

Daily (sometimes) Blogg – Part 4

Friday 26th June 2015

The ETZ15 is slowly being tidied up and no major horrors found so far. The back wheel has been restored with new s/s spokes from my spares stock and the hub has been repainted satin black. A good s/h tyre has been fitted and the whole shebang reassembled – looking good. I have ordered some spares from Germany which should be here within a week – complete exhaust system, new front spokes and a seat cover being the main items for the ETZ125. The other bits are spares for friends. I am away on Tuesday & Wednesday and the spares will hopefully arrive Thursday or Friday so all being well the ETZ will hit the road o by next weekend.

Earlier in the week Steve Hook came over with a couple of his TS250 motors. One of these was the original motor from his Red Supa5 which I repaired after it ingested the crankshaft oil seal circlip. The other was the ill fated engine from his black Supa5 which despite my best efforts (see separate Blogg) is apparently still jumping out of third gear – doh. We checked and transferred a few bits to the ‘Red’ engine which he now intends to re-install. He is planning to sell the Black Supa5 to fund a Powerdynamo system for the Red bike. I am still keen to get to the bottom of the rogue engine problems and after some discussion, Steve agreed to sell me the motor so that I can play with it and hopefully lay the ghost once and for all. Today I examined an ETZ250 I stripped a while ago. Though the bulk of the engine is poor and only fit for spares, the gearbox components look fine with no evidence on the selectors of jumping out of gear. When time allows I will strip ‘Jumpy’ and rebuild it with the replacement gearbox. Big issue then will be how to test it.

With the proceeds of two recent bike sales burning a hole in my pocket, I have been studying eBay and various other web sites mainly for another AJS/matchless machine; either a G3 or a lightweight 250/350. In the course of this study I started looking at Velocettes which are a long time favourite of mine. Tomorrow I am hoping to view a 350 MAC near Swindon which looks promising. I doubt I will make an immediate decision as there are also a couple of G3s which I hope to view next week but it will be an interesting comparison.

Monday 22nd June 2015

I am getting really bad at writing up the blog recently, seem to have lost the plot a bit. Quick update of the salient issues. The S8 has now gone to a new home in Norfolk; funnily enough the chap had viewed the bike in Kent before me but went off to view a couple of others. When he rang back to make an offer I had already bought it. Bit sad to see it go but I know it was the right decision. On Friday evening I went to Enford near Pewsey to look at an ETZ125. I made an offer which was rejected so came away empty handed. On Sunday night I got an email accepting my offer – seems none of the 3 others who had made an appointment to view bothered to turn up. Been there, got the tea shirt for that.

Anyway a very scruffy blue ETZ125 is now in my garage getting some tlc. The picture definitely flatters this little beast. Mileage is shown as 8063 which may well be genuine as it is a 1994 model which has not been taxed since end June 1997. I am the 4th owner and in reality the second real owner as both the previous names in the log book only had it for about 4 weeks each. I expect I shall find out in due course why they both moved it on so quickly. However, I did not pay much for it and worst case it will be a useful source of spares or a basis for a future project. So far however, it is cleaning up very well and no horrors have emerged as yet. It even has 2 keys and original toolkit.

Over the weekend I stripped the spare Honda TLS wheel and cleaned up the hub and an 18" MZ alloy rim. These are now with Brickwood wheel builders to be laced up with s/s spokes to fit into my Supa5



ready for the Spanish trip. After Cumbria I decided that its brakes might not be up to the demands of the Pecos mountains. I have also been searching out and servicing the bits needed to convert the front end of the Supa5 outfit to disk braking. Took me the best part of Sunday to successfully bleed the hydraulics. Several times I thought I had succeeded but ½ later the whole setup was spongy again.

However, my last attempt seems ok as it was still firm this morning. One of the reasons for buying the ETZ125 was to provide a complete disk front end but hopefully this will not now be necessary.

Wednesday 17th June 2015

Busy few days so no time to write up the blog till tonight. Thankfully the van warning light seems to be Renault electrics as the garage could not find any obvious problem when they attached their computer. The ECU has been reset and fingers crossed it does not recur. I have not looked at the Supa5 which was remarkably clean considering the 500 or so miles it did last week. It has been put to the back of the queue while I sort out a few other things like 10 days of growth on the lawns. I blew some of the money from the BK350 on some MZ stock items from Germany and they arrived on Tuesday, mainly cables, s/s spoke sets but also included were some chrome covers for the ES250 rear shocks. These were fitted today in place of the chrome springs which were actually perfect and too good to hide inside the covers. I dismantled some old shocks which had plain steel springs and fitted these instead. Pure bling but it does look nice.

Tonight was the Poulshot Classic Show; an informal get together on the village green from late afternoon, cars lorries, tractors bikes and static engines were in abundance. Met up with a few friends and admired a number of the vehicles on display. Some folks were better organised than us and had picnic tables set up. Bit worried when I noticed that the ignition warning light on the Supa5 outfit was glowing brightly when I was half way to Poulshot. I decided to carry on anyway and trust to luck. Richard Kinsey kindly followed me home and it was light enough still not to need lights so we made it ok. Yet another job on the list of things needing attention. The S8 advert has finally attracted some attention and I now have 3-4 people who seem seriously interested in the bike including a chap who saw it when advertised by the previous owner but made his mind up too late. The first viewing is tomorrow and with luck it will soon be on its way. Funnily enough, I met a chap at Poulshot who had ridden his S8 to the show. His head gasket went a couple of weeks ago very soon after he had replaced the valve guides. It was also a new composite type and like mine had blown out a chunk of the asbestos. He was sure he had followed the correct regime for tightening the head so he has now fitted a solid copper gasket.

Sunday 14th June 2015

Well the Cumbria holiday was a great success and I will write up some notes on it as a separate blog some time. the supa5's proved to be the perfect bike for this type of holiday and neither missed a beat. The only blot on my horizon is that Mike's has much more pulling power up hills and into wind than mine. At first I thought it was because I am a couple of stone heavier than Mike but I think it's not just this. Anyway it had more than adequate power for the holiday so it's a problem which can be addressed another day. The BK350 was handed over to Andy Henworth at a truck stop just outside Lancaster on the way up and he is now playing with his new toy. On the way home we made it to the Salutation at Ham in time to meet up with the Bristol MZ section. Tomorrow I will have to unload the bike and tidy up the van. One other worry is that one of the warning lights came on just after I dropped Mike & Bike at Neston.

Friday 5th June 2015

Not much motorcycling activity this week. I gave the S8 one more short run then partly stripped it to tighten the head nuts. To be honest there was virtually no movement and I was not really expecting any given how carefully I tightened them initially and the fact that I now have a solid copper head gasket which is unlikely to settle the way a laminate gasket might do. Not sure if the leak is from the head joint or the rocker gasket but I have cleaned it up ready for the next – longer test ride. However, the bike is on the back burner again as I had other things to do.

The main one was to check over and clean the Blue Supa5 ready for our Cumbria holiday. Whilst doing this I noticed that the front mudguard was looking a bit sad so I retrieved the spare one I had partially prepped a while back. Most of the outer coats are now applied and after it had lain in the greenhouse for a couple of days to harden the paint I undersealed it with black bitumen. This is always a messy job and it now needs to harden off before giving the outside a further rub down and final coat of silver. I had hoped to get this done in time for the holiday but decided it was better not to rush the job. On Tuesday I picked up the Motolug trailer from Richard Kinsey and gave it a test assembly. It's quite easy and can be done singlehanded if necessary. I also bought some extra tie down straps to make sure I had enough for three bikes. Mike is coming over on Saturday morning and we are going to load the van and trailer ready for an early departure on Sunday morning. We hope to be at Lancaster to drop off the BK350 around 1pm. I plan to take the laptop with me so I should be able to update the blog with our riding experiences over the next week.

