 motor. By the time I got home I had made up my mind that the Orange ETZ250 would have to go. This evening it was brought into the workshop and put back to standard trim which basically meant swapping the fork legs and re-fitting the disk brake wheel and components. All now done and I have prepared an advert for the club web site, Tomorrow I will take some pictures and see what happens. If it does not go within a couple of weeks I will put it on ebay.

### **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2014**

Well the White Horse Trial is now behind us and all we can do is wait for the results. We got round our planned route but it was not without its hiccups however. The ride to the start was fine including a stop to fill the tank. When we departed the first control the bike was misfiring badly but I pressed on hoping it would clear. It finally stopped part way down the Ford old coach road which is a rutted muddy byeway just where you don't want a breakdown. Fortunately the cure was quick and simple, the ignition switch was being moved by the tank bag and was not fully on. It ran fine after sorting this. Next incident was after we left the second checkpoint; as we slowed for a crossroads the engine started making a horrible squeaking rattling noise. I switched it off while Mike and I debated what to do. My immediate thought was a dry exhaust valve as I had never checked the oil feed to the rockers after the rebuild. Anyway I started the engine again for another diagnosis and the noise had gone away so we rode very gently to control 3 without further incident and in fact the noise did not recur for the rest of the day. However, to be safe we rode very gently and stopped for 10-15 minutes at



every control to let the engine cool down. Despite this we were close to my target times at most controls and 15 minutes earlier than expected at the finish. The ride home was also incident free even though I gave it a bit more stick (well 40mph rather than 30-35). Something of a mystery but I will check the oil feed when I give the bike a clean tomorrow. Right now it's a bit mucky as we did 10 green lanes today. Despite the problems I was very pleased with the bike, it goes well and is a joy to ride.

### **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2014**

It rained heavily all morning, too wet even to take the dog for his walk so I had a clear conscience when spending a few hours in the workshop converting the hack TS250 to 12v. Quite easy as I had all the necessary bits on the shelf and the electrics are minimalist on this bike anyway. It started first kick and the voltmeter showed a 14.2 charge so everything appears to be functioning properly. Pity all my jobs don't go this smoothly. The bike has been moved back to the greenhouse for now as I have no other immediate plans for it. I must say that the Hybrid engine sounded very sweet and it seems a pity not to make use of it – but in which chassis?

Next job was to check over the AJS ready for Sunday's trial. Mainly greasing, topping up oil levels and checking that the nuts & bolts were firm. Both tyres were up to pressure as I had done them on Wednesday. Not a lot really. Biggest decision was how to carry the paperwork. The route card holder was not much use as I will be working mainly from maps so in the end I opted for the magnetic tank bag.

Traditionally the section members donate cakes and similar items for the refreshments after the trial and my wife had kindly baked a fruit cake plus I had a stack of bread pudding left over from the Calne Bike day (kindly provided by Mary Thornton). I had toyed with the idea of taking it with me and dropping it off at Sutton Benger Village Hall on my way past though this could have cost me precious time. As the rain had stopped and it was pleasantly warm and sunny I decided to ride part of tomorrow's route to make sure I could find the Village Hall, call in at Brian Newbury's house to drop off the cakes and ride another of the green lanes to see how much the rain had effected it. I took the 500R mainly because it had a full tank and the run was completed with no problems. The green lane at Kington Langley had not suffered much from the heavy rain and will I think be fine tomorrow.

### **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014**

I decided to do a couple of jobs on the TS250 rolling chassis today to further tidy it up. First job was to get it on the bike lift so that the rear end could be stripped out to fit the freshly painted swinging arm. I was able to rub down and paint parts of the frame at the same time. Not pretty but they are mostly out of sight and at least it will keep the rust at bay. I also fitted a freshly powder coated riders footrest bar which was part of the haul from Dennis's shed. A side stand and a new MZ badge for the tank completed the job for today. At present it still has the ETZ/TS hybrid motor installed. I need to make a decision on what to do with it next. The bike electrics are all still 6v and the present hybrid engine is 12v so it is running as a total loss system for now. It would make sense to convert the bike to 12v as this would not prevent 6v engines being tested provided if I only connect up the points and run total loss. In the interim it would allow the Hybrid engine to be properly connected and I still have a Powerdynamo kit for a TS250 on the shelf which could be fitted to any TS motor I wanted to

test more thoroughly. I think I have just talked myself into that job. Tomorrow I must give the AJS some quality time as it's the White Horse Trial on Sunday and guess what, after weeks of hot dry weather it's started raining! I also found some reasonably priced s/s spokes for the R26 on Ebay.de and placed an order. They are nearly double the price of the MZ spokes but I guess that's because of the name.

