

Daily (sometimes) Blogg – Part 7

Saturday 1st October 2016

Another week without a huge amount to report. Insurance has been the biggest issue this week after my renewal premium doubled from last year. Main reason was the inclusion of the Baghira which being only 12 years old effectively re-rated the whole policy. Took a number of phone calls and time on-line before I finally managed to get the cost down to a more sensible figure. It was my present broker who finally came up with the best solution after some armtwisting and threats to change broker. It's annoying that they could not be bothered to research the market better in the first place. The K75 is now taxed and I took it for its first ride today over to castle combe to watch the Classic Car racing. Awful weather and the bike is filthy but I just had to try it out. Went very well and will make a great touring bike. Only two observations so far: It seems a bit low geared but this makes it very flexible in top gear and the screen could usefully be a bit higher to avoid buffeting on my visor. Latter easily fixed.

This afternoon Bill came over with his van and we have loaded all three bikes ready for our Colombres trip. Bill is spending the night with us and we set off for Plymouth around 10:30 tomorrow. I did give the Velo one final test ride on Friday and it went fine so hopefully it will perform well in Spain. No more blog updates until 11th October as I am not taking the computer with me. I may have some news about the acquisition of a Skorpion when I get back.

Sunday 25th September 2016

Not a huge amount to report mostly fine tuning things on various bikes. I rode the Baghira to VMCC club night on Thursday and the gearchange is now fine so my fix worked. I also refilled the tank. It took 8.08l to cover 204kms which works out to 71.5mpg – happy with that. I had also noticed that the rear light was loose and found that one of the fixing bolts had snapped of the plastic housing. Some araldite and a new bolt seem to have fixed the problem along with a loose lens on one of the indicators. However, just in case I have made up a replacement rear light unit from an empty Lucas light unit fitted with leds – a batch of 7 for the rear light and 14 for the stop light. Tested it on the Baghira and it works fine but I will hold it in reserve for now – pity it's a Lucas shell rather than Miller as it would be useful on the MSS – see below.

I went to the VMCC Autojumble at the Bath & West showground yesterday and managed to pick up most of the items on my shopping list. One of the items was a 23w pilot light bulb. The plan was to fit this to the MSS so that I could ride it on sidelights rather than main beam. Lights are compulsory in Spain and I am dubious about the ability of the Alton 12v alternator on the MSS to balance the load at anything except main road cruising speeds. Fitted the new bulb and it was brilliant until I realised that it remained on when the headlight was on. Adding a further 23w to the load would certainly have caused charging issues with the hl on!. This was odd as though continental bikes often have sidelights and mainbeam on together (MZs and BMWs to name a couple) normally British bikes of this era operate them separately. This morning I removed the headlamp shell and traced the wiring. The sidelight connection was linked to the rear light so obviously they would always be on together. I managed to find a terminal on the switch which gave a separate feed for the sidelight and have now rewired the bike. A quick test showed that the charge load is balanced at moderate engine speeds with the 23w bulb – result.

I also picked up a 2nd hand handlebar mirror for a modest £2. I had intended to use it as a donor to repair another mirror. In fact it was in very good condition but did need a new taper nut. This was soon turned up on the lathe so now I have a good spare mirror but still one that needs an internal clamp – I must figure out a way to make one of these.

I have managed to touch up some of the peeling paintwork on the K75 engine. The swinging arm still needs attention but it will need some dismantling to gain access so I have left this for now. All the obviously rusty bolts have been removed, cleaned up, oiled and replaced. Amazing how much this improves the appearance of a bike. I managed to get some 10mm s/s bolts at the a/j which will further tidy up areas like the calipers. Looking forward to Thursday when I can tax and ride the bike legally.

Wednesday 21st September 2016

John and Ern came up to visit on Tuesday and after lunch we loaded up the Guzzi V75 in Johns trailer for the trip back to Exeter. Bit sad that it did not work out, more for Johns sake than anything. However he has cunning plan to lower the bike which could make it more suited to his physique – lets hope so. Within an hour I had a visit from John may who I have not seen for several months. He has made a good recovery from his heart attack and is still planning to do a ride from the tip of South America to somewhere in North America. He and Chris have just come back from a rehearsal trip to Montenegro and Greece which went well but he still has some practical issues to overcome like insurance and medication supplies. Target is to be in Tierra Del Fuego no later than January to maximise the Southern Hemisphere summer. Brave man

Today I collected the K75RT from Tetbury. Terry kindly drove me up and I was back home before 12. The bike went very well and I am more than pleased with it. One slight issue, it has a monitoring system for the rear and brake light and this came on when I was close to home which panicked me a bit till I realised what it was. Sure enough the rear light bulb had died during the trip and is now replaced. My plan is to work through the bike checking it over and sorting out some minor cosmetic issues mainly odd rusty nuts and some peeling paint on the engine. Other than that the finish is excellent – I think the panels and the tank must have been resprayed recently but very well done. Taxing it will wait until I get back from Spain in October.

The new gearchange cable for the ride-on mower arrived in the post today and it proved surprising easy to fi- Mower now fully operation so no excuse for not cutting the grass.

Monday 19th September 2016

Drizzling today so no guilt about working in the garage. I had a look at the gear change on the Baghira and the problem was obvious. There is a remote gear lever system connected by an adjustable rod. However, the short splined section on the actual gearbox had been put on too far forward so that it was hitting the chain guard on downward changes before the gear could fully select. Stamping hard forced it in but a normal pressure would only partially engage. Strange that it only seemed to manifest itself when selecting first gear. By moving the selector round one spline I not only gave it sufficient clearance but raised the pedal to a better angle as well. Wish all problems were as easily solved.

The van has been to the garage today to have the pro-bitz chip fitted. The mechanic said he thought it felt torquier when he took it for a test drive and I felt the same on the short trip home. Probably wishful thinking, and the acid test will be towing the caravan which is probably some way off given the autumn seems to have arrived in earnest and we have no more trips planned.

Sunday 18th September 2016

Workshop time on Saturday was limited to investigating why my ride-on mower would only engage revers gear. Finally figured out how to get it into a position where I could see what I was doing and the problem was just a broken cable. Don't have anything in the motorcycle line which gets anywhere near the length required so I have a search on the internet identified one at slightly less than second mortgage price.

Today I took the Baghira on a VMCC run which started at Wootton Bassett and wended its way through rural Oxfordshire. Only the vaguest idea of where we went but the weather was good, the route pleasant and the lunch excellent at pub in a place called Leafield. Bike went well but a couple of things will need attention. First one is easy – remove the extension I put on the sidestand – not needed now the rear suspension is lowered. Second thing is to investigate why its reluctant to get into first gear – often it has to be selected then held before it will engage fully. Also the lever could usefully be raised a little as it's too low for comfort at present and makes my ankle hurt. Its not the smoothest of engines and has a rough spot just around 55 which was pretty much the speed of todays run! At 50 its very smooth and at 60 it smooths out again and ran briefly up to 75 with no further vibes. However it needs 4th as soon road speed drops below 40ish and 3rd gear for town speeds – not the most flexible of engines especially

compared with the Velos which will run top down to 30mph no problem. However, it's a horse designed for a different course and great fun even if not the ideal mount for a VMCC social run.

I am suffering temptation tonight as I have been offered first refusal on BMW R75/5 which I saw many years ago and always coveted. Awaiting photos and other details but I suspect it will be just as good as I remember as the owner is fastidious over his bikes. Biggest problem will be finding space to keep it (assuming the price which we have yet to discuss is within my means). Something may have to go but I don't know what I could bear to part with.

Friday 16th September 2016

A satisfying day doing a number of small but worthwhile jobs in and around the workshop. First job was to our new caravan to relocate the smoke alarm which was right by the hob and went off every time we used the frying pan or boiled a kettle. I also mounted the fire extinguisher in an accessible location. Those two jobs got me some smartie points from Mrs F which is always a good thing.

Next job was to make a tapered nut for the handlebar mirror on the MSS. The existing arrangement was a simple nut and the taper was provided by the inner pressed steel clamp but over time this tape smooths out and the mirror just flops about. I also changed the fixing socket bolt to a metric type as I have very few imperial allen keys whereas I have loads of the metric type. The wing mirror is now fitted to the left hand side of the handlebar ready for riding in Spain. I also started the MSS to make sure it was still running ok. Took about three kicks to get it going but this was largely down to me experimenting with the tickler and choke settings. All seems good anyway.

The Baghira has been promoted to the workshop as I plan to use it on Sunday. Main job was to have another go at the alloy wheel rims, removing the last of the paint and giving them a good clean. They are slowly getting better though nothing like as shiny as the rims on the 2-strokes given similar treatment. Spokes on the rear wheel cleaned up quite well and there is no desperate urgency about replacing them. The front heel spokes are a different matter and most are well rusted. I have touched up the worst with silver paint for now but they will need more attention sooner rather than later.

Carrying on with the wheel theme, I have started respoking the ETZ250 front wheel. I had done this once already but my grandson was desperate to upgrade his ETZ125 to a disk brake so I gave him that wheel plus a master cylinder and caliper. Pleased to say that (with his Dad's help no doubt) he has done the conversion and all seems to be well. Ran out of energy tonight with 6 spokes to go – they should not take long tomorrow.

Spoke to my friend John today and he has decided to come up and collect the Guzzi on Tuesday. He has a friend who was coming up this way anyway to deliver a clock (repairing antique clocks is his hobby) and has a towbar so it was a convenient solution. I have arranged to collect the K75 on Wednesday morning as space is at a premium currently.

Thursday 15th September 2016

Well I guess things are getting back to normal so far as the blog is concerned. Holidays and riding bikes are rapidly disappearing into history to be replaced by tales of workshop activities and woes. Today started encouragingly when I made a start of fitting the Pro-Bitz tuning device to the Trafic. I studied the Haynes manual assiduously – even photocopied the relevant pages and laminated them save getting dirty fingermarks over the book. All went well initially, I got the air cleaner box off ok but then the pictures and words bore little resemblance to what I could see in the engine bay. So back together it all went and I drove down to the garage to consult the experts. It's now booked in on Monday for them to do the job and hang the expense.

Things did not improve. I rode the MSS and it went well to start with but as soon as I got more confident with it and tried overtaking lorry it started missing and actually cut out altogether above certain throttle openings. Difficult to believe that raising the needle one notch could have such a dire effect. Back home I tried swapping plugs and it did seem to improve a little with one of the iridium plugs that came out of the guzzi. Putting the needle back to its original setting did not improve matters either. In desperation I refitted the new Wassell carb I bought for the bike a

while ago and which I could never seem to tune properly. This made matters even worse, it was clearly running far too rich at anything above ¼ throttle. Paradoxically the Colortune suggested a good mixture and it started easily and ticked over quite well.

In desperation, I stripped the old 30mm concentric I had removed earlier in the day and the problem was immediately obvious. The main jet had unscrewed and was lying in the bottom of the float bowl. When I tried to replace the jet it would not tighten up and I found it was partially fractured, possibly from being previously over tightened. I could not find a spare 270 main jet but I fancy this was too big for my bike anyway so a 250 main jet is now installed and I put back the original plug (only change one thing at a time my dad taught me). A test ride with the 30mm carb in place showed no signs of the misfiring or cutting out at wide throttle openings so hopefully this particular problem is resolved. Doubtless others will arise.

Wednesday 14th September 2016

The MSS got the full service treatment today at xxxxxx miles. Fresh engine oil and filter, gearbox oil replaced, primary chain re-tensioned (it was a tad too tight) and oil changed. Tappets set to correct .005". Did not do the forks as they were done very recently and don't seem to leak. I also set the needle one notch higher in the carb as it was showing signs of weak running after my last trip. Tomorrow we have a lunch time meeting at the Westbrook Inn which is only 6 miles away, perfect for a short proving ride and it will be warmed up enough when I get back to use the colortune to set up the idle correctly. Once that is done I shall put the bike in mothballs until the Colombres trip in October.

Having decided the Guzzi V750 is not for me I have been looking at various internet sites to see what is for sale. This morning I saw on Ebay low mileage 1990 BMW K75RT for sale in Tetbury. Contacted the owner and viewed the bike this afternoon. It really is a cracker and after a test ride I was smitten in a way that the Guzzi never achieved. After a short haggle we agreed a price and I left a deposit to secure the deal. Not sure yet when I can pick it up. The most sensible time would be after the Guzzi has returned to Exeter. Now need to clarify when this might be with John.



The Pro-bitz diesel tuning device arrived in the post today. The instructions are quite clear in terms of where the device has to fit in a general sense but don't actual tell you where to find the insertion point (the fuel rail pressure sensor) and looking under the bonnet merely served to confuse. I am avidly studying the Haynes manual for the Traffic at present. I don't want to use a garage for the job if I can help it as I may need to be able to remove it myself and anyway paying someone to do the job would defeat the whole objective of saving money. I will consult my friends at the pub tonight to see if any of them could help.

Tuesday 13th September 2016

No chance to update the blog for a few days or so as we have been in Cornwall for the VMCC Cornish Section Holiday week. Major preoccupation was towing the caravan for the first time and getting everything set up properly. The bike was secondary to this but as always the MAC rose to the challenge and did not miss a beat all week during which we rode about 450 miles over 4 days. Pleased to say the caravanning side also went well. We learnt a few things which will make it easier in the future and it was certainly much more spacious and luxurious than the dear old motorhome. One slight downside was that the van seemed to be a bit underpowered at times needing 4th gear on some main road hills and the fuel consumption dropped like a stone. So much so that I have yet to work it out s I really don't want to know. Taking to some of the other rally entrants, a couple of them recommended fitting a black box device into the engine management system. They had obtained significant improvement in power and much better fuel consumption in their vehicles without any downsides. I have ordered one of these from a company called Pro-Bitz and will give it a try.

The rally itself was superbly organised with excellent routes and route cards and we explored quite a bit of Cornwall. I missed out on one days because of a gippy tummy but this turned out to be a good thing as the dog got a twig stuck in his throat which required a visit to the vet in Newquay at considerable expense. Not only that, I managed to dent the lower sill on a rock in the vets car park; not a happy bunny. Overall however these were minor matters in what was a very good week and a format which Mrs F enjoyed as well so all being well we will be doing more of this type of event in the future. The picture shows one of the lovely organisers with my MAC on the Mevagissey harbour wall.



On Sunday I decided to try the V750SP on a longer run. It went ok, running well but somehow it did not bring the same sort of smile to my face I get with riding some of my other bikes. It pulls well and the road holding is very good though it does seem to understeer somewhat. The riding position is also very good but my backside did not take too

well to the seat which is quite firm. Towards the end I felt as though it was not quite as smooth and sure enough the plugs were well sooted up when checked. So my efforts to sort the carburetion have not really solved the problems. Net conclusion was that it was not really a bike I wanted to own long term. Funnily enough someone finally responded to the advert I put on Gumtree (mainly to try and gain an insight into its value). He came around on Monday and took it for a ride and made an offer of £1100. To be honest, I think that was probably a realistic figure but well below what John would like so he left empty handed. Talked it over with John last night and he is going to have the bike back and experiment with lowering the riding position to make it more usable for himself. Not sure yet if I am taking it down to Exeter he is going to pick it up.

Today I put the MAC on the bike lift and gave it a service at 9863 miles. Fresh 20/50 engine oil (filter has only done about 700 miles), tappets checked, gearbox oil replaced (SAE50) and primary chaincase refilled. When I drained it there was still about 40cc remaining of the 70cc so it does retain some despite the leaks. The MAC has worked hard all Summer being the bike of choice for road trials and now the rally. After its service it will most likely be in hibernation to give the other bikes a chance – but at least it will have fresh oil to keep it in good condition.

Friday 2nd September 2016

Nearly two weeks without putting finger to keyboard and now I am struggling to think what I have done since my last write-up. Easiest to work backwards I fancy. On 1st September I rode the MSS Velo on a VMCC run into the Costwolds stopping at the ever popular Chedworth farm Shop for coffee then on to Northleach by a very pretty but circuitous route to Northleach for lunch. The plan was to visit the mechanical music museum but lunch dragged on to near 3pm and I needed to be home before 5pm to pick up the Renault van. So I was able to give the bike it's head on the way home and it went really well. This was a relief as this was intended to be the final proving run before taking it to the Colombres rally in October. Other than an oil change and general checkover I think it's ready. The plug did look a bit light in colour so I will rise the needle one notch during the service.

The 4spd TS250 has been used regularly and no recurrence of the carb pin problem fortunately. In fact it's going very well and is growing on me. Now stays in the workshop as the bike of choice for shopping and other suchlike runs.