Monday 1st June 2015

On Sunday I lead a VMCC run down to the Portsmouth area to visit the Royal Armoury at Fort Nelson. It was a bit wet until we got to Winchester for the coffee stop but cleared up later so we soon dried out again. Nice visit and a good run home though the wind was getting quite gusty. Must be getting old as I am very stiff today and we only did 170 miles.

This morning I pottered around doing a few odd jobs, mostly cleaning the Revere which was quite dirty after the Portsmouth trip and the Blue Supa5 which was still filthy from the Ramsbury run. I also replaced the inner tube in the trail TS150 back wheel as it had gone down yet again. Strange really as I cannot find any leaks and there were no foreign objects embedded in the tyre. I have left it fully inflated but so far it has not lost any pressure at all. I have had similar problems with rogue inner tubes before so I think I will scrap it – too risky to keep it as a spare. I have also started thinking about the spares, tools etc I should take with me to Cumbria for the club holiday which starts next Sunday.

Saturday 30th May 2015

No time to write up the blog for a few days so a few things to catch up on. The S8 top end has been stripped, checked and rebuilt with a new solid copper head gasket. The picture shows clearly where the gasket had blown, initially between the two bores, the out of the LH side near the middle stud. The head gasket was of the composite type and the asbestos had completely blown out of some sections – now wonder it leaked.



I only finished this today so no opportunity for a proper ride yet but the engine starts easily and seemed fine on a short ride round my test route. Part of the rebuild regime is frequent checks on the tightness of the head bolts so it will be a bit tedious for a while. Though there is no evidence of the gasket actually blowing, there does seem to be a suggestion of an oil weep from the head joint near the camshaft oil feed.

Hopefully this will cease as the head is tightened down. I hope so as removing and replacing the S8 head is a pig of a job and not something I want to do again in a hurry. The ride also gave me a chance to try out the front brake. Initially I thought it was little improved but after a few 'emergency' stops it does seem to be developing a little bite.

During the week I looked at some other bikes, a couple of Honda CD200s but both were pretty rough and I thought rather expensive for the condition. The other was a quite nice looking AJS 350 model 16. I got close to buying that one but there were a few things I was not happy about, the main one being a difference between frame number on the V5 and the frame itself and no real proof of its age as the log book recorded a 1st regn date of 1994 – though it was also classed as an Historic vehicle. In the end I walked away.

Whilst wheeling the bikes around this afternoon I noticed that the Trail TS150 had a flat rear tyre. I have pumped it up hard but I suspect it's going to be in the workshop shortly for a puncture repair. Main reason for moving bikes around was to do a trial run fitting two supa5's and the BK350 in the van for the trip to Cumbria next weekend. No way would they all fit so plan B comes into operation and I will put the BK350 on a trailer. My friend Richard has kindly agreed to lend his Motolug trailer. These can be dismantled and stored in the boot of a car or van when not needed for towing. Mike D came over today with his Supa5 partly to experiment with the loading and partly to have a 6v electronic regulator fitted. This went smoothly and the improvement in charge rate and brightness of his lights was impressive.

Saturday 23rd May 2015

The R26 was reassembled today with a home modified inlet pushrod as I could not quickly locate a new replacement. A quick road test proved it was running fine – no better and no worse than when I stripped the top end. One thing which was different though was that it ran perfectly from cold. The last couple of times it was used spluttered and coughed horribly until the motor had warmed up. The only thing I have changed is to fit a new carb-airbox rubber hose as the old one was split. Whether this

accounts for the weak running only time will tell. There was certainly no indication of more pulling power up my test hill. I'll take it for a longer run shortly.

Forgot to mention that the relined brake shoes came back on Friday. I was a bit miffed at first as they had been lined with the woven material which Villiers Services seem to prefer. In my covering letter I explicitly asked for the Ferodo type lining as I wanted to be able to machine them to fit. You cannot machine the woven linings – not even Paul Frith. However, I fitted the shoes to the backplate and offered it up and it fitted the drum perfectly with only the slightest movement of the lever need to operate the brake. So machining was not necessary and I doubt I could have got a better fit; lucky or what? The original S8 front wheel is now back in the bike but then I found the link from cable to arm was missing. Searched high and low but no sign of the original nor a suitable replacement so I had to fabricate one for now. As the bike is not running I am not able to give the brake a proper road test though its not as sharp as I was hoping; perhaps it needs to bed in? Late this afternoon I swapped the bikes over and the R26 is back in the bike shed and the S8 is now in the workshop ready to start the strip down. Now need to decide what to do with my spare Honda TLS front wheel. The Supa5 outfit already has one and the Blue Supa5 has an excellent brake anyway at present. Neither of the TS150s needs a bigger brake, they are so light the standard MZ 6" brake is totally adequate. Tempting to try it on the ES250 but that would mean converting it to 16" rim which is a bit daft. Probably best to just put it to one side for a now - a suitable project will emerge in time.

Friday 22nd May 2015

Had a super run out to Tilshead on the Trial TS150 on Thursday. Its performance was a revelation compared to the R26. It was easily able to cruise at 50 and ran up to near 60 with plenty in hand but its still running in so didn't let it stay there too long. Pulling up hills was good and it wasn't wind assistance nor an optimistic speedo because it performed the same in both directions. Friend Terry followed me home and rang later to say how well the bike had performed and confirmed that I had been cruising at 50-55 most of the time.

At Tilshead I met up with Ian Clarke who is a BMW expert and also has an R26. He is as puzzled as me over the lack of performance of my R26 though he admitted that his was not hugely better and 60 is probably about its top wack. Yet when he was in Germany a while ago he regularly saw R26's running at much higher speeds in some cases pulling sidecars which was why he decided to get one. The road test in 1956 suggested they were capable of 80mph. However, a C15 which develops the same 15bhp and is much lighter was not really good for much over 70 so one wonders if the testers were a bit optimistic. The one thing that seems better on mine is vibration which is certainly present but nearly as bad as other have described including Ian who says his vibrates from tickover to max revs without any sweet spot. Betty barber who is his regular passenger confirmed that she hates riding pillion on the R26. Now the handlebars are rubber mounted mine is fine at most of the speeds its capable of and is quite sweet at 50.

Having got over the sulks about the S8 and had a dialogue with the Sunbeam Forum, I have now ordered the bits to replace the blown head gasket. I opted for the solid copper rather than the composite type as these seem to be less troublesome by all accounts. As soon as the R26 is back together I will get the S8 on the bike lift and start stripping it down. Meanwhile I am avidly studying the Pitmans book of the S8 and the Sunbeam Owners Bedside Book to learn the intricacies of head gasket replacement. If it was an MZ it would be a 10 minute job, on the S8 it's likely to take a couple of days.

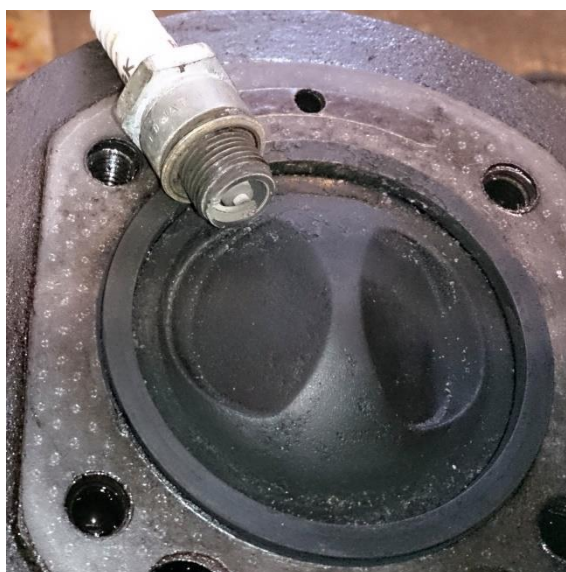
Wednesday 20th May 2015

Well the tale of woe for this week continues. I wanted to ride the S8 to our section lunch time meet at Tilshead tomorrow so decided it should be checked over first. As the last time it was very reluctant to start and in the end I drained the straight 50 and replaced it with 20/50 oil. This did the trick and after a few more kicks it did spring into life but sounded a bit ragged which I put down to the tickling I had been doing previously. I stopped and started it a few more time and all seemed well until suddenly it made that horrible farting noise you get from a blown head gasket. So that's another bike that needs major workshop attention. As I have already pondered in these pages, I am not wholly in love with the S8 and this may well be its swansong. Not sure whether to fix it and sell or just offer it for what I can get. For now I have done the sensible thing and pushed it to the back of the garage. Looks like I will be riding the Trail TS150 to Tilshead tomorrow. At least it started easily enough though the carb still floods until the engine is running – irritating as I have stripped the carb several times and found no obvious faults. The cut-off valve is clean and the float is not punctured. I will have to try the new BVF clone carb I bought a while back if it continues.