#### **Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014**

Today I removed things that badly needed painting like the rear brake levers, footrests, stand and particularly the battery box which has battery acid corrosion. I also altered the air cleaner box



fittings as the originals were crude and not overly effective. I am now positive that it is not the correct air cleaner box but since it's the only one I have it will have to do for now. Once this task was completed I took the parts shown to Steve at Sells Green for powder coating in gloss black. Don't expect to get them back for two weeks or so. With these bits out of the way I

was able to clean up and brush paint parts of the frame purely to keep rust at bay until I strip the whole bike for powder coating. Like every other bike I have bought recently, the side stand lets the bike lean to far for comfort such that you have to put a block underneath. I made up an extension piece which gives much more satisfactory stance. Some of the smaller bits from the R26 were rotary brushed to clean them up and painted – mostly silver except for the filter and its housing. It was too risky to send this item for blasting and powder coating as the mesh filter is sealed into the housing. It has been cleaned and the holes plugged for now whilst it was given several coats of black gloss. With this done the bike was moved to the rear garage to make room for the AJS which will need a checkover before the trial on Sunday.

To complete my workshop shift I cleaned up the swinging arm removed from my TS250 the other day and gave it a couple of coats of smooth Hammerite. This is destined to go into the rolling chassis TS250 which has a horribly rusty s/arm at present. It will also gain a rear side stand which I found in the spares box whilst looking for something else today.

#### **Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

I took the BMW for a longer ride today 22 miles or so to Corsham for coffee with Mike and then home again. Handling braking and steering were all excellent. Riding on the harder suspension setting I only noticed one or two clunks from the rear end. When I did some bounce checks at Mike's he could not see any evidence that the tyre got anywhere near the mudguard or its fixing even on the soft setting so I am a bit confused about this at present. The bike is quite flexible and pulls well from low speeds even in top. However, it still feels sluggish and at times opening the throttle has no effect but closing it's the bike begins to pick up. This type of flat spot is typical of fuel weakness in the low-mid range and when I checked the plug back home the centre electrode was very pale,

almost white. I have since raised the needle to its maximum setting two up from previously. Another test ride will have to wait as I am about to strip out some bits for painting.

## **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

I spent part of Monday working out various route options for the WHT next Sunday. As I don't normally do well on questions my preferred route will involve the maximum number of green lanes. However, Brian the new Clerk of Course is rather more demanding than me and intends to make entrants ride the whole length of all the green lanes. As some were new to me I decided it would be prudent to do a reconnaissance and in company with Mike Davis we clocked up over 50 miles during the day half of which was off road. I took the 500R as it was already dirty and it proved perfectly adequate for the task. In fact probably more suitable than the rigid framed AJS I shall be using in the actual trial. I got a sneaky sight of the other entrants today and the competition in the PV class is going to be fierce so it's green lanes or nothing. Just hope it does not rain because one or two will be very slippery if it does.

In the evening I checked over the mudguard fitting on the BMW and reversed most of the fixing bolts so that there was the minimum of protrusion inside to catch on the tyre. I also noticed that the rear suspension units top out too easily and suspect the dampers need attention.

## **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

It's been a few days since I last updated so several things to cover in this first entry of new blog. One thing to note is that I will from now on put the most recent entry at the top having been told that's the way to do it.