This has been less satisfactory with the V750SP which has been plagued with carb problems. It sailed through the MoT though the front brake light switch was a bit sticky (now fitted anew one). It ran reasonably well on the way to the garage but taking it for a longer run on the way back proved troublesome. It was misfiring and stalled easily when waiting at lights. Back home the plugs proved to be exceeding sooty. When I stripped the carbs I found that virtually all the internals were uprated from standard – presumably because of the K&N filters fitted in place of the standard air box. Main jet was 110(100), idle jet 40(38) atomiser 268T(266T) and the plugs were a mismatched pair of Iridiums. New jets are pretty expensive and as I was doing this investigation over the Bank Holiday weekend – not readily available so I played around with what I had. Needle in weakest setting, colour tune to set up tickover and balanced the carbs. Somewhat disappointingly the thing still showed sooty plugs after a trip round the block. Subsequent investigation established that it was not running properly on one side and which side depended on which plug was fitted. It seemed to like the hotter of the two plugs, indeed it would not start on the other plug. On Tuesday I tried to get a matching hotter Iridium plug but it would have been a special order costing over £16. So I bought a pair of B6ES plugs (standard is B8ES) and tried those with encouraging results in the garage testing anyway. Today I took the V70 for a 15 mile ride with a mixture of fast main road (well 55-60 is fast for me) and country lanes mostly at circa 4k revs or less but the odd spurt up to 5k. No issues from the engine on the run and back home the plugs were a nice shade of mid-brown. So the bike is now rideable so that I can try it on some longer journeys to see if I like it enough to buy it at which time I will sort out the jets more rigorously. Couple of things I will need to look into: there is a clonking noise if you hit a pothole (we have lots of these) and I am not sure if it's from the tank or the fairing, there is a sizzling noise from the clutch/gearbox area at tickover which goes when the clutch is pulled in and the screen needs a small extension as it currently directs the wind to the top of my visor. Nothing too dramatic. I must say after riding the 4spd TS250 the V75SP seems very ponderous, it has a much longer wheelbase and

understeers especially noticeable if you don't get the right speed/gear approaching the corner. Not dangerous or worrying, just something to be aware of.

Sunday 21st August 2016

An exhausting few days. On Friday I drove down to Exeter to see John Hill and came back with the Guzzi V75SP pictured below. Poor John had always wanted one of these and snapped up this one when it came on the market without riding it. He already has a V35 and V50 and reasonably enough thought the V75 was just a bigger engine in the same clothes. When he finally got it on the road he found it too high for him – seems the V75SP has a much taller frame. He rode it once and its languished in his garage for over a year. The idea is that I get it Mot'd and running and try it out. If I like it I will buy it from him, otherwise I will sell it for him. Seems like a win-win to me. I have added it to my insurance policy whilst sorting out a few other changes so it could soon be road legal. As usual, the picture flatters and the bike is a bit scruffier than it appears but seems sound.



The journey home was nightmare, took 1.25 hours longer than the trip down and I was late starting because I was helping John with a wiring problem on his ETZ150. The next day was the MZRC AGM at Market Harborough so I still had things to do to prepare for that so the bike was left in the van.

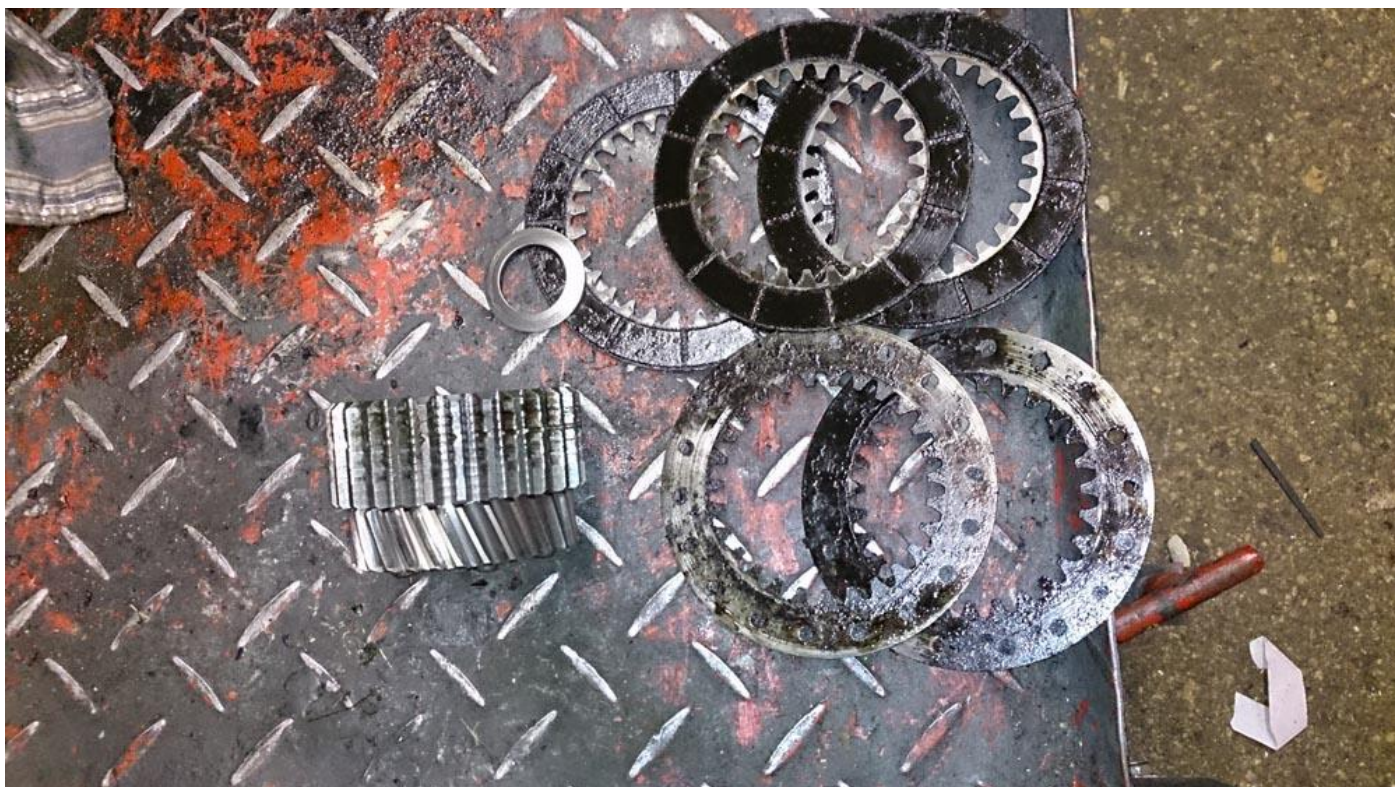
I have never been to M-H before but it is now clear I have been close as the latter part of the trip seemed vaguely familiar. Then I realised that I had picked up the CB400A from Pitsford which is only about 8 miles south of M-H also on the A508. It was great to meet up with some of the other MZRC committee members especially the new editor – Steve Quirke and Webmaster – Peter Morris as well as a number of other old friends. The AGM itself passed uneventfully – I am still the membership co-ordinator as no one else wants the job. However it did not finish till near 6pm so it was past 9pm before I got home. Slept well that night.

Sunday was quite eventful. I got the V75 out of the van and put the screen back on the fairing as it was otherwise too tall to go in. I did start it up and everything seems to be working ok but there were other priorities. The first of which was to sort out the tow bar on the van to accommodate dual wiring connectors. Should have been a simple job; I had bought a very smart s/s plate but it would not fit as it fouled the bumper! In the end I had to make up some 20mm spacers and find some longer bolts to move the ball hitch out. Now done but obviously took far longer

than I had expected. Whilst using my mobile phone to take some pictures of the Guzzi, I noticed some missed calls. They were from a guy who was interested in buying my two-bike trailer so we arranged for him to come down later on Sunday. He eventually turned up in the middle of the saga below but was happy with the trailer and swiftly departed.

At the AGM I had offered Maurice Banfield the Devon MZRC rep a stopover on his way back to Chard and he turned up about 1pm together with Wayne Noble from Cornwall. Maurice's bike was giving clutch trouble so we put it up on the bike lift and stripped it down. This was a much more complex job than normal. Firstly, we had to strip off all his camping gear, then fight our way past the full dolphin fairing he has fitted. Eventually we got it to bits to find a pretty mangled clutch assembly. The picture below shows that two of the plates had no fibre inserts left and the centre had deep grooves. Maurice had bought a few spare parts at the AGM but they did not include a clutch centre so we rebuilt the clutch with one of my spares. Reassembling the engine, we found it difficult to get the correct clearance on the crankshaft thrust washers but eventually found what we thought was a satisfactory fit by mixing/matching my spare washers. Eventually the bike was back together with new gasket and fresh oil. All seemed well until he tried a test ride. Though the clutch seemed to be operating correctly, it was not actually releasing.

It was now 6pm and Wayne still had best part of 150 miles to get home so he departed – it was good of him to stay so long. Maurice and I adjourned for tea and bacon butties whilst we decided what could be wrong and what to do about it. The conclusion was it had to be connected with the replacement parts fitted and in particular the thrust washers. The second strip down was quicker as we had figured out how to get the cover off despite the fairing. The clutch itself came off too easily and the problem was immediately clear. Despite our checks, the inner thrust washer was still too thick and had bowed slightly due to the pressure when torquing up the clutch. Effectively both parts of the clutch were solidly mounted on the crankshaft so the centre could not spin free when the lever was operated. The issue was the replacement centre from my stock which was slightly thicker than the original. Using the old was out of the question but luckily I found another which did fit properly and we were able to set the correct clearance. Finally, the engine was back together and we did a quick test to make sure the clutch was now working before completing the final assembly. Maurice eventually got away at 9:30pm. I guess we both learned something new and I hope he got home ok.



Thursday 18th August 2016

The MAC ran perfectly whilst riding in the Funeral Cortège and it even had a few people taking pictures of it. Sad to lose yet another of our long time VMCC friends. Though he had not ridden much for the last 4-5 years, he was a very keen member of the club and he will be missed.

On Thursday I took the TS250 for its first longer ride – as usual over to Neston to visit Mike Davis. It did not perform well constantly misfiring and hiccupping then suddenly running perfectly normally. I declined the offer of a coffee and turned straight round fully expecting to have to send for help. However, it did make it home. I could not make my mind up whether it was a fuel or ignition problem, it had symptoms of both. I checked the coil temperature as soon as I arrived home and it was quite cool so unlikely that was the cause. The plug was new and was a perfect colour but I did try changing it – without any improvement. As soon as I removed the timing side engine cover the likely cause was apparent, the points gap was huge, Not only was it causing misfiring, it also had the effect of over-advancing the timing. A quick road test after resetting the gap to 15thou and it was a different bike.

Suitably relieved I decided to take it for a longer run (circa 40 miles each way) to South Cerney for a lunch time VMCC meeting. Bike ran perfectly all the way though the front brake does not inspire much confidence. The fork seals are leaking a little and I wonder if some of the oil is getting onto the linings – something I need to check. Coming home I had one of those motorcycling moments. The bike was cruising happily at around 50 when I backed off for a corner only to find it kept on going – the throttle was jammed open. Luckily there was no one close behind so I switched off the ignition then pulled the clutch in to let it roll to a stop right into a convenient shady layby. At first I could find nothing obvious the slide moved and it clicked when bottoming but there was a lot of slack in the cable. Even when I pulled it out I could not see anything wrong until I looked for the pin which locates the slides orientation. This had moved outwards so the slide could turn in the bore until it fouled the throttle stop screw. I tapped the pin back in, reassembled and rode home very gently just in case it happened again; fortunately, it all worked ok. Silly problem and yet another warning about these cheap BVF copies. I have put some sealer around the exposed side of the pin to hold it in place for now. A proper repair would be to drill and tap then use a screw with locknut. Nothing small enough in my toolbox so I will have to consult the experts.

Carb issue apart I was well pleased with the little TS250, it seems to have a lot more torque than the Supa5 even though the engine is largely built from second hand parts.

Yesterday I replaced the temporary extended dogbones on the Baghira for a pair which had been made for me by a friend and which I had painted. They are exactly the same size – just look a bit smarter. I also tried to remove the handlebars to fit some spacers under the clamps so that I can lower the front end of the bike. Had to give up as the nuts holding the clamps cannot be loosened in situ; the top yoke will need to come off. I decided it was a job best left for another time as its not that critical and the potential for something to go wrong was quite high. I cannot ride the bike anyway as it is currently not taxed or insured and won't be until 1st September.

Sunday 14th August 2016

Things are moving on apace. On Friday we picked up the caravan which has been bought to replace the Motorhome which was written off recently. Mrs F is now a very happy lady though due to various dog showing commitments she has yet to have any time to play with her new toy. I was pretty nervous on the trip home but all went well. However, I discovered that my so called 13 pin socket on the Renault van only has 7 pins wired – fine for ordinary trailer work but not for caravan towing so I am now researching how to get the towbar wiring upgraded.

On Sunday I took the SM Baghira in the van to Longhope nr Gloucester to meet up with Eldest son Richard who had ridden the Honda down to its new owner. After a cup of tea and exchange of paperwork, Richard rode the Baghira back to Shrewsbury and I drove down to Ham for the MZ club meeting. While I was in Longhope Rob showed me his Velocette Valiant fitted with the LE side-valve engine. Very nicely done and an attractive bike but I suspect it would become a bit pedestrian on some of our club runs. Ideal for the Tiddlers & Tortoises event though. This exercise has cleared a space in the garage and freed up some cash to enable another potential purchase to take place. On Friday I am going down to Exeter to visit John Hill and look at a Moto-Guzzi V75SP which he is selling as he finds it too tall for

comfort. It ticks many of the boxes for a successor to the Revere: V-twin, shaft drive, armchair riding position and old enough to be VMCC eligible. Hopefully it will live up to its promise. However, the deal is that I bring it home to try out and sort any issues. If I don't like it, I will sell it for John so nothing to lose and a visit to John was well overdue anyway. Tomorrow we ride escort to the funeral cortege of Peter Taylor from Devizes to Calne.

Thursday 11th August 2016

The Supa5 passed its MoT on Tuesday but has been mothballed for the time being to allow time to be spent on the other bikes. The Whitchurch TS250 has been pulled out of hibernation and given a checkover. Though it passed its MoT back in April and is insured and taxed, I have never actually ridden it so far. So Wednesday was its first test ride. Quite pleased with the way it went though I only did about 5 miles round the village. The gearbox & clutch seem quite smooth compared to the Supa5 and the engine pulled well but it did not seem to have quite the same willingness to rev like the Supa5. This was confirmed when I took it out today to get petrol coming back on the main road where I could give it a bit more throttle. It flies up to 50-55 but was reluctant to go much beyond and opening the throttle wider seemed to bog it down. I must check the records to see what sort of rebuild I did, it may just need running in. Anyway I will use it regularly for the time being to see how it develops. One thing which surprised me was the riding position and handling. I used a pair of the low short bars for the rebuild and expected to feel cramped but in fact it was quite comfortable and the steering does not feel anything like as light as the Supa5 with its high bars. I was going to seek out a set of higher bars but will hold back for now.

On Tuesday evening I rode the Baghira to Wick for the Velo Club meeting. Three pleasant surprises. Firstly the seating is much improved since I arranged my bean bag to make the seat more level and wider at the edges. I was still comfortable after 20 miles. Secondly I filled the tank and the consumption worked out at 70mpg – rather better than I was expecting and quite satisfactory. Thirdly, despite the tiny odd shaped headlight, it works surprisingly well and night time riding was fine. Today I fitted the handlebar container for my phone which came as a birthday present from my son. Easy to fit and to move around to other bikes. Have not yet tried the phone in it to make sure it actually works. My daughter tells me she has bought (on advice from Richard) a USB connector for the bike this is on its way and could be a useful fitting.



Monday 8th August 2016

The cold is finally beginning to clear up but slowly and I have not achieved much over the last few days. I skipped the VMCC Run to Bourton on the Water but if I did anything useful with the time I am darned if I can remember. The Revere has been sold and Richard will be riding it to its new owner next Sunday near Gloucester. I will be delivering his Baghira to the same location so he can ride it home then driving back to Ham for the MZ club meeting. On Sunday Mike and I drove down to Creech St Michael to take part in the Somerset Section Signpost Trial. Cracking event which we both enjoyed though I have not seen any results yet. Glad we drove down as otherwise it would have been a 200 mile ride overall and I was pretty tired when I got home anyway.

Today I gave the MAC a clean after its exertions yesterday. I also checked all the oil levels as it was dripping a small amount of oil every time we stopped. Gearbox was full, primary chaincase still had the correct amount and the engine oil did not seem to have dropped much so not sure where the oil is leaking from. It's annoying but not enough to worry about. I also gave the Supa5 and clean and polish as it's booked for an MoT on Wednesday. Always wise to present a clean shiny bike to the examiner. I have ordered some spare cables for the MSS for our Spanish trip plus a couple of other bits so tomorrow is allocated to giving it a good clean and fitting the new parts.

Wednesday 3rd August 2016

The cold has turned into something more aggressive and it has really slowed me down as I have no energy and little enthusiasm for garage work. However, some things had to be done. First job was to change the oil filter on the MSS which is normally an incredibly messy job as there is no official way to drain the filter chamber. In this case the chamber was empty of oil indicating that its contents had drained back into the engine. There is no anti wet-sumping valve on the return side but in theory only a very small amount of oil can pass as the feed pipe is almost at the top of the chamber. However, there is an aluminium tube which should be a tight fit on the filter retaining stud. Mine was loose so the whole chamber was able to drain. I have now glued the ali tube to the stud and reassembled with a new filter. Hopefully this will cure its wet-sumping habits.