No response to my request for info on the R26 forum so it remains in pieces for the moment. The more I think about it the more I feel that the piston is correct and that it is the flange on top of the barrel which fits inside the head that creates the impression that the piston is sitting too low. If so then I still have no idea why the bike is so down on power compared with other R26's and even contemporary 250s like the C15 and the ES250. I guess I am just going to have to accept it the way it is.

Tuesday 19th May 2015

Sunday was the Cotswold Signpost Trial based at the AV8 café on Kemble Airfield. The concept is simple, identify on the OS map 12 places based on pictures of its roadsign. Then ride to each location and answer questions to prove you had actually visited the location. Great fun and some were quite difficult to locate this year as increasingly mileages are not shown on fingerboards. The R26 proved very reliable but its lack of performance was highlighted once again when it struggled to keep up with a BSA C15 ridden two up. Nevertheless we completed the course with time to spare and managed to come second overall and to win the PW Class. I filled up with petrol near home and clocked 127 miles on 6.7litres of petrol – 86mpg so at least its economical



As the R26 is not entered for another trial until August it is currently in bits trying to identify where the performance has gone. My latest theory is that it has the wrong piston based on the fact that the one fitted does not reach the top of the barrel by 3.2mm even at tdc. I am in dialogue with a BMW forum to check this out. Otherwise I can find nothing wrong, the piston and bore are perfect and it never smokes or uses any oil. The plug looks a bit grey and weak but that could be the ethanol in the petrol and the piston crown certainly does not seem to indicate a weak mixture. I have raised the needle to its highest setting to see what effect this may have. One thing I do need to sort out while the engine is partly stripped is one of the

pushrods which is badly worn and nearly out of adjustment.

Whilst waiting for a response to my R26 queries, and because heavy rain has stopped all outside work for the last two days, I decided to rebuild the 4 speed engine donated by Terry Dixon. I have never

really liked building these engines, they are more fiddly than the later 5 speed engines and need a lot of care to get everything right especially the gear selection. For once everything seemed to go ok and I had 4 selectable gears with everything spinning freely or so I thought. When I completed the primary drive side and did the final tighten of the screws gear selection became very problematic and there is a lot of friction in all the gears including neutral. Quite what has gone wrong I don't yet know and I didn't have time or enthusiasm to strip it down again. It's now under the bench awaiting another rainy day plus some inspiration on where to look for the cause.

not really a very good start to the week. However I now have a firm offer for the BK350 so that will create some space in the shed. Only slight snag is that I promised to deliver it on my way up to our Cumbria for our holiday. Now I am wondering if I can get 3 bikes into the van. Mike and I are going to try a test loading next week.

Friday 15th may 2015

First time I have been in the garage since Tuesday. As I had no luck in finding a replacement gearchange shaft for the ES250 motor I have been working on, I decided to have a go at repairing it by grafting on the end from a Supa5 shaft. These are quite different at the business end but identical in diameter and shape of splines at the gear lever end. In the end it turned out to be pretty straightforward. I cut off about 60mm from the ES250 shaft then drilled a 7.5mm hole about 30mm deep into the remaining part. I cut a 90mm piece off the Supa5 shaft and turned it down to just over 7.5mm for about 30mm so it slid inside the ES250 shaft. I tapered the ends then welded the two parts together. Not a pretty sight initially but when cleaned up in the lathe I think the results is quite acceptable. You can see state of the old splines.



While I was in workshop mode I decided to fully strip the crankcases so that I could properly examine the bearings and seals. I assume the engine has been apart before as the main bearings were of two different types. One which I imagine is an original had the plastic cage, the other had a metal cage but no obvious manufacturers name. I would guess this was a later replacement and funnily enough it was not in as good a condition as the DDR plastic cage one. The other surprise was the oil seals which were the 7mm rubber cased variety which I have seen in the TS250 4 spd engines. I was expecting to find the 10mm metal cased seals in this engine. I am consulting about this subject as it's something which has always puzzled me.



Tuesday 12th May 2015

We got the results of the Moonraker Trial today (or rather Mike did as my post is always a couple of days behind his for some reason). We (as in the West Wilts Section) seem to have done quite well. Nigel Halliday got an award which we think was for best newcomer, Bill got the Three Wheel award, Mike got the Post 75 award and I won the Post War Class (up to 1960). Mike and I also shared the Moonraker Cup as jointly being the highest overall scorers. Next weekend is the Cotswold Signpost Trial based at Kemble so more to do yet.

Today I finally decided I had to do something about the original front brake on the S8 which stemmed partly from a chat with Paul Frith on Saturday over machining brake linings. I measured the diameter of the brake drum (179mm) and the shoes in the back plate (176.5mm). This is quite a gap and may well have been ok if the linings had worn from new to this state. However, the shoes show every indication of being freshly relined and with that level of gap it's no wonder they only touch the drum at the centre. My feeling is that the drum has been skimmed at some time as the surface is very good – too good for a 60 year old bike. The shoes have linings 3.5mm thick, which is probably standard but for this drum they really need to be at least 4.5mm thick to have a reasonable chance of bedding in effectively. I have sent the shoes and my measurements in a covering letter to Villiers Services for them to be relined. I also asked for them to use the type of lining that can be machined in a lathe if they turn out to be too thick rather than the more popular (these days) woven type which most certainly cannot. Even master engineer Frith confirms this fact.

That's it on the motorcycling front; gardening is the current priority activity.

Sunday 10th May 2015

Not a lot to report on the motorcycling front which is why it's taken me a week to get round to updating this blogg. I changed the oil in the Ts250 gearbox and added some graphite powder which John Hill gave me a while back. I also checked over the motor and found the sparking plug was quite loose but nothing else wrong. Took it for a test ride and the gearbox did not seem to whine as much. Not really possible to tell if I have regained any power without having another bike to compare. On Tuesday I collected a 4spd ES250 motor from Terry, mainly because I wanted the timing side cover to make my Trophy look a bit more original (it had a supa5 cover previously). The 4spd motor is now in bits as I decided to give it an overhaul. It's obviously had a hard life and been apart at least once before. Whoever did it used hammer and chisel rather than the correct tools. In fact the crankshaft, bearings and main gear cluster all seem fine. The clutch looks to have been incorrectly assembled, the large primary drive gear is missing a tooth and the detent ball bearing was too small and had jammed itself inside the hollow retaining bolt. Major issue is the stripped splines on the gear change shaft. Still researching a replacement for this. Not an urgent job so with luck all the necessary bits will become available in time.

I had one of my regular reviews of the stable this week and decided that the BK350 was never going to get finished or used. Put an advert on the Club website and had a couple of enquiries one of which was from Paul Frith who lives in Frome. He came to look at the bike and turned up on my old 1981 ETZ250 that I used on the E2E in 2009. I sold it to a chap in Warminster who sold it to Paul about 4 years ago. Paul is very meticulous and a stickler for originality and the bike looks a treat. He did compliment me on the engine which he has never had to touch – praise indeed. We got chatting about MZs in general and it turns out that he had performance issues with the ETZ initially and found that it was running with a TS250 silencer. When he fitted a genuine ETZ silencer it restored the lost performance. He also told me about a bike which Richard Difazio had built using a 300cc conversion to the TS250 engine. It also would not perform properly until Paul gave him the TS250 silencer he had removed from his ETZ. Instant transformation. Given my experience with the Trail TS150. The moral is don't tinker with MZ exhausts unless you are an expert; the factory knew what they were doing.