The 500R has been given 3 rides this week and covered almost 200 miles without any mishaps. First trip was to the castle of Comfort near Priddy to meet up with the Bristol section of the VMCC around 55 miles for the trip. The only thing I noted was that it seems to have a flat spot if you open the throttle around 50mph when going up a hill. Second trip was to the VMCC meeting on Thursday evening which gave me a chance to try the lights. They are quite good but the bulbs in the speedo head obviously need replacing as there was no illumination. The tachometer is well lit but pointless as it does not work. Final trip was today with Ray and Rob on the Annual MZRC Charlie Binks Run. We went the pretty way to Staverton to visit the Jet Age Museum which was small but very good. To cater for little boys (and their dad's & grand-dads) they have the nose section of a Vulcan so I was able to sit in the pilot's seat - awesome but very cramped especially when you remember the length of time they would be on patrol. We went our separate ways and I came home via Seven Springs and Cirencester. I filled up at Melksham - took 11.1 litres to cover 192 miles - 78mpg which was very satisfying. I noticed the flat spot again when climbing Swainswick Hill on the A46, I think I just have to get used to revving the motor more to get it into the power band. Coming back on my own it ran happily at 50-55 without any obvious flat spots. One thing that is not so good is the vibration which at times makes my throttle hand go numb. The vibration seems to lessen as you go faster and beyond 50mph it's much less intrusive. Jury is still out on whether I want it to be a long term addition to the stable but it is growing on me. Still sounds very clattery and I really need to hear another one running to understand if they are all like that or whether mine is getting near its sell by date. This evening I fitted a clock so I have easier access to the time and one of my plastic 'cruise control' widgets to see if that helps with the numb hand.

Reverting to the R26, looking at the most recent photos I realised that lowering the mudguard but leaving the rear carrier set high looked odd so I have now adjusted all the supports so that the carrier is set just above the mudguard. I also tidied up the selection of nuts/bolts and in the process made a useful discovery. My local bike parts supplier GMS also stock metric fine nuts which previously I have had to buy in small quantities via ebay. I bought 6 to try out and these have replaced the rusty nuts on the bevel box. I need to get a few more to tidy up other areas.

My battle with the charging on the R26 continues. I had a reply from Al Osbourn which basically told me to check my meter. One of my meters was in fact over-reading but not by much and I now have three others in play all of which confirm I am getting 8.9 volts output at running revs. Worse still I wired in the ammeter and this shows readings of the scale even with the lights on. I have tried various things including a new battery and replacing the V-REG-2A with a VAPE electronic regulator removed from my BK350 when it went Powerdynamo. This produces exactly the same results so I guess the problem is not with the regulator and must be in the wiring or within the dynamo itself. I am at a loss currently as to what else to try. For the moment I have disabled the charging system altogether and am running it on a total loss basis. To avoid embarrassment I have run wiring to a spare battery in the toolbox. This can be brought into use very easily if the main battery runs out of juice.

As I was already kitted up from my MZRC run I decided to take the R26 for its inaugural run this afternoon. Only about 2 miles which included my test hill. Given the reputation of these bikes for vibration I was pleasantly surprised that it seemed smoother than the 500R. Performance was very pedestrian however and it seemed reluctant to go much above 40mph downhill or uphill. It felt retarded to me so I checked the timing with a strobe when I got home, In fact it was spot on and the autoadvance was working perfectly. Certainly it does not feel as lively as the AJS but then its probably near twice the weight. There was also some noises from underneath when I went over the bumps, not sure if it's the suspension bottoming out on the lowered mudguard or one of the stands bouncing. I have set the rear shocks to the harder setting for now to see if that helps. Having spent all that time lowering the mudguard it would be annoying if I had to raise it again.

Saturday was Calne bike day and we had our usual pitch in Castlefield Park. I had to take the gazebo and chairs etc so was not able to display a bike. Support from within the section has been lukewarm at best this year and when I left to rescue the dog at 11am we still only had 5 bikes on display and one of those belonged to a visitor. I did not get back until around 3:30pm and pretty much the same number were on display though I gather we did have a fair number that turned up in fits and starts during the mid-part of the day. I did have a couple of walk rounds and visited the AJS-Matchless display. There were a large number of bikes the majority being modern stuff. What did surprise me was the number of British bikes parked up which were not associated with any of the various clubs on display let alone ours. Makes me wonder why we cannot attract more of them into our ranks

That's about it for now, the final instructions for the White Horse Trial arrived last night so I need to concentrate on planning my route for next Sunday.