Flushed with success, I then tackled the leak in the bathroom cistern. Initially I seemed to make matters worse but after dismantling the syphon valve and reassembling with plenty of sealant all now seems to be well. At least it has not dripped for near 48hours anyway. Thinking I was on a roll I stripped the Bagihira down to do the tappets and check the plug. Well doing the tappets was fiddly but easy enough, getting the plug out was another matter which has occupied me for the better part of 2 days. The photo shows the problem:



You can see the rubber bung sitting on the top of the plug which stops the plug spanner fitting on the hexagon. It looks easy enough to remove but bear in mind the plug is recessed by about 3" and you have only about 4" of clearance above the head to work in. Getting the mobile phone in there to take the picture was easy enough but otherwise you are working blind. In fits and starts over two days I tried various things most of which simply drew more blood from my knuckles. Success was only achieved when I made a chisel out of an old kitchen knife and cut through the sides of the rubber grommet. I was then able to hook it out and finally remove the plug which I suspect had not been removed for many a long day. The rubber grommet was the end piece of an NGK extended plug cap and the reason it would not come

out easily to start with was because it was partly trapped under the plug washer. Goodness knows how long it had been like that or how anyone managed to tighten the plug with it in place. Curiously the plug cap now fitted is complete with its end cap. Fortunately, apart from a 35thou gap the plug colour looked good but I have put in a new plug anyway.

Tomorrow (Thursday) we have a VMCC run to Bourton on the water which I was looking forward to but unless my cold clears up dramatically overnight I shall give it a miss.

Monday 1st August 2016

On Sunday I rode the Enduro Baghira on a trip to visit a number of dealers to look at various types of caravan to establish which type would suit us best. Really it was just an excuse to go for a longish ride when the sun was shining. The bike went very well and with one exception is a joy to ride. The exception being the seat which is extremely uncomfortable. The pain in the backside means that you just have to stop after 25-30 miles you just have to get off and walk around. Fortunately, this was pretty much the distance between each of my destinations. There is still a bit of popping on the overrun, but I can live with this for now. Today I gave it an oil and filter change – 27795kms for the record. I was hoping to make do the tappets as well since they are a bit clattery after I played around with them last week. However, I seem to have developed a cold complete with headache, runny nose and sore throat so working in the garage rapidly lost its appeal. Maybe tomorrow.

Saturday 30th July 2016

Apologies to any readers of the blog (are there any I wonder) for lack of updates but I just didn't seem to have enough time or enthusiasm to write it up for the last two weeks. There has been some progress on various fronts. The main one being that the insurance company finally confirmed the motorhome was a total loss (due to lack of spares from Compass) and we have agreed an acceptable valuation. Now the hunt is on for its replacement though it may be prudent to wait until later in the year when prices traditionally drop. Sorting this out plus coping with 6 family visitors for the last week has pretty much been all I could cope with.

On the bike front I found an easy way to way to get the Baghira off the ground to fit the new dogbones. I pushed my bike lift (fully lowered) under the bike at right angles, put a couple of pieces of 3"x3" timber under the rails and it lifted easily and was very stable. This technique can also be used to wheel changes at both ends and to grease the chain. Changing the dogbones was then only 5 minute job and I was pleased to find that the bearings were all in good nick. I was relieved to find that my calculations were correct and the 130mm links dropped the bike by around the target of 2"; just enough to make getting on and off bearable and feet flat on the ground once seated. A road test to a lunch meet at Poulshot confirmed that this had no adverse effect on the handling. On the advice of the MuZ Forum I had opened up the pilot airscrew adjuster from 2.5 to around 4 turns out and this has reduced the popping and banging in the silencer quite a lot. I have now opened it to 5 turns out but not yet tried it like that. The Forum recommended 6 turns out but that seems a lot so I will get there by easy stages.

My eldest son Richard has been staying with us this week along with our 10 year old granddaughter and 18 year old grandson, the latter riding down on the ETZ125 I built for him last year. Richard was very smitten by the Street Moto Baghira which I had been trying to sell without success. He has been riding it whenever he could all week and in the end I relented and agreed he could have it. The deal is that he sells the Honda Revere I gave him last year to at least make some contribution to my bike fund. To celebrate the 3 of us rode in convoy to Calne for the annual bike day; rather nice to have three generations of the family on the road together. However, it nearly turned into disaster when someone lost control of a bike (an MZ Supa5 of all things) whilst leaving the display area and knocked over my MSS Velo which in turn knocked over the Baghira. Fortunately, no damage seems to have been done to the bikes but my granddaughters new helmet is badly scratched and will probably have to be replaced. The Supa5 came off far worse with bent indicators and a broken rear shock.

Friday 15th July 2016

I forgot to mention in the last update that Mike Davis and I rode in the Cotswold Weekend Road Trial. This was based at the Apple Orchard camp site just off the A48 North of Westbury on Severn. This was an old fashioned time trial where you have to follow a route card and keep to a set average speed. Mike got hopelessly lost on the morning section and though I kept to route I was running consistently slower than set speed all day. Still I managed a second

place and it was a really nice day out. Good route through parts of NW Glos and Herefordshire I have not visited in many years, excellent carvery lunch and the MAC ran like a dream all day. Even the weather was good. Such a shame that they only had 22 entries – the others don't know what they missed.

On the Baghira front – did I mention I have two of the things! I have been slowly tidying up both. The luggage rack and the hand guards from the Street Moto model (the one I plan to sell) have been transferred to the Enduro model as it needs them more and both now have some transfers which I made on the computer to brighten up the solid black appearance. The seized choke cable on the SM model has been removed and I have adapted the choke operation to a simple pull link – this seems to be a common problem and common solution. With the choke seating properly when off, the tickover seems to be more stable as well - bonus. Now all I want is a buyer.



The Enduro model proved to have severe popping and banging noise in the exhaust on the overrun so I checked the tappet clearances and found some very tight. Annoyingly, the noises were no better after this service. Next idea was to fit the original MZ silencer which came with the bike. This made it much more socially acceptable in that it did remove the raucous bark from the race can previously fitted; there is still some popping on the overrun but at least its more muted and I can live with it until a final solution is found. Removing the carb is a major job on this bike.



A few days ago my friend Mick the welder gave me some 6mm strip steel and today I made a pair of longer dogbones to lower the suspension of the Enduro Baghira. These are 130mm against the original 118mm. Does not seem much but I am assured that this is enough to drop the back end by about 45mm. The next trick is to figure out how to fit them to a bike that has no centre stand. From the picture you can see why these links are called dog bones. Mine are nothing like as elegant at present, just two pieces of 25mm wide strip with 12mm holes for the bolts

Tuesday 12th July 2013

Things have moved apace on some fronts though sadly not with respect to the motorhome where we are still waiting for the estimate for repair. The delay seems to be in getting prices for parts from the manufacturer and it's beginning to look like they may not be available Mrs F is not a happy lady.

On Monday evening the BMW F650 was collected so that freed up some space in the garage but not for long. On Wednesday I drove down to North Devon to pick up a Honda VT250 that needed a new home. It was not something I wanted particularly but the owner had died (not from anything motorcycle related) and his widow basically wanted it out of the way and a friend of my asked me to help. The idea was I would check it over, tidy what I could and then try to sell it. Any proceeds going to the Air Ambulance charity. There was not a lot I could do with it, it had stood for 17 years so was well seasoned but complete and quite a pretty looking thing. As there was no key I could not even test the electrics. Anyway I put it on Gumtree on Sunday night and it had sold by Monday lunchtime. Clearly I underpriced it as I had several more phone calls but the AA charity is now £225 better off and my garage again has a little more space.



During the week I got to pondering about my Baghira and remembered that I had ridden the one at Harlow which whilst high, had not seemed anything like as daunting. It was still on eBay and the price had dropped so I decided to go try it again and to cut a long story short, it too is now in my garage. This one is the Enduro model with 21" front and 18" rear wheels (Street Moto has 17" F&R), yet it is lower – very odd. I have swapped a couple of bits over to the endure bike – hand guards and a rack - and the other one will be put up for sale shortly.



This one is bit scruffier but has done pretty much the same mileage (circa 17k). But in many ways is a better prospect for me. Presently it has Avon Roadrider tyres which are fine for now but will need replacing so a set of trail tyres will make it a good green lane prospect.

Saturday 2nd July 2016

This has been a most stressful week. I was due to spend couple of days at Windsor where Mrs F was booked in to camp for the week to attend the Championship dog show. The idea was that I would follow her up in the car on Tuesday, help her set up the camp, then drive the car home on Wednesday with one of the dogs. Tuesday started off, I stopped off at Harwell to look at a Baghira, then drove to Windsor. Just before I got there I received a phone call from Mrs F to say she had been involved in an accident and sure enough when I arrived our motor home was creating traffic havoc. She had clipped the load platform of a delivery lorry and opened up the side of the van like a tin-opener.



Obviously camping was out of the question and by the time the AA had got its act together it was near 10pm before we got home – the accident happened at 12:15! Sorting out the consequences of this has occupied most of my time since then. We finally managed to find a local specialist repairer who has viewed the damage and gone away to produce an estimate. He thinks it can be repaired but the cost he suggested is not far off the market value of the van so we now have to wait and see what the insurers decide.

Anyway back to bikes. The Harwell Baghira was pretty scruffy and difficult to start but sounded and went ok when warm. Its most endearing features were the lowish price and the fact that it had the Enduro wheels 21" front and 18" rear. The van incident put it out of my mind however and then I found an interesting ad for a Baghira near Sherbourne (about 40 miles away). To cut a long story short it's now in my garage. The chap I bought it from was the brother of Ken Doyle who ran a motorcycle business in Templecombe. When Ken died his MZ workshop tools were sold to a guy in Yeovil and now reside in my garage - small world.



Needs work but mechanically it is pretty good and though there is little paperwork with it, the previous owner had owned it for 3 years and had kept it serviced and the tyres and battery are new. This bike is the complete opposite to the BMW F650. Seat height is 36" and though I am 6ft I can only just get my feet to the floor. On the move it's fine and its much smoother and quicker than the BMW. The insurance is done and I will tax it on Monday.

In the interim, I re-did the advert on Gumtree and it has provoked more interest this time round. In fact, someone is coming on Monday who seems very keen. He would have come tomorrow but I am tied up all day with the VMCC navigation trial. With luck I will break even on the BMW. Today we had complementary tickets for the motorcycle racing at Castle Combe so I rode the MSS over for our display. Must say it goes very well now that it has a sorted carb. Runs really smoothly with none of the steady speed lurching I was getting with the Wassell. It has a reliable tickover and starts 1st or second kick – magic. Now all I have to do is sort out the wet sumping and

Sunday 26th June 2016

On Wednesday it was the MZ section run and at the coffee stop I tried out the seating position on Janet Wilson's BMW 650Cs and it seemed quite comfortable so this was added to my search list. Having got zero response on Gumtree, I put the G5 on eBay on Wednesday evening and by 8am on Thursday it was sold at the full asking price. Nice chap from near Bognor who collected it early Friday morning.

Out of the blue an hour or so later I got a 2nd chance offer on a BMW F650CS I had put a bid on a while back. Had a chat with the vendor and drove down to Gosport Friday evening to look at the bike. As usual the photos flattered and there were some obvious issues like a flat battery because he had left the steering lock in the parking light position and a front tyre that was clearly in need of replacement. However, there was a lot of paperwork including the MoT history to confirm mileage and a receipt for a drive belt about 5k miles ago (life is 24k miles according to BMW). These are an eye watering £350 including fitting so something that needs checking on this model; the F650GS models have chain drive. It also had a Givi monolock top box with passenger back rest built in and a BMW tank bag. Actually it's not a bag it's a removable plastic box sitting where the petrol tank would normally be. The petrol tank on

these bikes is under the seat. Anyway these and the Vario adjustable screen were fairly expensive and desirable extras. After some haggling we agreed a price to reflect replacing the battery and the tyre and I brought it home.



It looks ok but I would say it was no more than average condition for a 15yr old bike but it was cheap enough. A more detailed study of the paperwork did not reveal anything horrendous though regular servicing seems to have stopped around 2012-3. In fairness it has only done circa 5k of its 28k miles in that time. The whole exhaust system is s/s so though it looks a bit manky it should clean up somewhat.

The big disappointment is that for me the riding position is awful. The seat is very low (It think in retrospect it must have the low seat option) even with my bean bag in place. For me the footrests are too far back and too high such that I feel like a crouching monkey on the bike. It also feels much heavier than I was expecting. The engine seems noisy to me, quite clattery but not seriously worrying. It is a Rotax design despite the BMW logo on the castings and thinking back, the MZ 500R made similar noises. The good news was that everything seemed to work ok on my test ride, all the gears selected fine, all the lights did what they were supposed to and it ticks over reliably. It also starts easily, the battery did recover after an overnight charge and was still working fine on Sunday.

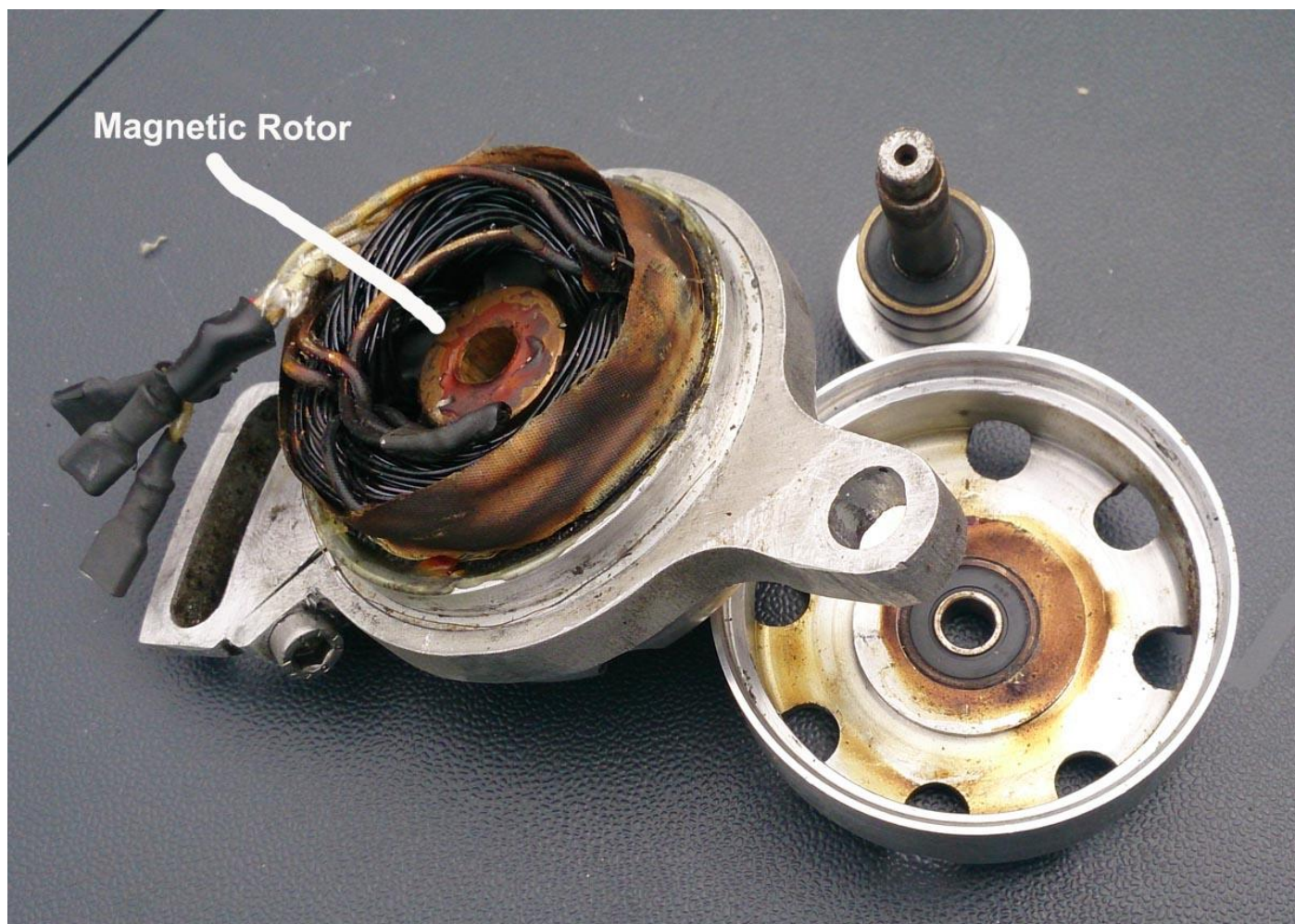
Readers will not be surprised to hear that it is back on Gumtree as I cannot see me ever being able to come to terms with this bike. May have to change my mind if it does not sell but the price is low so I think it will. Learnt a couple of lessons from this exercise. Main one is of course to insist on a test ride or at least blag a ride on a friend's bike before buying. The second one was think carefully about centre stands. This model does not have one so changing the tyres or doing other servicing presents problems. Neither do the MZ Mastiffs and Baghiras!