Today was the Moonraker Scatter navigation trial and Mike, and I rode round together, he on his TS250 and me on the R26. We had a good run with 3 green lanes two of which I had not done before. The R26 ran well and is nice to ride but it was completely outclassed in the performance stakes by the MZ.

Sunday 3rd May 2015

Well the Ramsbury Run is now over for another year and it lived up to its reputation as a serious rain making event. We had only 5 bikes at the start plus Ian Young in a car after his TS150 refused to start. Ian went direct and the rest of us set off in heavy drizzle which fortunately stopped after about 20 minutes. We picked up another rider in Sandy Lane and stayed pretty much dry until we reached the Crown and Anchor. There were four others waiting (all in cars) so we had 11 in total. While we were eating there were a couple of very heavy storms and though it was dry when we started the return trip we soon ran into a really heavy downpour such that we sheltered under the bridge at Ogbourne St George for 20 minutes or so. This gave Mike a chance to change the plug on his Supa5 and dry out the electrics after which it went a lot better. At least until he ran into another even heavier storm after he had split off to make his own way back to Neston. This time the rubber cover on the coil was full of water and shorting out the electrics but he did manage to dry it out and get home under his own steam. Not the best of days but they say what does not kill you makes you stronger.

My Supa5 was not entirely trouble free either. The gearbox was whining like a banshee at times in most of the gears though above 50 in top it shut up. I don't remember it being this bad the last time I rode it. However, it was last August so I could have forgotten and anyway I was in a lot of pain having hurt my leg pushing Ian's TS150. At one stage I was convinced I had forgotten to put oil in the box but when I checked after the run it was well up to the mark. I also suffered a loss of battery power when we started off after lunch. Not a major problem as the bike has the Powerdynamo kit and runs quite happily without a battery though the indicators refuse to function properly. When I got home and checked the actual battery it was fine and jiggling the fuses restored power. However, the earth fuse was very intermittent so I have bypassed it completely for now. The bike is still using the original MZ exposed fuse box and it's high time I converted it to blade fuses. It also seems to be down on power compared to all three of the Supa5's on the run. On the flat it's fine but uphill it seems to run out of puff more quickly and needs 4th gear much earlier than the others. This needs investigating as I plan to use the bike on our club holiday in June. Perhaps it's just because I am a fat git.

Saturday 2nd May 2015

Earlier in the week I had been in communication with Nigel Percy who had given me more info on his Puch 250SGS. The engine number dates it to 1959 which is great, but the VIN plate is missing and he could find no evidence of any numbers stamped on the frame. Enquiries on the internet forum I joined and with the VMCC Puch marque specialist Jim Lee suggested that Puch did not in fact stamp numbers – relying instead on the VIN plate. This could present a problem in getting a dating certificate and Jim suggested I send him some pictures so that he could advise the likely age/era of the frame. As Nigel does not have a digital camera or a computer I drove down today to have a look at the bits and take some photos. What was there seems to be in scruffy but sound condition.



Mileage is unknown as the headlamp and speedo are missing but both sets of brake linings are worn almost to the rivets so it is likely quite high. I have now sent a selection of the picture to Jim Lee and await his verdict. The obvious missing bits include headlight & speedo, both toolbox covers, the mudguard tail piece and rear light (and of course

the regn plate), all of the electrics including the dynamo, the rh engine cover, all of the handlebars controls and cables and the air cleaner torpedo. There is a box of smaller parts but until an assembly is



attempted its impossible to say for sure that nothing else important is missing. The engine does turn but its internal condition is also unknown. As these parts came with another running bike which Nigel now uses, it's quite likely that it has donated all the best bits.

Given the list of items missing, the overall condition and the issues over the frame number I am not sure this is a project I am ready to take

on. I had a quick look on the internet and found no 250SGS parts for sale in the UK, there are some in the USA but many are for the later Sears Allstate version which has a number of differences in the cycle parts. There is a company called RBO in Austria which has been recommended by several people and I did use them to get parts for the Puch M125's I was restored some while ago.

Friday 1st May 2015

We were very lucky with the weather over the previous weekend for the Twin Dragon and had very little rain where we were at any given time. Plenty of evidence that it had rained hard not long before we arrived and often looking in the mirror there were ominous looking dark clouds but a few brief showers apart we seemed to ride in our own bubble of dry weather. The cold was something else though and I wished I had not removed the third lining from my jacket. Dave provided some excellent routes once again, a mixture of old favourites and one or two unclassified roads I had not done before. The Revere went very well and returned over 70mpg for the weekend – very satisfactory.

During the previous week I had heard about a Serow being for sale close by and the owner was on the Twin Dragon so I had arranged to look at it when we got home. I was a bit disappointed therefore to find that he had changed his mind, for now at least, because of a problem with one of his other bikes. He had recently bought a Honda CB450 (not a black bomber but a later derivative of the 400 superdream) which had gone well on a recent VMCC run. He had intended to ride it on the Twin Dragon but it had misfired and generally run badly on his way to our rendezvous so he returned home and picked up one of his other bikes. He thought he had fixed the problem by fitting new plugs so we went out for a test ride with me on the Sunbeam S8. Within 5 miles the misfiring was back so we returned to his house for him to try some more fettling and I rode over to Corsham for a natter with my friend Mike. I still have first refusal on the Serow which looked very tidy in the brief viewing I had and better still is 1990 so VMCC eligible. A light economical electric start bike will be a welcome addition to the garage should he eventually decide to sell it.

The S8 seems to have developed a problem with the carburetion just off tickover and hiccups slightly when picking up. More an irritant than a serious fault and I played around with tickover adjustments to see if that helps. There is still a slight leak from the final drive oil seal which I intend to live with for now. In fact I am not sure I really want to keep the S8 long term as I don't find the riding position very comfortable, the ride is quite hard. It's at its best on good main roads when 50-60 is effortless and smooth. On bad roads and country lanes it's a bit of a handful and the trouble is that I do most of my riding on the latter. I am currently pondering but I think it may well be on the market soon.

Whilst putting the Revere and the S8 I unwrapped the ES250 and the Blue supa5 from their winter hibernation. Both had been sprayed with ACF50 and had survived the with very little corrosion but it took a while to clean of the fluid and the dirt which had stuck too it. After a checkover I found only the tyres and battery on the Supa5 needed attention – the latter because I had left the ignition switch on and flattened it. Fortunately I was able to get it charged up again and avoided the need to buy a replacement. Both bikes have been topped up with petrol and I have yet to decide which to ride on Sunday for the Ramsbury Run.

This evening I pulled Rob's 'new' piston from the soaking tank. Two of the rings had freed of nicely, the top ring was still tight but I did manage to get it of albeit in two pieces. This was not a problem as I had intended to fit a new one anyway and the broken piece is useful to clean out the grooves in the piston. The old piston was removed and put to one side. For some reason the gudgeon pin and small end bearing were very tight. No obvious signs of damage but I found a good used pair in my spares stock and these fitted perfectly in the small end. The rings were re-fitted to the cleaned up piston and it is now back in the engine. Final assembly will wait until Rob comes as he wants to be involved in the rebuild.

Friday 24th April 2015

The parcel from Germany arrived yesterday so I have now fitted the trail TS150 with a complete new standard exhaust system as shown below. I took it for a quick test ride and it pulled an easy 50mph up the test hill so performance wise it is now up to scratch. At some stage with the help of my friend Mick



the welder, we are going to try and build a new hi-level exhaust system which does not lose such a large amount (hopefully none). Also in the parcel was a set of the correct piston rings for the spare engine so this has now been completed and put back under the bench in case of need.

Yesterday I went to Brislington and picked up a TS250 barrel & piston from Phil Hutchings for Rob Wells engine. They seem to be a matched set and are in good usable condition apart from a good clean and freeing up the top ring which is stuck. The piston is soaking in diesel for now and I have found a new spare ring so it is not too critical if it frees off or not. I hope to finish the rebuild some time next week.

During the week I also gave the R26 some attention and the exhaust pipe is now properly secured and has a thick copper/asbestos gasket to help seal the joint. It is now amazingly quiet so I suspect that there has been a leak at this point for some time. I also firmed up the side stand by welding a thick fillet on the flange so that it no longer rotates on the mounting bolt. Clearly it had been wearing for some time as now that the prop stand is in its correct position, it's too long and I will need to trim down the spacer I added a while back.

Tomorrow we are off to Dolgellau in North Wales for the annual Twin Dragon Run so today has mostly been spent packing my gear and loading up the bike, checking the tyre pressures and oil etc. I wish the forecast was more promising.

Monday 20th April 2015

Our weekend in Cheddar went very well. We stayed at the Bridge camping site which is right next door to the football club which was the base for the weekends activities. On the Saturday there was a 90 mile social run over a great route which showed what a diverse county Somerset is. We rode over the levels, the Mendips, the Quantocks, Exmoor and along the coast. Lunch was at Willerton near Minehead. The R26 went very well and used 5 litres of petrol to cover the 100 miles (we got lost a couple of times). I rode in company with Nigel Percy who was on his ES250 Trophy with his wife on the pillion. Most of the time the MZ had the legs on the R26 especially on initial acceleration but they were well enough matched overall. There was a buffet meal in the clubhouse on Saturday evening and thankfully my wife made friends with some other wives and had a good time so perhaps we will be able to do this again.

On the Sunday it was the Cheddar Trial. Mike D. rode down on his Supa5 and we did the event together. Another lovely route of about 65 miles mostly around the Mendips this time using a few roads I don't ever remember riding before. The competitive elements were run on private ground and included a slalom course and slow speed riding test. There were also the inevitable questions and strangely enough I did rather better with these than the riding tests – the bike seemed to be a real handful. Part of the reason for my riding test difficulties became obvious just after when Mike pulled me over to say that my sidestand was hanging down. This is retained by the bottom engine mounting bolt which had slackened off. My own fault for replacing the rusty but effective spring washer with a shiny plain s/s item; easily fixed anyway. Then about 12 miles from the finish I noticed that the bike was getting steadily noisier. Not surprising really as the exhaust collar had come unscrewed and the pipe had fallen out of the head. We let the engine cool for a bit and managed to get the collar screwed back on but it was obvious that a copper/asbestos gasket was needed to seal the joint properly. The original gasket was nowhere to be found so I carried on anyway only for the collar to come unscrewed within another mile or so. Funnily enough the noise was not that horrendous so I rode the bike the rest of the way with effectively an open exhaust. It was easily fixed when I got home but clearly I need to add a peg spanner to the toolkit and make regular checks on the nuts/bolts on the bike. In other respects it survived the weekend very well but it had to be ridden hard to keep up with the Supa5 and this clearly generated a lot of vibration. Anyway it can have a rest for 3 weeks as the next event is not until 10th May. Nigel was riding his Puch 250SGS on the Sunday and it reminded me that this was another bike I had always fancied. It turns out that Nigel has 80% of a second SGS which he wants to sell so I may well be paying him a visit soon. First though I need to do some research on the model to make sure I know what I am letting myself in for. They don't come up very often so I may just have to buy it as a long term project.

I checked the S8 rear drive when I got back and some oil had come out of the level plug so it clearly has been overfilled. I plan to do another test ride tomorrow but first I need to thoroughly clean the rear drive area so that any further leak is easy to spot. Just had an email from Phil Hutchings to confirm that I can visit on Thursday look at his TS250 barrels.

Thursday 16th April 2015

I have done a couple more 20+ miles journeys on the S8 and overall it is going fine and cruises very smoothly at 50-55mph. The oil leak from the rear drive seemed to get worse and there was quite a lot on the wheel rim and on the rear tyre after the trip on Wednesday. I have been studying the spares book and the Sunbeam Bedside book which is the bible for S7/S8 owners. The initial diagnosis was a failed oil seal where the drive shaft enters the worm drive housing. I cleaned off the worst of the oil deposits before going for a 25 miles ride and to my surprise the scale of the oil leak today was much less. Being an old Brit bike my first assumption was that all the oil had now leaked out but removing the level plug established there was plenty present – possibly too much. I have left the level plug out and a drip tray underneath to see just how much comes out over the next couple of days.

Phil Hutchings has come up trumps with a choice of barrels/piston for Rob's engine and hopefully I will get to Brislington next week to choose one. I have also placed an order on OST2RAD for a range of MZ bits for various people which includes a complete standard exhaust system for the Trail TS150. The £-Euro exchange rate is high at present making bits from Germany very cheap. I talked to my friend Mick the welder at the pub on Wednesday night about the problems with my hi-level exhaust and he has volunteered to lengthen the exhaust pipe so that I can experiment to see if its performance can be improved. Would be great if it can be sorted.

Tomorrow we are driving the motorhome to Cheddar for the weekend towing the R26 on a trailer I borrowed from Terry D today. The event includes a social run on the Saturday and the Cheddar Trial on the Sunday. The latter is a qualifying event in the Western Region championship. I won my class on the AJS last year but the postwar class we are now entered in will be a much tougher prospect with some very good competitors. Just hope the weather stays reasonable.

Monday 13th April 2015

Very little to report for last week due to a visit by my son and his family when it was made plain that my presence was required in the house, not in the garage or out on a bike. Anyway, the workshop was taken over by a project to repaint my granddaughter's bike pink. I must say Richard made a very good job of it, pity he does not live closer as I would happily let him paint my bikes. Anyway they returned home on Saturday evening which meant I was free to go to Ham for the Bristol MZRC section meeting. I took the van so that I could return Ian Young's TS150. This was a good move as it turned out. Ray Cattle kindly donated a top box full of assorted MZ bits plus some other odds and ends which I am still gleefully sorting through. Roger Badland kindly brought a tidy pair of knee grips for the ETS150 tank on the trail bike and Rob Wells brought an engine which needs some attention – more on this later.

Today was quite warm and sunny and not nearly as windy so I finally took the S8 out for a decent ride. Must say I was really pleased with the way it went and better still there was very little sign of any oil leaking from the engine. Most of what was present was from the previous problems; especially the missing oil seal in the distributor. It looks as though my efforts over the winter have paid off. The engine felt smooth once above 30mph in top and the oil pressure light only came on at tickover occasionally when it was really hot. I plan to take it on a VMCC run on Thursday to give it a longer test. The only signs of an oil leak were on the rear wheel rim under the final drive unit. I will need to check this out but it seems to be only a trickle but being very thick it sticks like glue and attracts dirt like a magnet.

The R26 was also pulled out of the rear garage and given a good clean to remove the rest of the Cotswold mud. It now looks much better and is ready for the Cheddar Trial this coming weekend. I plan to borrow a bike trailer for the R26 from Terry D and tow this behind the motorhome as we intend to

stay the weekend in Cheddar. If this proves successful I am hoping that Mrs F will be persuaded to come on some other weekend events during the summer.

Looking at Rob Wells engine it is easy to see why it stopped rather suddenly and with no prior warning. One of the circlips holding the gudgeon pin had come out of its groove and got chopped in half in a transfer port. It then travelled through the hollow gudgeon pin and got trapped between piston and barrel. Before finally seizing the engine it scraped a deep groove down the barrel and bits got into the combustion chamber where they pitted the cylinder head. Quite a mess but in fact it's only the piston which is scrap, the barrel can be rebored and the head will clean up fine. The hunt is now on within the section to find a 2nd hand barrel and piston failing which it will have to be a rebore and new piston.