Tuesday 21st June 2016

Summer solstice today, dry but very cloudy so I doubt the druids got much joy at Stonehenge. On Sunday David arrived spot on 8:30 to collect the ETS150 and was packed and gone by 9am; he had a busy schedule of visits to fit in. I took the G5 to the Steam rally, must have been all of 2.5 miles for the round trip. It went very well and but no one reacted to my for-sale notice so today I finally gave in and put it on eBay. It started to rain about 2:30 so I packed up and came home. The dogs were glad to see me back as they had been shut in all day.

On Monday I went over Terry's with the alternator that was fitted to the Alton electric start kit. After a considerable amount of head scratching and trying things out, we final managed to dismantle the unit without breaking anything

(I think). It was actually pressed together and the joint was sealed with thread lock. Initially it resisted all attempts to twist it apart but the application of some heat and a bit more grunt did the job in the end. The magnet itself is tiny but incredibly powerful. The stator poles and the wiring are still in one half of the housing; they appear to be glued in with resin of similar. The picture shows the component parts. My plan is to contact a few specialists to see whether anyone can rewind and reassemble it for me at a reasonable price.



Today I have checked over the blue Supa5 ready for its MZ club run tomorrow and the Trail TS150 which will be used on the Tiddlers & Tortoises run on Sunday. Both working fine. Not so the ETZ250 which I thought I had sorted out on Saturday. It flatly refused to start even with a new plug. Given the amount of sticky resin I removed from the tank it was affair bet that some of it was gumming up the carb so I striped it down. Sure enough the needle was stuck closed and the float bowl was empty. After a good clean I expected it to start first kick but there was still no sign of life. In the end I resorted to the old 2-stroke trick of shutting of the fuel, Opening the throttle wide and kicking for England. After about 15 kicks it coughed and a couple more kicks had it running with clouds of blue smoke as the crankcases cleared. Thereafter it sounded very sweet so I kitted up and took it for a couple of laps of my test circuit. It has to be one of the smoothest and quietest engines I have ever built. Pulled well through the gears, ticks over quietly and now very little smoke. Even more pleasing because this is the engine I nicknamed 'Jumpy' because of my inability to get to the bottom of its gearbox issues. In the end I junked the entire box and fit a complete gear set from an old ETZ engine. Seems to have paid off. I will try a few more test rides with increasing range to see how it gets on.

My hunt for a Baghira or Mastiff is not progressing too well. I do have the highest bid in on a Mastiff in Peterborough but it's below the reserve and I am not inclined to bid higher so it's doubtful I will get it. I made an offer on a nice low mileage one which was declined; his asking price is way too high in my view and it would be a courier job to collect. None of the others on offer appeal at present and are much too far to go and view. I am casting the net farther afield by investigating the BMW F650 as an option as well – they seem to be much more available and of a comparative cost to the MZs on a year-year basis.

Saturday 18th June 2016

I have kicked over the MSS several times over the past couple of days and it now starts easily needing light tickle and the choke full on. Once running it requires ½ choke to maintain a tickover. Have not run it long enough to get really warm but I reckon its behaviour is now pretty much as it should be so the 30mm carb stays unless it too proves troublesome.

The ETS150 now has a buyer who is coming down on Sunday to pick it up. Funniy enough both potential buyers were called David and were friends. The David in France was having trouble getting a courier and was advised it might be hard to get it registered as these bikes had never officially been imported to France. Anyway the UK David is delighted; will be nice to see him again as he bought a supa5 from me some while back and we got on very well. No interest whatsoever in the G5 so I have put it on my drive with a for sale notice and plan to display it at a Steam rally at Semington tomorrow.

With most other projects on hold I decided to do a few jobs on the ETZ250 which had been languishing in the greenhouse for some time and was close to taking root. First job was to rebuild the back wheel with s/s spokes. It's an easy job in itself, the time and effort is mostly concerned with cleaning and polishing the hub and the rim. In this case it was a bit harder as the hub was originally painted and though a lot of it has fallen off because of the underlying corrosion, the bit that remains can be quite tough. Anyway job now done, new tyre fitted and its back on the bike. Next job was to investigate why the fuel tap kept blocking up. This was down to a tarry mess which must have been the residue of the old petrol. I had previously drained the tank of its old fuel and it ran out ok. The tap was rebuilt with new gaskets and filters and all seemed well but I guess the new fuel had softened the tarry residue which was about 3.8" thick all across the bottom of the tank. I was able to ladle the worst of it out then poured in a couple of litres of cellulose thinners and left the tank soaking overnight. I repeated this cycle a couple more times and eventually found the tank was clean enough to be safely used again. Horrible smelly job and everything still stinks of stale petrol and cellulose thinners; Mrs F is not pleased.

However, the real fun and games started with the petrol taps. I got through 3 before finding one that would work properly. The original one developed a pinhole allowing fuel to leak out of the side from the reserve passageway. The second one would not seal to the tank and third one only worked after I fitted a new rubber gasket even though there was nothing obviously wrong with the old one. Any It's now done but I wasted most of a gallon of fuel prattling around with the various problems so I need to fill up a couple of cans at the garage.

As a bit of light relief I replaced some of the rusty nuts/bolts with s/s items and found in the spares cupboard a new bracket for the silencer and a freshly painted support strut. So the bike is now looking a bit tidier, still a long way to go though not sure whether to go for an MoT now or wait until its finished. On the one hand if I MoT and ride it I may never get round to finishing it properly. On the other hand riding it for a bit will get it well sorted so I know it's worth spending the pennies on the cosmetics.

I put another order into Germany for MZ part today. In the end I found I only wanted a few odds/ends for myself, but with everyone else's bits it makes up respectable order.

Thursday 16th June 2016

This morning I partially stripped the MSS and fitted the 30mm Concentric which I rebuilt last night. Initially it did not respond at all well and when I removed the plug it was not sparking and was very sooty. Cleaning it did little to improve matters but luckily I found a brand new B6ES plug in the cupboard and with this fitted, things improved a lot. I took it for a test ride and it went well with none of the surging I had found with the Wassell. When I got back it was quite easy to set up a reliable and reasonably slow tickover. Afterwards it started very easily without the need to put the choke or even tickle. I did not detect any obvious problems with the oversize carb so I plan to leave it on for now and see how it settles down. I am beginning to wonder if the problems with the Wassell were plug related so

perhaps at some stage I am going to have to try it again. But first I am going to have a chat with Mike at Surrey Cycles to see if he can offer any suggestions.

Today was a VMCC meeting at the Cross Guns at Avoncliff, only 5 miles away. I rode the G5 to give it an airing and it went well enough but it does not inspire the same grin factor as the Velos, even when the latter are not running properly. I have decided to put it on Gumtree again, at a higher price with an offer to take an exchange to see what that produces. Over the last couple of days I have developed a yen for an MZ Baghira as the eventual replacement for the CB400A. They are not a common bike but there were 3 on Ebay when I looked, all of which have now sold but they were too far away to be of real interest anyway. However, they do give me an indication of likely prices.

Wednesday 15th June 2016

Well taxing the TS250 proved remarkably easy despite all the dire warnings from some quarters. The post office was able to do the change of class on line before doing the tax so it came up tax exempt. They have sent off the old V5C for me as well. Mike came over in the afternoon for a coffee and chat so I got him to help put the CB400A on the bike lift. I then tried a new technique for adjusting the cam chain which I found on the internet. This involves removing the rocker box cover to expose the top of the adjuster which, once the lock nut has been slackened, can be pushed down if the spring is too weak to self-adjust. Not sure if I took up any slack or not but at least now I know the cam chain is properly tightened. Tuesday evening was the Bristol Velo Owners club meeting so I rode the MSS to give it an airing. The new tyres have transformed the road holding and handling and it flew up Swainswick Hill. Sadly the surging on steady throttle openings has returned and on the way home it started to misfire briefly. Bit disappointing and I need to think through what to do next.

Today I removed the Wassell carb from the MSS with the intention of dropping the needle a further notch in the belief that the problem is too rich a mixture. This idea came to nothing when I found that the needle on these carbs only has three slots and it was already in the weakest setting; back to the drawing board! As an interim measure I decided to fit the original 26mm Concentric carb which came with the bike. Despite sorting out the blocked pilot bush it still does not work properly, being hard to start and with an unreliable tickover. Nevertheless, on an extended road test it does not produce any of the surging at steady throttle settings. So it would seem to prove that the problem lies with the Wassell carb rather than something within the engine or ignition system.

I still have the 30mm Concentric which the previous owner sent for me to try so I stripped it down and gave it a clean. This one has a pilot jet fitted but when I checked the passageways it was clear that the fuel passageway was blocked. Eventually I drilled out the plugs to gain access to passageways and found that the original pilot bush was still in place and was totally blocked. I made up a drift and tapped the bush out completely as the pilot jet makes the bush redundant and a potential source of problems. The drilled holes were then tapped 2BA and suitable screws fitted to block them off. My guess is that this blocked bush was the reason the carb was taken out of service as it otherwise seems in reasonable condition. When time permits I will try this carb on the MSS to see how it performs.

I have had two serious enquiries about the ETS150 so it looks like it will be going shortly.

Monday 13th June 2016

Well the good news is that the 4spd TS250 passed its test today. The bad news is that it was not completed until 5:30pm so the post office was closed. I will be at their door first thing tomorrow hopefully to get it reclassified as tax exempt and taxed so it can be used. Still not overly sure of the correct procedure for this despite having downloaded all the forms.

Sunday 12th June 2016

Today was the monthly MZRC meeting at Ham. I was going to ride the MSS for its first longish run but it rained quite heavily and I didn't want to get it wet just yet so dug out the Supa5 instead. I have not ridden it since I made a minor adjustment to the carb by dropping the needle one notch. Somehow it seems to have transformed the bike. It felt

much more willing, held on to top gear better and was smoother on the overrun. Initially I thought it was because I had the wind behind me on the way up but if anything it went better on the way home. Must have a look at the plug to see if its now the right shade of chocolate or could be adjusted further. Riding the MZ when it goes like this makes me wonder – not for the first time – why I need any of the other bikes.

Enthused by this I pulled the 4sp TS250 project bike from the garage and gave it a checkover preparatory for an MoT. Initially it would not start but putting in a new plug sorted this. Odd because the old plug was sparking well but MZs can be very fussy over plugs. Once you get one they like they are fine and I don't remember replacing the plug in the Supa5 for years. On the other hand once plug has stopped working in an MZ it won't work in any MZ even after a good clean – most odd. Anyway the TS250 seems fine so I gave it a clean and polished the shiny bits. Presenting a clean shiny bike for an MoT is always a good idea. Tomorrow I will make an appointment at the MoT centre.

Saturday 11th June 2016

Over 2 weeks since I put finger to keyboard – smack hands. From 28th May to 6th June I was in Northumbria on our annual VMCC section holiday. We stayed at the Derwent Manor hotel just outside Consett which was very pleasant. The weather was mostly dry though we often had low cloud to contend with. On the routes which took us towards the west you could often see the sun was shining on that coast. I took the CB400A in the and though the rattling noise did not abate much it did nearly 600 miles without any problems. Longest trip was 187 miles when we did Lindisfarne, Bamburgh Castle and the NT house & gardens at Craggside near Rothbury.

I brought back a cold which has kept me quiet for the rest of this week not to mention the time and effort needed to tidy the garden. I have tinkered a bit more with the purple ES175. It now has a lh riders footrest using one of the pillion footrests and its bracket as a donor. Still needs some refining but it should do. I have also connected up the front and rear brakes. The linings 9and possibly the drums) are badly worn on both so I had to shim them but they both work well enough for now. These early MZs use different brake shoes so replacement are hard to find in the UK anyway. One option is to have the old shoes relined at friction services in Keynsham, the easier and cheaper option is to use brake plates or possibly complete wheels from my stock of later MZ parts. Anyway at least it has some braking power – adequate for my intended usage in the orchard. Fitting brakes meant cobbling up some better handlebars. I then had a look at the electrics. Most of the wiring loom is still present and can probably be resurrected. For now I have removed it completely and fitted the minimalist loom I made up for the previous garden bike.

It was at this stage that I found something odd. The dynamo in this bike is fitted upside down and the points cam seems to be reground to suit. I fitted a complete new dynamo system with rotor the correct way round then found



the points were opening at bdc! Gave up at this point as it was not my intention to do anything with this engine in the short term, all I was doing was testing out the electrical side which works fine. At some stage I will look more deeply into the matter but gut feeling is that the timing side main shaft has been replaced at some time and not lined up properly so the keyway is in the wrong place for the rotor. Next activity was to find and fit an exhaust system which after some experimenting I managed. Best fit was with a standard TS250 pipe and a battered old TS250 silencer. There was no carb with the

bike and they are special to these models anyway. However, it does have a manifold and I was able to turn down the spigot on this so that a TS150 carb would fit. This is only 24mm choke whereas the bike normally has a 25mm choke but I doubt it will make any difference on my test circuit. Quite pleased with this result as it tested my lathe skills to the limit. At this stage I got bored with the ES175 and put it in the van to make space for other jobs.

I have also been considering the other bikes in my stable and the review concluded that The ETS150 trophy sport was simply not being used. Apart from rides round the block it has only done one longish run on the VMCC tiddlers outing last June and a trip to the Mot Station last September. Since building the trail TS150 it has seen the main choice if I wanted a small bike. Ray made a super job of its restoration and it seems a shame to keep it locked away unused. I unwrapped it today, put the battery on charge and it then started first kick even on stale petrol. I almost weakened at that point but have put it up for sale on the club web site and Gumtree to see what interest there might be. The picture was taken yesterday after only a wipe over to remove the dust. It won't break my heart if it does not sell.



Thursday 26th May 2016

ON Tuesday evening following an exchange of posts on the Jampot website I discovered I had probably fitted the engine sprocket the wrong way round. So on Wednesday morning the first task was to dismantle the G5 primary drive, sure enough it was the wrong way round but all is now sorted. To celebrate I took it for ride to Corshan to check out another of the WHT green lanes then round to Mike's place ta Neston for tea and a natter. The G5 performed very well. So well in fact that I took it to Chippenham tonight for the VMCC meeting. Not overly impressed with the 6v lighting but that apart it ran well again. Pleasingly, the engine oil level does not seem to have

dropped at all in nearly 50 miles so maybe that problem has also gone away. It would be great if it has but not sure what if anything I have done to fix the problem other than replace the oil filter and I don't see a connection.

The van went to the garage today for a checkover before the Northumbria trip. Thanks to their computer, all the errant warning lights are off for the moment. Filled it up with diesel on the way home. Mike is coming over tomorrow with his Triumph so we can get the van loaded rather than leave it to the Sunday morning.

Being at a slight loose end, I dragged the purple peril (the donor ES175) into the workshop today to figure out what needs doing to make it a runner. First obvious problem was the lack of a centre stand which I removed with the intention of fitting it to the Black ES175. It turned out to be in poor condition so I had started the repairs and it is now back where it came from so that the bike can be parked on the bike lift. Next issue was the lack of a seat, the original single saddles having been sold before it came to me. Inspiration struck and I have adapted an ETZ251 seat to fit the frame. It will need a new cover but should look ok when finished. Next problem – which has no solution as yet – is the lack of a lh footrest and more to the point no obvious place to fit one. Like many of these older MZs, the footrest area is poorly designed and frequently badly repaired. This one is no exception. Anyway it's not an urgent project just something to fill in any odd moments I might get.

Tuesday 24th May 2016

One of the things I ordered last week was the proper front mudguard stay for the MSS. A special cranked type is needed to clear the lever on the TLS hub. Mine still had the old one which had been flattened and bent badly to clear the lever but it was then a tad too short so pulled the mudguard to one side. As usual with these things the lever did not quite line up but it was easily sorted by drilling a new hole in the new stay. I wanted to fit chrome stays but these are not available in the cranked TLS form so I have painted it and the one on the other side silver for now. In due course I will probably have both and the rear stays powder coated silver.

Later on I took the trail TS150 for a ride round a few more of the green lane checkpoints in the WHT. First time I have ever done Heddington Steps which have always had a fearsome reputation. In fact much of the Byeway has been graded and approached from the Roundway end it was fairly level and easy. Dropping down into Heddington was rather more testing but still nothing like as bad as I had expected. The views from the top were amazing as indeed it they were when I rode to the Ridgeway checkpoint. Approached from the North via Hackpen Hill it's a long but fairly easy ride. I made the mistake of riding the byeway from Avebury up to the Ridgeway checkpoint from the South. That was seriously hard work and just one long muddy switchback. Cherhill was fine, the byeway at East Kennet was a series of water filled pot holes and no fun at all. Had to pressure wash the bike when I got home. My boots will take days to dry out. Only three checkpoints left to do.

I have just received the route sheets for the Northumbria holiday so tonight I will plot them on Memory Map to see how they look.