Wednesday 8th April 2015

Rode Ian's bike to Melksham and back for its MoT (which it passed thankfully) and it went like a rocket. Not desperately fast, I kept it around 55mph in deference to it not being my bike but it pulled hard from 3000 revs and even at 55 had plenty in hand regardless of road gradient. When I got home and had let Ian's bike cool down, I borrowed his silencer and fitted it to the trail TS150 together with a standard exhaust pipe. Instant return of performance at least as good as Ian's bike and up my test hill it ran up to 55 easily and would have gone faster but I got balked by traffic. So good news and bad news. Clearly the combination of my lovely hi-level s/s exhaust pipe (did I mention it cost a bomb) and the modifications made to the silencer have combined to rob the bike of its standard performance.

I made up an adapter and fitted the modified silencer to the standard MZ exhaust pipe and gave this combination a test ride. It was not as good as a totally standard system but much better than the full hi-level system. It would reach 50mph up the test hill but not much in reserve. So the diagnosis of an exhaust problem was correct, I almost wish it had not been as right now I don't know what to do. Go for the bling and keep the hi-level system or accept the low level but higher performing exhaust. Written suggestions gratefully accepted on something containing the Queen's head.

Tuesday 7th April 2015

This morning there was a strong smell of petrol when I opened the garage door and I found that the TS150 carb had been leaking despite the fact that the petrol was turned off. I checked the tap and found it needed the plate which holds the seal in position tightening a little. Since the carb had to come off (again) I decided to have another try with the replacement 24mm TS150 carb which I bought from Germany. When I tried to fit it to the R26 I found a couple of manufacturing faults which I had since rectified. It went on ok this time and everything connected up properly and my initial impression was good as it started immediately but with too fast a tickover. I adjusted this but then found that if the throttle was blipped. The revs were reluctant to drop back to a steady tickover – usually symptoms of an air leak. In the end I reached an acceptable compromise and took the bike for a test spin round the block. It was quite lumpy at low speeds and throttle openings but seemed to pick up and rev ok.

However up my test hill the bike just lacked power and needed 3rd gear to maintain 40mph towards the top. It also seemed to pick up as the throttle was closed – symptoms of too weak a mixture normally. I removed the slide and put the needle in its richest position. This did not help over much in terms of top end pulling but it was clearly now far too rich at the bottom end refusing to pick up cleanly and needing constant revving to prevent the motor dying. I then tried dropping the needle to the weakest position which immediately improved bottom end response but it was still well down on power at the top end.

In the end I refitted the original carb and took it for another test ride. General riding was much better than with the new carb and it had more power up the test hill but still seemed to me gutless compared to my previous TS150. Anyway I had booked an MoT for Ian's TS150 for Wednesday and decided I should give it a further checkover. Just as well as the tyres were both low and the indicators did not want to oblige. The latter just needed cleaning inside the lap housing as the contacts are prone to corrosion. One sorted I took Ian's bike round my test route. What a revelation; this bike really flies and was pulling strongly at over 50 up my test hill so now I have positive proof that something is not right with my trail bike.

Just to make sure it was not the ignition side, I marked up the Powerdynamo flywheel and the crankcase with some paint showing tdc and 2.7mm bt dc. With a strobe connected the timing proved to be spot on at 2.7mm bt dc so that was not the problem. I am now wondering if the problem is with my lovely new exhaust system. Possibly the silencer is blocked or the new hi-level pipe is altering the power characteristics? Something I will investigate tomorrow.

Sunday 5th April 2015

On Saturday Ian Young came down with his TS150 on the trailer. It needs a couple of minor adjustments and an MoT which I will get done locally for him. His nearest MoT man is temporarily out of business since VOSA have insisted that he install a rolling road brake tester for bikes. Since he does comparatively few bikes he is trying to source a 2nd hand brake tester which could take a while. The rear brake adjustment was all I could find wrong and this has now been done so I will book it in for a test next week if I can fit it round the family visit which is planned.

My current screen saver is the TS150 trail bike and looking at it yesterday, it occurred to me that pukka ISDT MZs have external front brake levers. It so happens that I had the necessary bits in the shed so I spent the morning making this transformation. To make it look really authentic it should have a ½ round lug which fits round the fork leg as a torque arm instead of the strap currently used. However that is a bit more complex than I felt like tackling today. The actual brake plate is one that came from Dennis Poulter and he had ground off the location lug for the original internal brake arm; presumably for cosmetic reasons. Unfortunately, this left a slot in the plate which could be a weak point so I made up a bracing piece for now. This is screwed and tapped in place and ideally I would like to get it welded up but it should be ok for now.



Friday 3rd April 2015 (Good Friday)

Yesterday we had a wet ride into the Mendips going by a somewhat convoluted route to Cheddar. Wells was a nono as it was Maundy Thursday and the Cathedral had a service so no chance of a tour. Maybe something we can try again later in the year with some better planning. Anyway our leader found an excellent small hotel for a coffee stop and we had another lazy stop at the Cheddar Garden centre. I took the Revere in the end because it was already dirty from the night trial and had just

enough petrol left to do the trip; this was significant as will be revealed and not just a matter of economics.

When we got back I removed the sump plug, the oil comes out like water when hot, and left it overnight to drain. Today I completed the oil change, replaced the bevel box oil and checked the plugs, tappets and air cleaner. To do this you have to remove the tank which was why I wanted it near empty. The plugs looked fine as did the air filter and the tappets were all within spec so it was a bit of a non-event really but had to be done for piece of mind. However, I did notice during the service that the near side footrest was partly broken. This is the new one I fitted after my spill during the 2014 Westward Ho and I am a bit puzzled as to why one leg had snapped off. Anyway it is now repaired pending buying a further replacement. I suspect if I had tried standing on the footrests, it would have broken off completely – that would have been interesting! The only real excitement was an almost total lack of electrics when I put the bike back together. I checked the battery and all the fuses to no avail. Had a cup of tea and thought about it and the only thing which occurred was that part of the cable loom was clipped to the air cleaner box and had to be moved aside to get it off. Sure enough with the tank off (again) I found that there was a connector block which had been disturbed when I unclipped the loom. In fact there were two as I discovered when only half the electrics came back to life to start with. Perhaps not a bad thing in some ways as the connections were a bit dry and beginning to corrode so I gave them a squirt of ACF50 and at least I now know about this in case of future problems.

Wednesday 1st April 2015

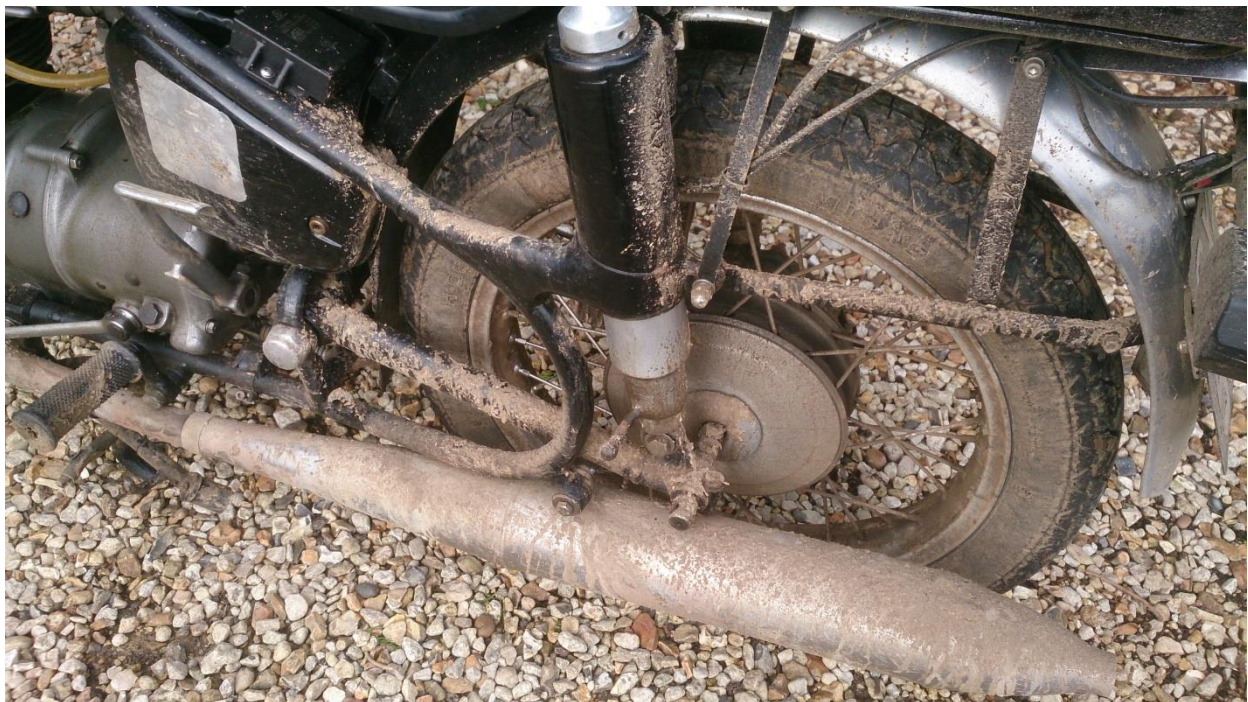
Just realised it's April Fool's Day though there is no intentional joke in today's scribble. Yesterday I took the Trail TS150 on a shopping trip and decided I would extend the ride and visit my buddy Mike in Neston; a 20 mile round trip. The bike went well with no hiccups and is a joy to ride. With the standard road sprocket however it did not like combinations of gale force head winds and hills so it spent a lot of time in 2nd gear on the narrow country lanes. On the open road it seems quite happy to maintain 40-50 even into wind so I may well ride it to Wells on Thursday. However, it has raised the question of whether it is possible to get a bit more power out of the 150 motor. I found a website in Germany that provides tuning kits for the ETZ150 engines; up to 17bhp being mentioned, they also sell a 60mm piston which gives a capacity of 160cc but the ETZ piston would not work in a TS motor due to the higher crown above the gudgeon pin. The largest TS150 piston I could find was 58mm which would give a capacity of 154cc (standard is 143cc). In fact measuring the crankcase throat and the cylinder liner, I reckon 60mm would be the absolute limit and even then the liner would be paper thin. Though there is quite a lot of information out there about tuning the 250 motors, particularly the ETZ variants, I have yet to find anything about tuning the 125/150s. Perhaps I may have to revisit the option of fitting an ETZ motor into the TS frame.

Today I decided it was high time I got the S8 out for a run as there is little chance of any salt remaining on the roads and the wind is keeping them dry. Though I did nothing special to prep it for its hibernation, apart from some dust and suchlike it came out of the shed looking pretty good. The 50 grade oil I filled it with last autumn was like treacle and getting it to run initially was hard work. It would cough once but not catch. Eventually it coughed twice, then three times and finally after a few more kicks it staggered into life. I left it to warm up for a while then shut it down. From thereon it started first kick just like always. I adjusted the front snubbers which I replaced but could not get access to set when it was in the shed. I checked the tyres (both well up) but could not find anything else that needed doing so I took it for a test ride round the block. It went like a dream and I am now sorely tempted to ride it to Wells tomorrow if the weather remains dry. On my return I found the horn was not working (again!). In

fact it was the replacement Chinese horn which I had piggybacked onto the Altette when that refused to work that had failed. It would work if you tapped it but not otherwise. Playing around with the adjuster screw on the back improved things but I decided it was time to sort out the Altette horn once and for all. Last time I investigated the horn would work fine on the bench but refused to oblige when bolted to the frame. From previous experience of horns, I know they can be very sensitive to the tightness of the bolts holding the front surround. I found that by slackening all the bolts the horn would indeed work properly. It was a bit of a palaver to get the right combination of slackness to allow the horn to work and tightness to make sure nothing fell off but I managed it in the end and used Loctite on the threads to be sure.

Monday 30th March 2015

Yesterday was the Felix Burke Scatter Navigation Trial based at Andoversford in the Cotswolds. I drove the R26 up in the van as I was not wholly confident about its reliability given the recent carburettor problems. However, I need not have worried as it started easily most times and did not miss a beat over 60 odd miles which included a ford at Kinton and about 10 miles of green lanes. Some of these were quite bad with deep ruts and very slippery mud. You can see the state of the bike below and this was after riding through as many puddles and fords as we could find to get rid of the worst mud. At times the R26 flew going better than I can ever remember at other times when wind and gradient were against us it spent a lot of time flat out in second gear. Nevertheless it got me round and I enjoyed the day, the bike still sounded like a sewing machine despite the rough treatment.



I washed it last night but it still looked pretty dirty this morning so it has been given a further clean up ready for the Cheddar Trial in a couple of weeks. The TS150 trail bike was also given a clean as it got pretty dirty on the recent ride up to the Salutation. Now that the exhaust is settled, I removed the temporary rear brackets, de-rusted and painted them to look a bit smarter. I also touched up some rust spots on the lower frame which had been hidden by the first generation hi-level pipe. While it was on the bike lift I also fitted the gearbox sprocket the correct way round. According to the Haynes manual the dished section faces inwards so I hope they are right. I think they probably are as I was not happy

with the alignment when I fitted the new chain and 16t sprocket last week. We have the first of our VMCC midweek runs on Thursday to Wells so this seems like an ideal chance to put some more running-in miles on the clock.

Saturday 28th March 2015

On Friday night Mike and I rode to Andover for the start of the Westward Ho Night Trial at the Wehill Fair. Bit of an eventful trip as Mike's Triumph Trophy started running like a dog and eventually expired with an enormous backfire complete with flames from both pipes after about 25 miles. The people outside the house where this happened were no doubt not impressed but they were either too scared or too polite to investigate or criticise. The only thing we could find wrong was a blown fuse and when this was replaced the bike started up ok. Initially we decided to head for home to be on the safe side. Mike stopped again after a few miles and said it was now running fine so we turned round and rode to Weyhill getting there around 10pm. With hindsight we think the problem was two-fold, a lower than specified fuse (15amp when it was supposed to be 25amp) and a dodgy dipswitch which held dip and main beam on at the same time. Anyway we rode most of the first section of the Ho and then home with no further trouble. The ride itself was not pleasant as it started to drizzle just before we started the route and developed into thick fog by Shaftesbury; I was quite glad we were able to turn for home.



On Saturday I played around with the exhaust system on the Trail TS150 and modified another silencer with a larger bore end to fit the new exhaust pipe. This was then welded up and I now have a fully gas tight exhaust system which is much more robust and professional looking. It also gave me a chance to try out the automatic dimming helmet I bought at the Bristol Show. What a revelation being able to see where the welding rod was before striking the arc. For years it has been pure guesswork and correct by luck rather than judgement. I also tried the knee grips from my ES250 Trophy and as Roger Badland predicted they were a perfect fit so I have left them on for now. Roger has a spare set which I will put on the ES250 in due course.

Tuesday 24th March 2015

I had another play with the R26 on Monday. Raising the needle would have been the obvious thing to do but due to the proximity of the carb to the tank this involves a fair bit of effort. I decided to cheat and change the main jet instead as this can easily be done with the carb in situ. I replaced the new (and correct according to the manual) 120 main jet with the 125 jet fitted when John Hill first got the bike. My logic was that not only would it give a richer mixture above $\frac{3}{4}$ throttle, but being obviously worn, it should be richer across the lower throttle openings as well; much as though I had raised the needle. Anyway it seems to have worked as the flat spot was not evident on my test ride. The bike as a whole still feels sluggish but no worse than it has always been. So the R26 will now be used for the Felix Burke trial on Sunday.