Monday 23rd May 2016

On Thursday I rode the CB400A on a make or break trip to Tilshead for a VMCC lunchtime meet. On the way I tackled 3 of the green lane controls for the forthcoming White Horse Navigation Trial. Two of them were basically hard surfaced and pretty easy, the third was very muddy with potholes full of water. No fun at all on a bike with a freewheel so no engine braking to help steady progress. Me and the bike were pretty mucky at the end. Only 7 more green lanes to check; next time I will take a more suitable bike. On the way back I looked at a modern Suzuki 250 (Inazuma I think) which was for sale locally at a good price. Quite tempted and it's still for sale but the insurance was quite high for some reason.

On Saturday we went to the Barge at Seend Cleeve to receive the VMCC 70th anniversary baton from the Bristol Section. On Sunday it's being passed on to the Somerset Section. I rode the G5 which went well enough but as soon as we got home I started the strip down ready to fit the larger gearbox sprocket. Got it apart in the end but some of the nuts were very, very tight and I had to stop work to consult the experts to confirm if they were rh or lh thread.

On Monday I finally get it all back together and took it for a test ride. the taller gearing does make it less fussy at 50 or so and 1st gear is now useable – previously it was better to pull away in second most of the time. I also fitted some transfers to the side panels to make it look a bit less bland.

Sunday was the MZ riders Club Ramsbury Run a circa 60 mile route from the Cross Hands at Old Sodbury to Ramsbury mostly via country lanes. I took them further south this time through Pewsey, Burbage and Savernake Forest to avoid Marlborough. The run to the Crown & Anchor was dry and warm. While we ate the heavens opened and though it stopped before we departed the roads were awash until we dropped down into Ogbourne St George. From there on the roads were dry – most odd. I rode home via Bremhill to visit Steve Hook to look at Guzzi California he had for sale. Nice bike, low mileage and a good price but much bigger and heavier than I was expecting based on the photo. Decided it was not for me. Still overall a very good day.

Monday 16th May 2016

The Cotswold Signpost Trial went very well. The MAC ran like a dream and the alternator system finally worked the way it should with the charge rate dropping to virtually zero after a couple of miles when there was no load on the system. There was one oddity; when I put the lights on the charge rate went quite high and only dropped back a little (probably around 2amps) even after a few miles. At times the ammeter needle would swing wildly from max to min. Decided not to worry about it and just turned the lights off after which the charge rate stabilised at near zero. In the dark I won't be able to see this and therefore won't worry about it. The Trial itself was very enjoyable, Mike Davis could not ride due to a trapped nerve in his back but Bill Little and I rode round together. I needed to get back to let the dogs out so left very early. Not heard any results as yet.

In the evening I fitted the new Roadrider tyre to the front of the MSS so it now has a pair of new tyres. That just about sorts the known problems so looking forward to putting a few miles on it. Today I drove to Long Ashton just South of Bristol to see Adrian Webber and pick up an arc welding set which he was giving away. This is destined to go to my grandson in Shrewsbury as he is doing a welding course at college. Had a nice chat with Adrian then drove home via Whitchurch to see John Matthews. He seems quite poorly these days seems very confused at times. He finds it hard to get things done as he can only stand for a few minutes at a time before needing to sit down. Garage time is going to be sparse for the next few days as Mrs F sails back from France on Tuesday evening.

Saturday 14th May 2016

The MAC charging saga finally appears to be resolved. I still do not understand how the ammeter worked with only one side connected. In the end I went right through the wiring and traced a couple of other oddities which have now been corrected and the ammeter now works properly. I guess I should have done that in the first place. However, none of this corrected the original problem which was the overcharging – that was solved with the replacement regulator sent through by Criterion today. In celebration, I gave the bike a good clean though ready for the Cotswold signpost Trial tomorrow.

On Thursday I rode the MSS to Frome to meet up with John Hill and some other friends. First time starting is still not guaranteed when cold, the 20/50 oil I used is clearly thinner than what it replaced so it wet sumps within a couple of days or so rather than a week or so. I also rode it to the VMCC meeting at Chippenham in the evening. Though it went well enough when pulling hard, it has a tendency to hiccup at steady speeds and when slowing down there was the odd bang in the silencer. I also found the back end tended to follow any road imperfections – hopefully cured as I fitted a new Avon Roadrider to the rear wheel this morning. Talking to Mike at Surrey Cycles who supplied the carb he reckoned that the problem was at the needle or needle jet stage which could be adjusted by raising or lowering the needle. A tip he gave me was to try operating the choke lever when the hiccup happened. If it got better the mixture was probably too weak, if it got worse – too rich. On a test run I tried this, it was clearly too rich because the problem not only got worse when I operated the choke, but if I kept opening it the engine actually stopped firing. Today I have dropped the needle from notch 2 to notch 3 – the middle position - which is where I think it should have been anyway. A test ride indicated that I was heading in the right direction. There was some hesitation at

steady speeds but nothing like as bad as before and no backfires. I will try this for a couple of days and then maybe drop it one more notch.

Tomorrow I will fit the new tyre to the front wheel after which the MSS should be pretty well sorted.

Tuesday 10th May 2016

Not really much progress on the bike front. The really dry sunny weather has gradually turned to cold and wet so no incentive to try out any of the bikes. It started late Saturday afternoon with some really heavy thundery showers but fortunately stopped around 9am on Sunday so I was able to complete the Moonraker Trial without getting too wet. . In fact, it had been so dry for the previous couple of weeks that even the green lanes were free from muddy puddles Mike and I had a cracking ride though I doubt we did well enough to win this year. Mechanically the MAC went really well though I did have some concerns about the new alternator system which was showing a 6amp charge all day. I kept a regular eye on the battery and it never got warm nor showed any signs of boiling. Subsequent investigation established that the bike itself was not wired up correctly so the regulator was not able to work properly and the ammeter is faulty anyway.

The wiring fault is now corrected but an even more peculiar feature has emerged. When the bike was incorrectly wired (one side of the ammeter was not connected to anything though it should go to the battery and now does). Yet with the incorrect wiring the ammeter appeared to work showing a discharge when the lights were switched on and moving to a charge reading once the engine was started. Now it's wired correctly the ammeter shows no reading at all other than vibration of the needle when the engine is revved. I wired another temporary ammeter into the circuit and that shows everything working correctly so the bike ammeter is obviously faulty but all rather odd.

By Sunday evening it had started raining again and I don't think it's stopped since for more than a few minutes – the dogs are really brassed off. Other than fixing the nice new number plate to the 4spd TS250 that is about the sum total of biking activities. The wet weather encouraged me to tidy the conservatory (which is really a glorified dog kennel) and that has morphed into a painting and decorating job so the garage is full of various items waiting for the paint to dry. I only tackled the job because I have the house to myself (well me plus 2 fogs) whilst Mrs F is gallivanting in France for 2 weeks. I have now got to the stage where I wish I had not started but it will get me some smarty points when she gets home.

Thursday 5th May 2016

The week did not start well. While the CB400A was 'dry' I took the opportunity to adjust the balance chain as I felt it might be the cause of some of the odd noises. On the later versions of this model, you can access the adjuster through a small plate, on mine you have to strip the drive side covers including the fluid flywheel assembly. Not difficult but boy is it messy. Even though I had drained the engine overnight, the garage floor was soon awash with oil. The chain was soon adjusted though oddly the adjuster quadrant was fitted the wrong way round so clearly someone had attempted this job in the past. Getting it back together was fiddly but not difficult. My confidence was shattered when the bike made the most hideous rattling noises when I started it up. It was obviously a slack chain type noise and I adjusted the cam chain just in case I had disturbed this somehow but it had no effect. Nothing for it but to drain the oil (near 6pints) and check my work. Absolutely nothing wrong as far as I could see. The balance chain was tight as were the locknuts. So back together it all went. Needless to say the noise was still present though perhaps not quite so loud. Despite consulting widely, I am no nearer a solution though the noise itself has quietened to the point where I felt it safe to ride it round the block. Everything worked fine and the noise could not be heard when riding. So for the moment I plan to use the bike for local journeys to see what develops. The only theory put forward so far is that I overtightened the chain but right now I cannot face the mess it creates stripping the engine down. CB400A mileage was 25345 for the record.

On a more positive front, I took the MSS for its first serious ride (about 35 miles) to Corsham and then on to Castle Combe where the VOC was meeting. The bike behaved well and I managed to start it fairly easily thank goodness.

The handling did not seem quite as good as the MAC and the gearbox was certainly clunkier particularly changing down. I decided the tyres were in need of replacement so I have ordered a pair of Avon Roadriders as fitted to the MAC. Today I changed all the fluids on the MSS adding some graphite powder to the gearbox oil (mileage 33379). In doing the service I found another possible reason for the handling to be less than optimal – there was no oil in either of the front fork legs. There is now so it will be interesting to see what improvement this makes. I also did a few cosmetic jobs. I fitted the genuine Altete horn ‘borrowed’ from the MAC whilst I clean up the original MSS horn. I also fitted a period black rubber battery cases which contains a pair of 6v AGM 5ah batteries connected in series to give 12v. This makes the near side of the bike look much smarter and original. I also replaced a number of the fasteners with s/s items. Oh yes, according to Terry who followed me for a few miles, the bike does not smoke and the frame is straight. In fact it was pulling top gear up some of the hills where Terry was changing down to 3rd on his T100. Still some way to go but the bike appeals to me and I think will be a good’un once sorted to my satisfaction.

Sunday 1st May 2016

Well the 1937 AJS was sold by Saturday lunchtime to a chap living in Melksham, only 5 miles away. He actually came to look at the G5 but could not resist the AJS. A deposit has been paid and he will pay the balance and collect on Tuesday when the banks re-open. The G5 has had a lot of views on Gumtree but no one so far has rung or emailed about it.

The alternator drive belt arrived in the post as promised and fitted perfectly. I ran up the engine and its charging really well so that’s one problem resolved. Bike is now ready for the Moonraker Trial on Sunday. Now I have to decide what to do about the electric starter kit I removed. I doubt it has much value at present so probably best to hang in there and see if I can get the alternator repaired or at least identify where it could be repaired and the cost.

Saturday afternoon was spent stripping down the garden TS250 I built last winter. Its role as an engine test bed can be carried out by the 4spd TS250 I have just built in the short term (though I have no engines to test at present anyway). Longer term I plan to keep the spare ES175/1 I bought in March and make this the garden test bike. It struck me that this would be a better platform long term as it can be for testing ES type engines as well as TS and ETZ engines. I also saw a picture recently of an ES/1 in ISDT trim and I fancy having a go at creating one of these. Some of the bits from the stripped bike have been put up for sale, the rest are stacked away in the shed.

On Sunday I manned the VCC West Wilts relay rally checkpoint at Melksham from 9 to 11am. Quite a number of people either started their or called in so the time passed very quickly. As the threatened rain had held off I decided to go for a ride round a few of the other nearby checkpoints myself. I had thought of using the MSS but chickened out in the end as I felt it was a bit risky doing such a long trip for its first serious run. The trusty CB400A was pressed into service and I rode to the Bristol control at Frenchay, the South Glos control at Whitminster (only a stone’s throw from where I collected the MZ hoard) and back to Melksham; just under 100 miles in toto. Most enjoyable and we only had a few spots of rain but the wind was quite strong.

When I got back the CB400A went straight into the workshop. I undid the sump plug and the filter housing and left it draining overnight. Tomorrow it will get a new filter and fresh oil.

Friday 29th April 2016

Had an email on Wednesday to say that the Criterion Alternator kit was ready so I rode the G5 up to Bishopstone on Thursday morning to collect it. Total journey was about 75 miles and the bike went well though 45 seems to be a sweet spot for cruising. It will go a lot faster but it just sounds too busy for my liking. I seem to have cured my carburettor woes and there was no oil leak from the top of the engine at all. However, it still needed near ½ pint of oil when I got home – I suppose two out of three’s not bad but I would dearly love to know where it’s going.

Back home I got on with the job of fitting the Criterion kit to the MAC. All quite straightforward. The only snag came right at the end when I offered up the drive belt. It was way too big. I double checked all my work but there was no way I could have got things that far out of line. Fortunately, it was only 4:30pm so a quick phone call established that

I had the belt from a different kit. Grovelling apologies and the correct one would be in the post on Friday morning. On Thursday evening I had a long hard think about the bikes in the garage and reluctantly concluded that the 1937 AJS model 12 and the Matchless G5 should be sold. The AJS because it simply has not been used for nearly 2 years and it does not figure in any of my future plans either. In truth it was bought for a specific purpose – to contest the Western Region Post Vintage regional championship. It was successful in that role and we did win but I have no further plans to ride in that class and frankly no great desire to ride a bike which has no rear suspension. The G5 is a nice enough bike but somehow not in the same class as the Velo MAC and having spent so much money on it I really need to keep it for a while to get some use and pleasure from it. Both bikes were advertised on the Jampot club web site and on Gumtree on Friday evening.

Tuesday 26th April 2016

Quite a satisfying couple of days. On Monday I took the seat and tank off the G5 and examined the top end for the source of the oil leak. Initially I thought it was coming up the studs but this turned out to be totally wrong. When I removed the cover for the pushrods I found the rubber seal was partially tucked inside leaving a 2" gap for oil and fumes to escape. I also made an even more useful discovery; there was no clearance on the exhaust pushrod. This almost certainly explains the popping and banging on the overrun as the exhaust valve could never close completely. Both problems were easily fixed and while I had good access to the carburettor, I cleaned out the pilot jet once again. The bike was transformed; it starts easily, a proper tickover can be set and the overrun popping has gone.

Yesterday I ordered a new Wassel 928 carb for the MSS and it arrived this morning. So now it was the MSS's turn to be stripped of seat and tank. Fitting the carb was pretty straightforward, the choke and throttle cables were just and just long enough to do the job. While the rocker box was accessible I decided to check the tappets and low and behold, the inlet valve had no clearance at all! This was quickly rectified and everything reassembled. Bike now starts easily and ticks over nicely. It needs a test run to get it really warm for a final tune but looking good.

I have got nowhere trying to find the source a repair or replacement for the alternator on the MAC so I have ordered a kit from Criterion. This is basically a special housing to take a Lucas alternator and comes with pulleys, drive belt and a regulator. It locates where the starter motor currently sits so the whole of the Alton kit has now been removed from the bike in preparation. Hopefully I will be able to sell the Alton stuff to recoup some of the cost of the Criterion kit.

Sunday 24th April 2016

Great ride on Saturday, in the end I went as far as the Rhayader lunch stop before turning for home. At that point the other guys were closer to their beds than I was. Total mileage for the day was 219 and the CB400A ran like a dream. On Sunday I was able to take part in the VMCC section St Georges Run. This started in Malmesbury and finished at a pub only 5 miles from home which was very handy. I skipped the lunch so that I could get home and let the dogs out. I rode the Blue Supa5 – first time since the Colombres rally last October. It went very well once I had managed to get the clutch plates to clear.

This evening I decided to investigate the top end oil leak on the G5. Getting the tank off was a bit of a puzzle initially, putting it back properly will require some better fixing to be made. I made two problems both of which lay at my door. The first was that the rubber gasket which seals the pushrod cover plate was not seated properly leaving a large gap. Though there was quite a lot of oil around the rockerbox and head area, it seems most likely that it all emanates from this badly fitted gasket. Some of the rockerbox bolts were a tad slacker than they should have been so these were torqued down as well. Everything is now back together and all being well a test run tomorrow should confirm the leak is stemmed.

The second discovery was that both pushrods were incorrectly adjusted. The exhaust pushrod especially was far too tight and would almost certainly have prevented the valve from closing fully. This may well be the cause of the banging and popping on the overrun. They are now adjusted and again I hope to find an improvement when I take it for a test run tomorrow.

Friday 22nd April 2016

Gosh 10 days to catch up with since I last wrote up the blog. In part this is because I was busy getting the Motorhome ready for its first outing of the season then we spent 4 days camping at Cheddar last weekend. I took the Velo MAC and did the social run on Saturday and the Cheddar Trial on Sunday. Lovely routes on both days and the MAC ran perfectly. Sadly however, the alternator stopped charging but it ran fine on what life was left in the battery. Sorting out the alternator is still a work in progress as it's a very specialised unit built into the electric start system.

The MSS is still not finally sorted. Turns out the 626 carb fitted is not the correct one (it should be a 28mm choke) so I am reluctant to spend too much time and effort sorting it out. I have done the mod to expose the pilot bush from the other side so that it could be cleaned out properly and the tickover was a little better but still not right. There are a couple of other things I want to try before giving in and buying new carb.

The G5 was used on Thursday for a 60 mile ride to Minety for a lunch time VMCC meeting. It runs very well (though it still feels well undergeared) and Terry who followed me reported no smoke was visible yet it consumed about 1/4 pint of oil somewhere on the trip. There is a fairly significant oil leak from the rocker box area so this obviously has to be sorted first. Good news is that neither the gearbox or primary chaincase needed any topping up. The jobs are stacking up!

Today I dragged the CB400A and my old Blue Supa5 from the garage and gave both quick checkover. I have two runs planned for this weekend and one of both of these bikes will be needed. The Supa5 was cleaned and polished after the Colombres Rally and only needed some air in the tyres. The C400A needed the same plus some engine oil and a really good clean. It was sprayed liberally with preservative at the start of the winter and has been the winter hack but has come up really well with no serious rust or other corrosion evident. Due to a misunderstanding over the dates of my wife's holiday in France I did not enter the Twin Dragon Run this year. However, I plan to ride with my buddies part way to Dolgellau on Saturday then return home. Depending on the weather and how I am feeling, somewhere around Builth Wells should be my turning point.

On Sunday it's our section St George's run starting from Malmesbury. This is a run that I rarely get to do as it always clashes with the Twin Dragon so this year I finally get a chance to take part. I plan to use the supa5 as it needs an airing.

Tuesday 12th April 2016

Monday was a complete washout weatherwise and I had other jobs around the house that kept me out of the garage for most of the day so all I got to do was tidy it up a little and get the tools back in their correct homes. Today dawned dry and sunny – perfect for an inaugural run on the MSS. It started easily enough and again a mile or so later after I filled the tank. The carb is clearly set very lean as it needed the choke for most of that distance and again to restart. However, it did eventually warm up enough to run sweetly without choke and cruised sweetly and stress free at 60 up the bypass. That front brake is fantastic – I would say even better than the TLS Honda in my MZ. Gearbox is fine but not as smooth as the MAC so maybe some adjustment is possible but not really a priority. Back home the tickover was lumpy and much too fast so I tried tuning the carb. I now have a slower but still lumpy tickover. Adjusting the airscrew did not seem to have much if any effect and when I looked at the plug it seemed to me that the engine is running lean. The bike is fitted with an after-market concentric 626 and I do not have any information about the correct settings or tuning of these carbs (The original would have been a 376 monobloc). My gut feeling is that the pilot jet and or its passageways are at least partially blocked but I have yet to discover how to access and clean them. So a few things to do but no major problems – about what you expect from a new to you bike. I think the MAC is going to stay in service for some while yet – the target is to get the MSS sorted for the Colombres rally in October.



Sunday 10th April 2016

I took the G5 on its first longish run today up to the MZRC meeting at Ham – just under 40 miles each way. It still bangs and pops on the overrun sometimes but that apart it did not miss a beat going up or coming back. It still feels undergeared; it romps up hills in top gear. Going up I cruised at an indicated 43-45 and 45-50 on the way back. After the run the gearbox and chaincase levels had not dropped at all which was pleasing. There was some oil from the rocker cover gasket evident and some drips underneath but only a small amount on the back tyre. This must all have come from the engine as it needed over ½ pint to refill back home yet when checked at Ham only a small drop in level was observed. There is no smoke from the exhaust so it would seem that the engine is either leaking it or more likely blowing it out of the breather though why is something I have yet to establish. The strong and gusty wind made for unpleasant riding conditions but the G5 performed well and if I did not have so many other bikes I would probably be happy to work through its issues. However, the reality is that I have too many bikes and something will have to be sold or at least go on extended loan. I was hoping that the G5 would prove to be as good as the MAC but frankly I don't think it's in the same league. It almost certainly has more raw power but it's not as smooth and feels stressed at anything over 50 whereas the MAC will hold 55 and more easily. I'll see how I feel about it in the morning.

There was a good turnout at the MZRC meeting with Ian Young making a brief appearance – hard to believe it was exactly a month ago that he had his stroke. He is far from well but much better than I had expected with none of the paralysis or speech impediments that so often arise from this ailment. His main problem is that his vision is still poor and he cannot read; for him this is a life changing situation. The medics say it will recover in time – let's hope they are right. I dropped off a rear shock assembly for Graham White and picked up a speedo gearbox for the ES250/1 motor from Roger Badland. That should make the motor complete and ready to install though goodness knows when I will get round to it.

Saturday 9th April 2016

It was too wet to do anything outside so I pulled the 4spd TS250 back into the workshop and spent some time finishing of the wiring, fitting the remaining things like tank and seat and the various cables. Late in the afternoon the sun came out for a while so I was able to take the picture below. Not a wonderful restoration job but a far cry from the wreck I brought home in January.



Friday 8th April 2016

Too busy playing to write up the blogg for a few days. The MSS has yet to be ridden as it's my policy to check over a bike on the bench first. Overall its rather better than I had expected; for once the photos did not lie. I have altered a few things to suit my personal preferences. Nothing drastic, the main one being to remove the pannier frames and relocate the rear carrier brackets and the horn to a more pleasing position. I have of course checked over fluid levels and suchlike, everything spot on. The only issue I had was noise when spinning the back wheel. Investigating this has occupied a fair amount of time and proved in the end to be caused by the chain though at once stage wheel bearings and sprocket alignment were under scrutiny. I have a new chain on order.

On Thursday we had our first mid-week run of the season from Melksham to Compton Abbas airfield near Shaftesbury via a very convoluted but interesting route. In some ways it was Déjà vu as much of it duplicated the roads I used on the Westward Ho night trial last Friday. Apart from the obvious difference of daylight it was noticeably colder and wetter yesterday and I was glad to get home for a warm up. The CB400A ran very well.

Last weekend my friend terry bent up a sub a carrier frame for the ETZ250 and this is now fitted to the bike along with a top box. The bike is now pretty much ready for an MoT though cosmetically its still somewhat challenged. This weekend is the MZ Bristol section meeting and I am pondering which bike to ride. I would like to take the G5 as it needs a longish run to help me decide if it's to remain in the stable. On the other hand the MAC and the blue Supa5

are both taxed and ready to go as are the trail TS150 and the ES250 Trophy. Bit spoilt for choice at present – perhaps it's time to slim the stable down again.

Monday 4th April 2016

To pass the time whilst waiting for the MSS to turn up I got the MAC on the bike lift and cleaned it up. Actually it was more of a wipeover with an oily rag as it's not the shiniest bike however much TLC it's given. It did not seem to have suffered any great harm from the abuse on the F-B and I was pleased to discover that the gearbox oil level was still right up to the mark. Checking the primary chain case is more difficult as there is no level plug so I drained it and got about 100cc out which is pretty much what it should be. More important, there was no trace of water either from the ford at Kinton nor the pressure washer when I got home. The main oil tank seemed to have dropped a bit but it's always best to check after the engine has been run so that what's drained into the sump is pumped back into the tank.

Still needing to pass the time I did some more work on the 4spd project and wheeled it out for a photoshoot. Later I made a start on the wiring to kill a bit more time. The tank, seat and battery cover are all done but they don't take long to fit and would get in the way of the wiring. I think it's coming on nicely for what was an old wreck.



The MSS finally turned up around 7pm just as it was getting dark and it was raining so playing with that will have to wait until tomorrow.

Sunday 2nd April 2016

The MAC did near 150 miles today whilst taking part in the Felix Burke navigation trial today. Our start point was near Sapperton Village after which we visited all the controls which had green lane options. Most were fairly easy, even the ford at Kinton was not too deep. The exception was Salperton which fortunately we tackled from the 'wrong' end riding down hill to the control point. It is now very overgrown to the point that sidecars and 3-wheelers were not allowed to use it. Effectively it's one long narrow rut so deep in places that at one stage my bike grounded on the footrests with the back wheel spinning uselessly. I was able to get off and leave the bike upright with the engine running whilst I dragged it bodily forward to a point where the wheel was touching the ground again so that progress could resume. Funny thing was exactly the same thing happened the first time I rode a rigid MSS Velo in

this trial in 1973 (except it was called the Cotswold Trial at that time Felix was still an active rider in those days). Up to that point we all had a perfect score. However, the last 3 controls were questions only and we came down to earth with a bump. I doubt we will get the team award this year but it was great fun. The picture shows the state of the bike when I got home. It has now been pressure washed and tomorrow it will need a proper clean.



Friday 1st April 2016

The 4 spd project is coming on nicely. My parcel from OST2RAD arrived this morning so I was able to fit the swinging arm and the back wheel so it is no mobile. The engine is also in the frame. Though it doesn't sound much it took a surprising long time to find the correct size nuts & bolts and other small fittings. That's the difference between building a bike from scratch using a pile of bits from a miscellany of machines and reassembling a running bike that had been stripped for a makeover.

I tried to take it easy during the day and had a couple of hours shuteye late afternoon to make sure I was rested before the night trial. Left home at 21:30 and got to Weyhill around 10:30 having diverted to Melksham for fuel. The weather was just about perfect, dry and cool but nowhere near freezing. Not like last year when we had thick fog for most of the run. I met up with some old friends and wished them luck and listened to the briefing. Normally the first riders leave at midnight but this year some snuck off straight after the briefing and others were being flagged away from 23:30. I followed the second group away about 5 minutes later. I had planned my own route so after a couple of miles we went our separate ways and I rode to Shaftesbury (the end of the first stage) without seeing anyone else. Tesco's garage was eerily quiet when I got there about 1am and I worked out that those following the official route would probably start arriving until near 2am. It was chilly by then so I rode home completing just over 100 miles. The CB400A went well and it was a most enjoyable ride but I was glad to see my bed.



Thursday 31st March 2016

The big news is that the MSS has been collected from Scotland and is scheduled for delivery on Monday afternoon. Though I am naturally anxious to get my hands on the bike its actually a good thing that it won't be delivered before the weekend. On Friday midnight the 2016 Westward Ho night trial starts from the Weyhill near Andover. Though I have not entered this year, I do plan to ride to the start and do the first section which ends at Shaftesbury about 2pm. On Saturday my sons and two of our grandchildren are coming for the weekend and on Sunday I am riding in the Felix Burke Navigation trial in the Cotswolds which is why I don't have time to complete the whole Westward Ho trial. I love both events but every year they run on the same weekend forcing me to make a difficult choice.

I will use the CB400A on Friday night and have fitted a route card roller and some lights so I can read it. Other than checking the tyre pressures and the oil level that's about as much attention as it's going to get.

Monday 28th March 2016

Storm Katie was still lingering this morning so I spent a large part of the day tinkering with the G5. I followed the instructions meticulously to set the timing at $\frac{1}{4}$ " btdc fully advanced and have now scratched a line on the back plate so it can be restored easily should it ever get disturbed. I don't think it was far out if at all but now I am confident it is right. Next job was to remove the exhaust system and then fit the pipe with some sealant to make sure there was no air leak at that point. Again I don't think there was a problem as the pipe was a very good fit but best to be sure. I also replaced the coil with a new 6V one from my MZ spares stock.

In between these jobs I removed, rubbed down and painted the lower legs of both rear shocks. The top covers were fine as were the chrome lower covers. The brake rod was also rubbed down and painted. Once everything had dried I took advantage of a sunny spell and went for a 3 mile ride. I wish I could say that the changes had cured all the problems but that would be a gross exaggeration. There is still popping and banging in the exhaust on the overrun

and the tickover, though more reliable is still a bit lumpy. So a bit better but certainly not as well sorted as the MAC. Given that I have replaced all the electrics it does point to the carburettor being the problem and what I really need to do is swap it out for a known good one. However, none of my other bikes have anything suitable to donate and I doubt I have anything suitable in my Amal spares box either. Reluctant to buy one until I have proven it is the right solution so I may just have to put up with it and use as is until I have made my mind up whether to keep it or sell it. As of today the MAC would win hands down but I want to give the G5 every possible chance as I waited a long time to get one. The MAC has already been checked over for Sunday's ride but I do need to pack a few extra items I don't normally carry on local rides things like spare chain links, cables, tyre levers pump and inner tubes. These are items they sometimes ask you to produce to get bonus marks.

I had a very pleasant surprise on Wednesday when I received the V5C and other documents for the MSS. I will be only the third owner after 56 years. The first owner kept it until 1986. I guess the first owner must be the one who replaced the original Venom motor with the MSS engine and gearbox now fitted as the chap I bought it from seems unaware of the change. The V5C has been updated with the MSS engine number and this dates from 1955, not that it matters as they made no changes to the MSS engines over that period.

On a different tack, I have got fed up with tripping over all the bits and pieces belonging to the 4 spd project so this morning I made a start on assembling it. The aim was to get it to rolling chassis stage so that it's easy to move around. It's coming on slowly but quite well, even the simplest bits of assembly seem to take a long time because few of these bits ever fitted together before on the same bike and you have to search for the correct size and length of every nut & bolt. The only major hiccup was the fact that the new shoes I fitted to the front brake drum were oversize and would not go into the drum. I tried fitting an old set of brake shoes but they were hopeless. Somewhat nervously, I set up the brake plate with new shoes in the lathe and gently skimmed them down. I guess a proper engineer would be able to measure everything and simply turn to size in one operation. I adopted the pragmatic method and took a little off at a time tried for fit then skimmed a bit more until eventually the plate would just slide into the drum. Now I have a fantastic brake.

Sunday 27th March 2016

The carriers have been in contact with the vendor of the MSS and are talking about a collection on Wednesday or Thursday of this coming week; with luck I should have it by next weekend. Today I rode the MAC to Chew Magna for VOC meet. The weather forecast was sunshine and showers with strong winds and I was lucky in that I missed most of the rain but got some viscous side winds and wet slippery roads. Did about 50 miles altogether and the bike went really well, it is a real pleasure to ride. I just hope the MSS is as good if so I shall be well pleased. When we got back I gave it a checkover and topped up the oil levels ready for the F-B trial next Sunday. I also made a bracket to make the wiring to the rear lights more secure and put a block under the side stand to keep the bike more vertical. I have a phobia about side stands that let the bike lean to far over.

The final regs for the F-B road trial arrived by post yesterday. This is a scatter navigation trial where you have to plan a route visiting your own choice of 12 controls from a list of 16. Some of the controls have green lane options or other special tests for which bonus marks are awarded, otherwise you have to answer questions which is a bit of a lottery. You also have to get as close to a 60 mile route as possible to maximise bonus points, anything over 60 incurs penalties. So choosing your controls and finding a 60 mile route through them can be a challenging task. It's true to say that the F-B trial is won in the planning as much as in the execution. Anyway I have sorted out what I think is a maximum score route visiting all the controls with green lanes. That leaves 4 where the only choice is questions so fingers crossed they are easy – or so hard that no one gets the right answer.

I placed an order with OST2RAD in Germany on Saturday for various odds and ends. The most important thing in the short term is the swinging arm cup washers and seals for the 4spd project. Once I have these I can start to assemble the frame and make it into a rolling chassis. It's at that point that I will discover what other (probably small) items I still need to find or in extremis – buy.

Tomorrow is forecast to be a wet Easter Monday so my plan is to get the G5 on the bike lift to redo the timing and sort out a few of the cosmetic items. I really need to get some miles on this bike to decide if it has a long term future in the garage. Given how well the MAC went today it's going to be a tough head-head for the 350's.

Friday 25th March 2016

First and most important thing to log is that the new Velo passed its MoT this afternoon with no advisories and whatever the problem with the front brake which had been concerning the vendor has been fixed by what has been done to it this week. I have now transferred the funds and paid a deposit to the carrier so in due course it should appear in my garage.

Other than that it has been a question of tidying up various things to try and get the right bits on the right bikes so that I free up the parts I need for my TS250 4spd project. First thing was to put the 18" drum brake wheel which came out of the ETZ250 on Tuesday into the Garden Supa5 which freed up the 16" wheel it was wearing as a temporary measure. Next was to look at a fairly tidy Supa5 silencer which Mike D gave me recently. He had replaced it because it had loose baffles and rattled miserably most of the time. It was only a cheapo job so with nothing to lose I cut out the 3 welds holding the end cap. As far as I could see the baffles were simply a very poor fit so I put in some packing pieces held in place by self-tappers and replaced the end cap; now also held in place by self-tappers so it was easy to remove again if needed. Job done and another bit in stock for the 4spd project.

While the ETZ250 was in the workshop, I got the urge to make a rear carrier for it. More accurately, I butchered an existing carrier and a rear mudguard stay from some unknown donor bike to create something that will do the job for now. When he gets back from holiday, I may well ask Terry to use my frame as a template to bend up a more suitable subframe. Whilst my effort will do the job it is not really man enough for heavy weights and I managed to kink the tubing as well. The battery cover is in the workshop being sprayed so gradually it's coming together,



Wednesday 23rd March 2016

First job on Monday was to find, refurb and fit the original BVF carb to the trail TS150. The only thing wrong with it was a leaky float but I found a new one in my spares stock that fitted. It clearly suits the bike better as it seems to run a lot smoother and ticks over reliably. Oh well, maybe I now know why these BVF clone carbs are so cheap, they just don't seem to do the job properly.

I needed some bolts and washers so took the G5 to Melksham for its first run since I repaired the gearbox oil leak. It went very well so I carried on to Neston for a coffee and a natter with Mike and then rode home; just over 20 miles in total. No further misfiring and the hesitation at low revs has gone as well. The tickover is still a bit unreliable and there is popping and banging in the exhaust on the overrun. I suspect they are linked, the latter is normally associated with leaks on the exhaust near the head (which is just a push fit). On the positive side, though there was a small amount of oil under the bike overnight, there was no appreciable drop in engine or gearbox oil levels. The oil seems to be coming from the primary drive side so I will leave investigation this until I am ready to fit the larger gearbox sprocket as it's far too low geared at present. One other thing I noticed was that both of the transfers I put on recently have fallen off – again not a priority issue.