As a backup, I gave the ES250 Trophy a once over and took it for a test ride over the same route. Even though this bike is quite heavy for an MZ, probably much the same weight as the R26 it felt totally different. Acceleration was much better and it pulled the higher gears more effortlessly. Vibration is also much less. The only areas where R26 scores are in steering and brakes. Nothing wrong with either on the MZ but the R26 is somehow better. I guess if I was honest, the BMW looks better as well. However, somewhat reluctantly I put the Trophy away and got the Revere out for some attention.

Main job was to fit the route card holder and to rig up some LED torches to illuminate it ready for the Westward Ho Night Trial on Friday. I have not actually entered but Mike and I are going to the start and plan to ride part of the first section from Andover to Shaftesbury. We will head for home after descending Zig-Zag hill, the competitors continue to Blandford for the first compulsory stop. This of course assumes that the weather is reasonable – we have agreed that if its persisting down we will give it a miss (wimps).

That's it for workshop time, most of my efforts this week have been at a desk working on routes for the night trial and the F-B.

Sunday 22nd March 2015

This has been a very busy week but sadly not much of it motorcycling related hence a delay in writing up the blog. The parcel from Steve Edwards arrived on Wednesday and contained the ETS150 tank, the TS150 crankshaft and a TS150 barrel which I was not expecting but will doubtless come in useful at some time. The only slightly disappointing thing was the tank rubbers which were part of the deal but turned out to be not for this tank, indeed I don't think they are even MZ. There is also a dent at the front left side low down which I had not noticed in the pictures but this can be filled and painted in due course. As the trail bike was still with the exhaust people I made a start by rebuilding the TS150 engine and this is now virtually complete. The barrel and piston still need to be fitted but this is stalled for now whilst I sort out a correct set of rings. The ones I bought from Germany have a chamfer of the type suitable for a half peg whereas the piston has full pegs. As it's just a spare engine there is no urgency to sort this out, the main thing is that it's now substantially a complete engine rather than a box of bits under the bench. I did have one fright when one of the special caps which hold the clutch spring peg went ping. I searched the garage hi and low in the area where I was convinced I had heard it land with no success. Then a bit later I found it on the floor at the other end of the garage – my lucky day as normally the black hole in my garage does not give anything back.

On Thursday morning I had a phone call from Infinity Exhausts querying the design of the new pipe. As luck would have it, I was due to go right past their door later in the morning. Five minutes with the technician and the design was sorted and I was on my way to the Wishing Well at Codrington just down the road. Getting to Codrington was not however without its problems. My plan was to ride the R26 to make sure it was ok for the Felix Burke trial next weekend. It started ok but coughed and spluttered as I left the drive and expired totally within 50 yards. I pushed it back home and got the MZ Combo out instead and this I am pleased to say went really well.



On Friday morning Infinity rang to say the Trail bike was ready so I collected it that afternoon in the van. During Friday evening I fitted the ETS150 tank and a different single seat made from a cut down TS150 dual seat. The sporty little single seat I had initially used looked ok but was woefully thin on padding as I found when I rode to Ham a couple of weeks ago. Fitting the tank was a bit of a fiddle as it uses different mountings at the front compared to the correct TS150 tank and the rear fixing is also slightly different. However the job is now done and the result shown above. It's a pity about the missing tank rubbers but even so I think the bike looks much better with this style of tank and consider the effort and cost well worthwhile. I took it out for a test ride on Sunday afternoon and everything seems to work fine. Hopefully it will get its first green lane trip shortly.

On Sunday I finally got over my sulk with the R26 and started investigating. It had been running ok (if somewhat gutless) until I played around with the carb during the fruitless attempt to fit an MZ carb (see Friday 13th March). During this session I had refitted its original slide and the correct 120 main jet both intended to reduce the rich running indicated by the state of the plug. I had also played around with the pilot settings to improve the starting. At the time I thought I had been successful but had not actually given it a road test until Thursday. Obviously the most likely cause of the problem was something connected with those recent changes. Just in case I swapped the plug for a new one but this made no difference, it would start and tick over but just spluttered and spat back if the throttle was opened. I stripped the carb and replaced the slide with the one previously fitted. This has a smaller cutaway which should richen the mixture at the $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ throttle setting. I retained the same main jet and needle which was also on the same notch. No alteration was made to the pilot settings so the only thing changed was the slide. On the road the bike now performed much better and I was able to ride it

round my test route ok. It still seems sluggish when cold and I found that it also had a flat spot such that it would often pull better if you partially closed the throttle and then opened it more slowly. I had a very similar experience with the ISDT bike in the early days and this was improved by raising the needle and later further improved by fitting a larger main jet. Tomorrow I will try adjusting the needle and see if that is enough; otherwise the 125 main jet I removed last week will have to be replaced!

Monday 16th March 2015

I managed to get the hydraulic system to bleed on Saturday after a struggle and now have a working master cylinder/caliper set which can be used on the combination should I decide to go down that route. It will also enable me to experiment with the Mark Dicker L/Link forks I have mentioned previously. I did try to get another master cylinder/caliper set to work but gave it up in the end. The master cylinder was a something Japanese with a rectangular fluid bowl and is I think the one that caused John grief in the first instance. Anyway I have put all the bits back in a box for now – maybe I will have another go when the mood or necessity arises.

The only other development has been on the ETS150 petrol tank front. Steve Edwards finally sent me some pictures of his spare tank (which is yellow very conveniently). Looks to be in quite good condition so we concluded a deal which included a rebuilt TS150 crankshaft. The cheque is now on its way and hopefully in a week or so the bits will arrive.

Friday 13th March 2015

Being very superstitious I try not to do anything new or radical on Friday 13th so perhaps rebuilding the spare Supa5 engine was bit risky. However, all seemed to go quite well which was a bit of a surprise as John Matthews was with me most of the day and working on a rebuild whilst talking is never a good idea. Fortunately there were no spare bits left in the box at the end. Jumping back to Monday, I did fit the Powerdynamo kit to the TS150 and set it up for batteryless operation. This all worked fine so I decided to have a go at fitting the new ETZ150 carb I bought from Germany a while back. This turned out to be a bad decision and I have discovered why these carbs are so cheap – they are just poorly made so anyone reading this be warned and think twice about buying one.

First problem was getting the cable into the slide. The slot was not wide enough and had to file it out before I could get it to fit. Not difficult but annoying. Next issue was more serious; the starter jet slide was absolutely solid in the carb body. With heat and oil I could just about get it to spin round but no way I could get it out to fit the choke cable. In the end I abandoned the attempt and refitted the original carb after giving it yet another clean and service. Later I did manage to get it out by drilling and tapping the cold start slide and using a nut & bolt to draw it out. The slide itself was simply too large for the hole as a genuine BVF cold start slide fitted perfectly. Maybe I will have another go some time.

On Tuesday I had a response from the Infinity Exhaust people at Codrington so took the TS150 over to them on Wednesday. I took with me a photoshop pictures of how I wanted the exhaust pipe to look based on an ISDT version of the TS150 I found on the internet. The quote was a bit eye watering but I left the bike with them to get on with the job. On Thursday I took two Supa5 cranks to Bristol and had both rebuilt with new con-rod kits at Piston Broke. One is now in stock as a spare the other was used to rebuild the spare Supa5 engine which had been sitting around in bits for several months. I did it now in case the combo engine does turn out to need attention to the seals. It will be easier to simply swap engines than try to rush a rebuild.

John visited partly because he needed some help with the carb on his ETZ251 and partly to drop off a brake master cylinder and caliper which I had loaned him to get one of his bikes back on the road about a year ago. In the end he fixed the problem without using my bits and they are more useful in my garage than Johns which is like a Black Hole when it comes to losing things. After John had left I made a start on servicing the caliper for which I fortunately had a set of seals. That bit went quite well but when I connected up the master cylinder I could not get the system to bleed. As it was nigh on evening dog walking time I have left it until another day. Hydraulics never were my strong point.