Tuesday was just a pottering about day. I cleaned up and painted a few items for the 4spd project, it's going to be blue mainly because I like the colour and I have some left over from a previous project. I will then be able to 'borrow' bits from the garden Supa5 until such time as I can find replacement parts. The painted bits are in the greenhouse to harden off. I have also made a start on welding up the spare ES175 centre stand. It's coming on quite well but work stopped when I ran out of welding rods. I was given the box of rods over 30 years ago so they lasted well but I will finally have to buy some.

Today I refitted the original front forks to the ETZ250 have refurbished both legs with new stanchions and seals. I was then able to install a refurbished disk brake wheel and the hydraulics. While I was at it I fitted a matched pair of indicator stems and indicator bodies to make the front end totally original in appearance. One reason for swapping the indicator stems was that I thought I had originally fitted them upside down as they collided with the tank on full lock. However, this turned out to be only partly true. Fitted correctly the stems clear the tank but the top yoke no longer does. Closer inspection of the steering head revealed that the stop plate was missing. Not much I can do about that until the frame is fully stripped. For now I will tape some bits of rubber to the tank to stop it being chipped or dented further.

I finally got tired of falling over the rack from PDD99W which was removed a while back to allow a rear mudguard swap. Anyway it is now back on the bike along with the top box; I plan to tax this bike from 1st April.

Sunday 20th March 2016

First serious ride of the year today when four of us did circa 50 miles riding the perimeter roads round the army ranges at Imber and Larkhill. In fact the byeway from Urchfont to the Bustard inn was also open so we rode that as well. Thought I knew my way back from the Bustard but in the event we finished up on the Upavon-Amesbury road near Fighledean. Very cold but dry and a most enjoyable time was had. I rode the Trail TS150 and it did not miss a beat though the carburetion felt a bit odd at times and the plug was showing very rich when I got home. I recently fitted the brand new BVF clone I bought a while back from Germany and I think it would be wise to put back the original carb. Tomorrow's job will be to find it and check it over. I also found that the nuts holding the seat on had gone walkabout but that was easily fixed and this time I fitted a lockwasher and made sure they were tight. Other than that it survived the potholes very well.

Saturday 19th March 2016

After the abortive trip to Cheltenham I felt pretty low this morning – mostly due to a bug which has turned my legs to jelly by the time I had been to town to bank the cash I took out yesterday. No incentive to work in the garden or the garage so it gave me time to think about the bike I had seen yesterday and to review the other Velocettes I had seen advertised over the past month or so. One seemed in hindsight to tick many of the boxes. I had passed it by at the time as it was in Scotland making viewing impossible and transportation expensive based on the assumption it was going to be similar to the cost of getting the Jampot bikes delivered. However, I texted a courier company now used by Jerry Deekes for a quote which came by return and was £120, much lower than I had expected and less even than it would have cost me to drive up to collect (850 mile round trip). So out of interest I emailed the vendor who told me the bike was still available and sent me some newer photos and a bit more information. Anyway after long deliberation, consulting Mike Davis and some haggling, we concluded a deal tonight so that the total cost will be significantly less than the bike in Cheltenham. Moreover it is an MSS which is the engine spec I wanted but with some Venom shiny bits, a modern BTH electronic magneto, Alton 12v alternator powered electrics and best of all a Twin leading shoe front brake. It probably needs some attention to the cosmetics but I did not want an overly restored bike as I would be afraid to use it. This one has been owned since 1986 and used regularly so should be well sorted. The rack will be useful in Spain and it has Craven panniers though I am not sure if I would ever use these. No date for delivery yet as it is going to be freshly MoT'd first.



To further cheer me up, the V5C arrived in the post for the 1974 4spd TS250 which I retained from the hoard so it's now legally mine. The last recorded owner lived in Gloucester in 1981 so quite how and when it finished up in Whitminster with George is unknown. This provides the incentive to carry on with its rebuild but before I do space for storing bikes is becoming critical so it may be best to defer this until I have a chance to review and rationalise the stable. Quite a good day overall.

Friday 18th March 2016

No workshop activity today other than to drag the Trail TS150 from hibernation. It started second kick and all seems well but it will get a proper checkover tomorrow with the intention of using it on Sunday. Only other motorcycle

related activity was to drive up to Cheltenham to look at a Velocette Viper converted to Venom spec. Took Mike D with me and though tempted I finally decided not to buy it. Just felt it needed too many things requiring attention before I would be happy with it. This was the first one I have viewed in the flesh as distinct from photos and phone calls. I may come to regret my decision but Mike reckoned I might have regretted it more if I had bought it. This is the link if you want to look at the bike:

http://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/i.html?_odkw=&_osacat=422&_from=R40&_trksid=p2045573.m570.l1313.TR12.TRC2.A0.H0.XVelocette.TRS0&_nkw=Velocette&_sacat=422

Thursday 17th March 2016

The day did not start too well, our terrier managed to wriggle out of her collar and follow our other dog into the fields. I eventually found her just in time to see her disappear into a large rabbit hole. After 1/2hour of calling and chasing from one hole to another I had to conclude she was stuck so I had to walk home collect wife, car, neighbour and spades to dig her out. Fortunately, the farmer was working in the field and spotted that she had got free and was busy chasing rabbits on the other side of the field. Eventually we cornered her trying to wriggle into another burrow.

Back home it was nigh on time to head for the Fox & Hounds at Colerne for our MCC lunchtime meeting. I rode the MAC for the first time this since the new tyres were fitted and it went really well, not fast just a nice comfortable ride with enough power to cope with the hills and enjoy life. Over lunch we chatted about the tracks around the Imber ranges which are byeways and open to the public. Having nothing in the calendar this weekend and with the dry weather forecast to continue, it was a bit of a no-brainer to set up a ride for Sunday. Now pondering on which bike to ride – could be a good chance to try out the Trail TS150 since this is the sort of thing I built it for.

In the evening I decided I needed some garage therapy and stripped down the seat of the ETZ250 for which I now have a replacement seat cover. The seat pan was well rusty but solid so it was copiously wire brushed then painted with Hammerite silver; looked treat afterwards. When it had dried I put on the new cover and the result can be seen below.



Wednesday 16th March 2016

The I/link fronts forks from the garden Supa5 have been sold , funnily enough to a guy who lives not far from the hotel we are staying at in Northumbria in May. He is not desperate for them so I will take them with me in the van, saves me having to pack them up and him the postage.

So today I stripped the forks from the Supa5 and replaced them with a pair of teleforks I have set aside for the purpose. The only suitable front mudguard I had was painted green (done to match to the T250 outfit but it was sold before I got round to fitting them). At present it also has a 16" drum brake front wheel pending refurbishing an 18" wheel. This will be a fairly urgent task as the 16" wheel is destined for the 4spd TS250 project. I seem to have a surplus of disk brake wheels (3 spare at the last count) but very few complete drum brake front wheels. Do have a couple of bare hubs though. Their rims were probably donated to Honda TLS hub rebuilds.

Flushed with enthusiasm I decided to sort out a few other small jobs. First was to fit the correct drive side cover to the ES250/1 engine. This was fairly straightforward once I had found a spare kickstart lever and a cotter pin. The engine is now complete and ready to be dropped into the frame when the time seems right. I then stripped down the original forks from the ETZ250 and fitted new stanchions which I have had in stock for a while. These fork legs have the lugs for the disk brake caliper so once fitted, I have the option to refit the disk brake wheel. I found a spare front 18" drum brake wheel and started to clean it up. However, this one came from the Whitminster hoard and it proved to be quite badly corroded. In the end I abandoned the cleanup apart from salvaging the brake plate and brake shoes.

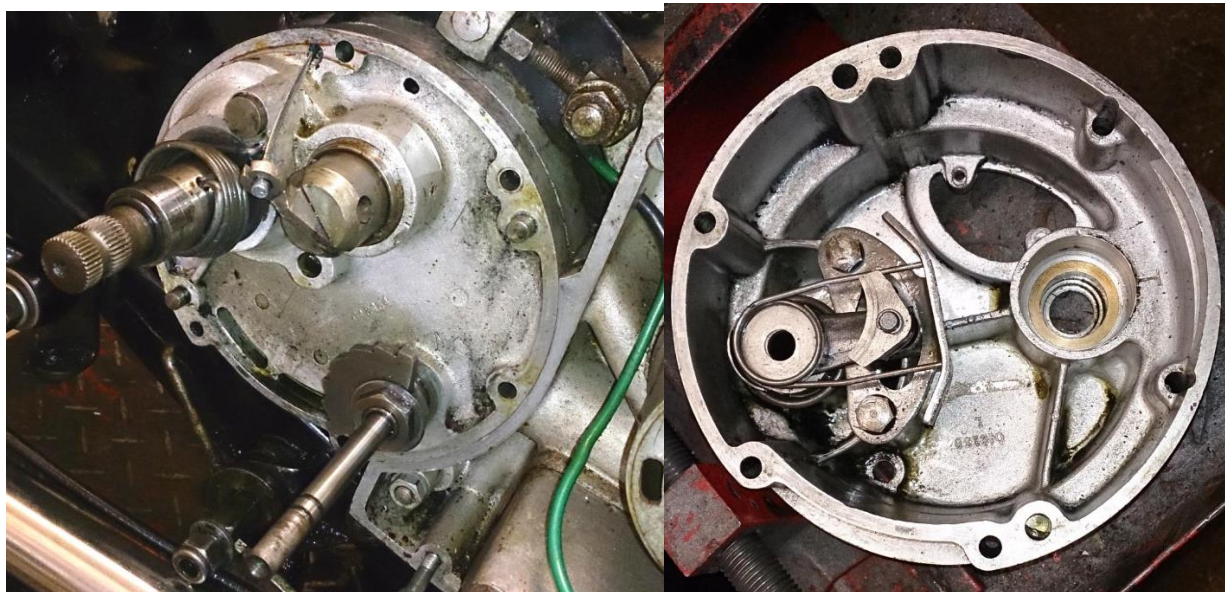
Tuesday 15th March 2016

Monday was spent stripping the front brake caliper on the CB400 to investigate the poor braking. The caliper is typical Japanese with a single piston and the body sliding on pins to balance everything up. The sliding pin part was fine so left alone. The pads themselves were barely worn but corroded at the edges so I cleaned them up and the body itself. My main concern was the disk which is quite badly scored on one side but near perfect on the other. I could not see any reason for this, the body had no contact marks and there was no evidence of anything embedded in the pads. I suspect therefore it was a previous set of pads which did the damage. Terry D had a look for me and we mic'd up the disk which was well inside Honda's wear limits. A test ride after reassembly did show some improvement but not convinced they are 100%. I have bought a set of new pads but not fitted them yet. I am going to try and find a replacement disk first.

Next task was the ES175 centre stand. Terry supported my ideas for repairing it and it is now clamped up ready for tack welding. The full repair will need some 3mm steel sheet which I am scrounging from another friend. Not really that confident over welding so I shall leave the job until I feel like tackling it but at least the repair is started and a solution is on the horizon.



Today I finally knuckled down and stripped the outer cover from the G5 gearbox. I have kept putting it off as I don't really like working on gearboxes but in the end it was quite straightforward. All I needed to do was replace the O ring on the k/s spindle so only the outer cover needs to be removed but my fear was that the inner cover would come off as well as it is retained by the same set of screws. Thankfully this did not happen and the rest of the gearbox internals remained safely in the box. The pictures show the inside of the outer cover and what remains attached to the inner cover. Anyway its now all back together. Let's hope it remains oil tight.



While I was waiting to see if there were any leaks, I decided it was time to swap the handlebars on the G5. The bars it came with are from a triumph and really don't suit the bike nor do they give a good riding position. I found a pair which I felt were more suitable and these are now fitted. Obviously only a road test will determine if they are actually better. Looking at the photo I can see I have forgotten to refit the mirror, must go and remedy that now; I hate riding bikes without mirrors. Oh and still no leaks from the end of the gearbox I tackled today. Some evidence of a leak from the other side though but I rather expected that. This is a bit like peeling an onion, fix one thing and it simply brings the next problem into focus.



Sunday 13th March 2016

Well the day started well with a small group of us riding up to Ham for the MZ meeting. Sadly we were met by Mrs Young to tell us that Ian Young had a stroke on Friday and was in hospital in Gloucester. Seems he was driving when it happened and crashed the car writing it off. Rather put the blight on what was otherwise a very pleasant day. Ian has been a long time MZ club member and indeed a Past President of the VMCC. His condition sounds serious and the omens are not good but it will be typical of Ian to prove us all wrong.

Anyway turning to lighter things we had a good ride both ways with cloudless skies and not too cold. I rode the CB400A for the first time since Boxing Day. It really needs a good clean as the GT85 preservative has encouraged all the dust and dirt to stick to it. However, I am doubtful that spring has really arrived and reluctant to clean it off until I am sure there is no chance of salt on the road. The front brake was less than inspiring, it has never been impressive as it's a single disk setup and the disk itself is a bit small but today it was even worse than I remember. Looks like another job lined up.

In between times I have been looking at the centre stand I removed from the donor ES175. It has been badly repaired in the past and is a bit of a mess so I decided to start by cutting away all the tacked on bits with the angle grinder to get back to its original shape. I have now more or less achieved that situation and am now waiting for inspiration to strike on how to repair it. To help me get it all lined up properly, I dug out the old bent ES175 frame. The damage to this does not affect the way the centre stand fits and operates. I have a feeling I shall need to consult that clever Mr Dixon.

Saturday 12th March 2016

Took the G5 for a 3 mile ride round my test circuit today and the surging and hesitating were absent as was the misfire. It did pop and bang a bit in the exhaust on the overrun which will also need to be investigated but overall it's now a usable bike so time to address the oil leaks and a couple of other little tasks.

Gardening and getting Mrs F and friends ready for a girls weekend at Crufts apart from the main task yesterday was stripping down the engine from the new red ETZ250. Not an essential task but I just wanted to know what sort of state it was in besides being filthy (which it still is for now). Normally stripping MZ motors is a piece of cake if you have the right tools. This one was the exception because the crankshaft was seized and the piston was stuck in the bore. I managed to get a little movement by using 3 of the studs to lift the barrel a little, the 4th stud refused to move. Eventually I was able to create a gap large enough to wedge of increasing size. With the use of some heat, lots of penetrating oil and large and large wedges the barrel lifted off the piston though it was tight right to the last ½". Though the flywheels and bearings were very rusty there was no real sign of major water ingress. I think the



crank was probably already seized through lack of oil and time and airborne moisture created the rust. There was plenty of oil in the oil tank so the oil pump is suspect. The rest of the engine strip was easy enough and apart from a broken kickstart spring and a hideous homemade cotter pin it all seems to be in good condition. Certainly it has not been apart before. The gear selectors were perfect so it looks as though it has never suffered from 3rd gear syndrome. The piston shows standard bore with only a small wear lip on the barrel, quite consistent with the 23k shown on the speedo. Everything has now been boxed up so that it can be rebuilt in the fullness of time. The mainshafts on the crank are good so it can probably be rebuilt with new b/e and conrod once I have shot blasted the flywheels. Not a priority job for now as I don't really have a need for another ETZ motor.

Friday 11th March 2016

Bought some petrol for the ETZ250 and pleased to say that the engine started easily and sounds pretty smooth. Will need to check my records to remind me of the origins of this engine and what sort of rebuild I gave it. Did not run it for long as I was not sure if it had any oil. I don't normally fill them until they are required. Postscript – gearbox was empty, now filled. So that's stage one of the ETZ250 project. Next stage requires spending money to get an MoT, tax and insurance. This can wait as I have plenty of more urgent jobs on hand. Later if it performs well, I have in stock new mudguards, seat cover and various other bits to smarten it up. I even found the can of Rover vermillion which is a dead match for the MZ orange/red colour. ETZ now in garage to free up the workshop.

Next on the bike lift was the G5. I played around with timing having cleaned the points (which look new). As far as I could tell it was correct anyway and moving the points plate while the engine was running made little if any difference. I did notice that the points were arcing more than I liked so found and fitted another condenser. Though there was now no trace of the misfire I could not get a proper tickover unless the pilot air screw was right in on richest setting. A road test was carried out and it pulled well on wider throttle settings with no misfires. However, it was back to its old tricks of surging and hesitating on low throttle settings. We have been there before and back in the garage I found a blocked pilot jet and murky petrol in the Monobloc base nut. An in-line fuel filter is clearly needed in the short term and a tank clean asap. I could only run the engine briefly after this. Today I will take it for a run and reset the carb. The seals and gaskets for the gearbox end cover have arrived so that's another job to be tackled – this is a never ending project, just hope I like the bike after all this.

Steve the powder coater rang so I popped over to pick up the TS250 swinging arm and the G5 gearbox top cover which is now fitted. I am pretty close to being able to start the TS250 rebuild – just need the cupped washers and seals for the swinging arm spindle. I know I have some but they refuse to emerge from their black hole. I will have another search today but to encourage them to appear, I emailed Roger Badland last night to see if he could lend me a set. This trick worked when I could not find the ES175 speedo gearbox.

Several people responded to my note about ordering spares from Germany so I placed an order with Meinzwerad last night as they were the best source for the majority of the bits requested. Sadly they don't stock the cup washers. I also decided to sell the leading link forks which came originally from Mark Dicker to raise a bit of cash and clear some space (the garden TS is going back to teles now I have enough bits). Put an advert on the MZ web site and already have someone interested.

Wednesday 9th March 2016

Lost the plot on time this week so all I can report on is what's been done, not necessarily when. In the main it's been a question of rationalising things, swapping bits around various bikes to get the best combination of parts. For example I have put the RH fork leg which had a damaged mudguard mounting on the TS150 trail bike. The leg was in otherwise very good condition and since the mudguard on the TS150 is mounted directly to the yoke the damaged mounting is of no consequence. This means I now have a pair of good fork legs to fit to the garden TS250 so that I can remove and probably sell the L/L forks currently fitted. I finished cleaning up and crudely painting a TS250 rear mudguard left over from the hoard. The mudguard which was fitted is now due for a makeover and will be used on the 4spd TS250 project.

Next was to get the purple ES175 on the bike lift to look it over for and remove bits I need for my other ES175. This included the clutch side and dynamo side engine covers. To my surprise the engine actually turns over albeit reluctantly. The front fork legs have been replaced with a spare set of rear legs. They will need stripping and servicing but they look to generally sound. I replaced the throttle side handlebar half with the damaged one from the black ES175 though I am not sure it's in that much better condition. Last thing to remove was the centre stand and this was a real disappointment as it's possibly even more badly damaged than my existing one. I'll know better once it's cleaned up and hopefully Mick will be able to do something with it. The Purple beastie is now back in the van pending a decision on what to do with it.

In between times I have been working on the ETZ250 and it now has a working petrol tap and some petrol pipe. The chain and some new guides were fitted this afternoon along with new footrest and twistgrip rubbers. One of the rear shock springs was quite rusty so I swapped this for a better one and was able to free of the pre-load adjuster at the same time. As far as I can see it should now run when I get round to buying a gallon of petrol. One thing I did notice when wheeling it around is that the front indicator tubes are fitted the wrong way up and hit the tank. These will need to be swapped over.

Doesn't sound much and it's difficult to see where all the time went but nevertheless I have not stopped working this week and am feeling pretty tired.



Sunday 6th March 2016

I rode the G5 for its first longish trip today about 20 miles each way to a lunch time meeting with my VMCC section. I half expected a few teething problems but not the misfire which plagued developed after about 10 miles and continued for the rest of the trip. Terry Dixon followed me home just in case and when we compared notes later we both concluded that it was an electrical rather than a carburation issue – fact my guess is I have loose connection somewhere in the wiring. Was not in the mood to do any further investigations today and sleeping on it may provide some ideas on where to look. There were a few other minor things which can be sorted out quite easily and overall it was quite a pleasant bike to ride in between the bouts of misfiring. A couple of times it ran up to 60 quite easily and it romps up hills so it has plenty of power.

I spent a couple of hours or so on the ETZ250 this evening and it now has a carb, an exhaust system and the Powerdynamo fitted. The tank is ready to fit but I need to clean up the tap before I can put in petrol or rather petroil as the Supa5 engine does not have a pump. In theory it should then run – time will tell.

Saturday 5th March 2016

Yesterday I made up my mind about an engine for the ETZ250 and have now fitted one of my rebuilt Supa5 motors. All the alternator electrical control components have been stripped out as they will not be required by the Supa5 which will run with Powerdynamo. Equally they are not needed nor for the Hybrid engine should I decided to try this some time as it has the late type alternator with rectifier and regulator built in. I left the 12v coil for now as it would

be needed for the hybrid engine. Only the bare engine is in the frame, I still have to fit the electrics, the carb and find an exhaust system.

Today was the VMCC a/j at Shepton Mallett and boy was it cold for my stint on the gate. Later I was able to meet up with a contact I made on ebay who supplied me with 2x25kgs bags of blasting grit. Saved a tenner on postage so very worthwhile. I also had further thoughts about an ES175/1 rolling chassis which Jerry Deekes kindly offered me a few weeks ago. Initially I turned it down as all really wanted were a few bits to complete my ES175/1 and could not justify buying the whole thing. I was also concerned about the frame as the last 3 bikes I have bought have all had bent frames or forks and in the pictures this one did not look too clever. Anyway Jerry agreed to bring it to Shepton so I could check it over myself. After some dickering we agreed on a price and it's now in my van. The plan is to remove or swap the bits I need for my ES175 then sell what's left; ideally as one item but as parts otherwise. Will need to advertise to see what interest is aroused.



Thursday 3rd March 2016

Mick finally checked his M14 and sure enough it is leaking from both spindles so I tried to order two sets of the parts tonight. Frustratingly one of the items cannot be ordered without first contacting the Jampot Spares scheme for confirmation it is available. Sent them an email and now await a response.

I needed to get the ETZ250 out of the van and as there was nothing else requiring the bike lift it is now in the workshop. First though I gave it a dose of the pressure washer to remove eight years of dust and grime. Its very original and not messed around as far as I can see but even after the pressure wash it was still thick with congealed oil and dirt especially under the engine. The latter was drained, what came out was mostly clear oil but there was a small amount of water as well – probably got in via the oil filler hole as the rubber bung was missing. The carb slide was seized but I managed to free it quite easily but a full strip will have to wait as will an engine strip. I also removed the tank and drained off ½ gallon of very smelly petrol. Pleasingly the inside of the tank seems to be fairly rust free. The oil tank was also drained and what came out looked fine though I have disposed of it anyway just to be safe.

With the engine seat and tank removed I checked over the electrics. It needed 3 new indicator lights, a new horn and a couple of bulbs (all of which came from my stock) but otherwise the loom was in good condition. It was horribly messy under the seat but this was mainly because everything had been coated with Vaseline.

Getting the congealed dirt off was a tedious business but the metal underneath was all very sound. The rear tyre was split so I replaced this was another from stock, brake linings look unworn so may well have been replaced not long before the bike was laid up. I agonised for a while on what to do about the front end as the fork legs needed new stanchions and seal. Finally I decided I would simply replace them with a set I rebuilt from the hoard for now. As these do not have the caliper mountings, I used the drum brake wheel which was removed from my Blue Supa5 when it went Honda. At least now I have a rolling chassis with good tyres and brakes.

Next big decision is what engine to fit; shall it be the Hybrid or the Supa5 for which I still have a spare Powerdynamo system so everything could stay 12v.

Tuesday 1st March 2016

On the G5 front I have been consulting the experts on the Jampot Forum about the gearbox oil leak and it seems that its relatively easy to strip the outer part of the box to replace the seals. One contributor actually posted pictures of the various components to clarify the process – very helpful. I will place an order for the bits shortly after I have heard from my friend Mick who bought the AJS. He mentioned that his bike was leaking oil quite badly as well. I told him of my researches and asked him to check where his bike was leaking from. If it turns out to be the same place, I will order two sets of seals/gaskets. I will probably order a new output shaft seal as well just in case; though I think the drips on that side are from the engine breather.

The ETZ250 is still in the van as I have no space in the workshop yet. I did have a play with the electrics. The headlight unit had to be reassembled and a bulb fitted and this now works fine. I fitted a battery and the warning lights came on and we have a rear light and brake light as well as the headlight. No horn and no flashers but the latter are only fitted to the raer at present. I could only find a 6v type so things area bit dim and may well have a bearing on the horn and flashers as well. Still cogitating on whether to fit a Supa5 engine of the Hybrid.

The TS250 frame is now back in the workshop and has been rubbed down and sprayed with Hammerite smooth black. Normally I hand paint and spray at the same time to remove the brush marks but ran out of spray when it was first painted. However, the end result seems to be much the same and the bits that will show once it's 'dressed' look quite good. Given its condition when I first got it I am quite pleased with the way it is turning out. The bottom yoke also cleaned up well and has been spayed silver. The rear mudguard is next on the list – not sure if it can be recovered or not.

In between times I have been sorting through the box of smaller odds/ends from the hoard which I had retained. I have managed to recover two carbs, a 30mm BVF for the 4spd engine and a 22mm BVF for the TS125, the correct handlebar clamps for the TS250 plus three petrol taps a couple of choke levers. The latter were quite a challenge as they were well corroded but came apart and cleaned up in the end.

Whilst searching for other parts, I found the correct swinging arm for the 4spd frame. It was quite rusty but appeared sound so I have taken that over to Steve the powder coater along with a couple of other bits to be finished properly. Normally I have to do these by hand but this model has metal rather than rubber bushes so can withstand the oven temperatures.

Saturday 27th February 2016

Lots of work to be done on domestic matters like the garden and the 4 wheeled vehicles so bikes have had something of a back seat for a couple of days. Even when I had the time I lacked the energy. What this has enabled

me to do though is investigate the oil leaks on the G5 which were becoming a bit of a worry. The investigation mainly required lots of newspaper and patience waiting to see where the drips appeared. Initially there appeared to be several sources but in the end it would seem they all stemmed from one place, the kick start spindle. Having isolated this, the bike has not leaked oil from anywhere else for a day. Still considering what to do about it – nothing drastic is the favourite option, just drain the level to below the spindle after a run and top it up when next to be used.

Having got the bike lift free again I finally got the Velo loaded up and fitted the new tyres I bought months ago. Its only a month or so before the first VMCC events of the year and the Velo is the bike of choice for 2016. It seems to have come out of hibernation reasonably well and started up fairly easily – huge clouds of smoke where it had wet sumped. Must look into that some time – easiest solution is simply to ride it regularly.

Wednesday 24th February 2016

Visited John Matthews today and came away with a couple of useful bits for the TS250 project (rear shocks and a battery cover) but more to the point a 1986 ETZ250. He acquired this from a friend about 8 years ago along with the ETZ251 which we did manage to get running and which he still uses. The ETZ250 has languished in a corner gradually donating parts to his other bikes. Today he announced that he was never going to get round to resurrecting it and would I like to have it. Silly question and I am now the proud owner of D96 FFB; the deal is I restore it and John gets to ride it which seems very fair. So now I have two projects lined up for next winter. I have yet to examine it in any detail but it certainly looks to be a better prospect than anything from the hoard. It could make an ideal home for my Hybrid ETZ/TS engine or even fit a Supa5 engine, something I have often thought about but never actually built.



Tuesday 23rd February 2016

I have just spent two very boring and not terribly pleasant days. I got a rush of blood to the head and decided that paying someone to shotblast and powder coat the TS250 bits was totally alien to my plan for a zero cost project. So I set to and cleaned up the frame by hand (well power washer and electric drill actually). Must have been hard work as I burned out one drill. Took me half a day but once done painting it was therapeutic; it won't win any prizes but at least the rust will be held at bay for a while. The power washer made a good job of cleaning the worst of the dirt from smaller bits as well especially after they had a soak in the new cleaning bath fluid. However, it did nothing for the rust so more drastic attention was needed and my shoulder still ached this morning from using the power drill on the frame. Over twenty year ago I bought a shot blasting cabinet which I used only a couple of times. I found it hard to use and the mess it made in the workshop was unacceptable even though it was ostensibly a sealed box.



Anyway as it was a nice sunny day so I moved the cabinet and the compressor to the end of the garden where the noise and the mess would cause less problem. I eventually cleaned up the s/arm, the centre and side stands, the rear torque arm and the airbox. Doesn't sound much now but it took half a day and everything bar the airbox is now painted black. I need some etching primer for the aluminium airbox before spraying it blue. Even in the garden the mess was unbelievable and despite wearing a hat, goggles and a respirator I was plastered in the grit as well. I needed a shower and all my clothes had to be thoroughly shaken then washed. Actually I also did the cylinder head from the TS125 motor which was very heavily corroded and was most impressed with the way that came up. I do plan to use the blasting cabinet again once I have replenished the grit but next time I will have to think very carefully about how to dress for the job.

All this activity was not really aimed at progressing the TS250 to conclusion in the short term – more to establish that the bits I had were sound enough to use when the time came (which they are) and to arrest any further corrosion. The painted items will be put in the greenhouse when dry to harden off in the sunlight. The work also helped me in compiling the list of items I will need to find over the next few months. So far it's fairly short and predictably mostly small stuff: thrust washers for the selector shaft in the gearbox, the rear brake arm (have several brake plates but none have arms which is odd) the washers for the s/arm spindle, the battery cover and a tank. I am sure the bits will emerge by the time they are needed.

Having a day off tomorrow to visit John Matthews in Bristol. He has been poorly for a while so have not seen much of him.

Sunday 21st February 2016

I finished the modifications to the 4spd engine today and it is now rebuilt ready to install. Not really much to show in a single picture and too much to tell in this blog so click on the picture to the right to load a separate project file on the work done to modify the 4spd engine to take a 5spd crank.



Whilst searching for other bits I found the TS125 gearlever – why on earth it migrated to the box I found it in I have no idea. Anyway it is now fitted and I was able to select 4 gears so I guess I did rebuild the box correctly. Engine is now put away until a need emerges. Most of the rest of the day was spent sorting through my boxes of spare parts trying to collect together enough bits to build a Supa5 motor into the crankcases which came from Ray last week. These are much cleaner and in better condition than the Supa5 engine from the hoard and this has been left undisturbed for now. The intention was to use new parts wherever possible and the end result was quite satisfying. The entire gear cluster is new and I have a refurbished crank. I dismantled 2 clutches to make one in excellent condition. As far as I can tell I am only missing the thrust washers for the gearbox selector shaft (always something that goes walkabout) and the spring for the neutral detent ball to complete the bottom end. Both can be sourced from other engines if need be. I already have a pair of main bearings and crank seals. I also have a set of gearbox bearings but they are not marked C3 so I am reluctant to use them; probably safer to buy new ones as they are cheap enough. Piston, barrel and head will be sorted out later.

In the process of this sort out I managed to assemble two complete 5 speed gear clusters from 2nd hand parts. As far as I can see both have unworn 3rd gear dogs and look to be usable. One set can go into the Supa5 engine from hoard eventually though it needs a crank and a few other bits anyway so some way off a rebuild. Quite a satisfying day.

Saturday 20th February 2016

Hmm 4 days since I wrote up the blog so time to catch up. Quite a productive few days though I cannot remember



now in what order I tackled things. I retrieved the 4spd frame from the greenhouse and stripped it completely to make sure there were no obvious faults making it unsuitable for restoration other than the missing footrest tube. In fact it seems pretty sound and appears to be straight. I had already cut off a footrest cum brake pedal tube from a scrap frame so this was cleaned up and offered up to the 4spd frame. Some dressing with the angle grinder got both parts fitting well so I held them together with threaded bar; one piece through the brake pedal tube and the other through the footrest holes to keep it aligned. Quite pleased with the result.

Andrew Long kindly sent me a replacement gear for the TS125 engine so that was rebuilt today. I had a few senior moments trying to remember the correct way to assemble the gearbox and a few false starts but eventually

it all went together. Normally I check that the gearbox is functioning properly but for some reason the one part I could not locate was the gear lever so this will have to wait until it emerges from its black hole in the workshop. I have only assembled the bottom end for now leaving the option to fit a TS150 top end should I find one.

The other major activity has been on the Ray Cattle 4 speed engine with Supa5 crank. Actually it turned out to be an ETZ250 crank which must have come from me at some time as I recognised it. Dimensionally they are the same though I fancy the tapers for the rotor are slightly different. The engine was stripped and is now largely back together but as it's quite interesting, I will record the details in a separate document and provide a link. Sufficient to say that my plan is to use this engine when finished in the TS250 project bike.

Tuesday 16th February 2016

My son and his family came down for the weekend which resulted in two developments. Firstly the Revere is now in Shrewsbury where Richard will love and look after it. Just got back from an extremely boring drive to deliver it. The Revere sits alongside the ETZ125 which I gave to my grandson Curtis last year. Curtis came with me to the MZ section meeting on Sunday and much to everyone's surprise professed to have enjoyed it. The MZ Riders Club sticker someone gave him is now affixed to the ETZ125. He is 18 next week so the family is clubbing together to pay for his CBT and insurance so he can finally get on the road. Times have changed, I remember my first bike in 1960 (a 1955 ex GPO Bantam) cost me £20 and my provisional licence was either 5 or 10 shillings. Can't remember the cost of insurance but it cannot have been much or I simply would not have been able to afford it. I do remember it was arranged through the Co-op as their agent was a friend of my father's.

I came away from Ham with a vanload of MZ bits courtesy of Ray Cattle. One item was a wheel for an ES150 which Andrew Long had been seeking for some time so he is now a happy man. Amongst other items was a TS250 4spd motor which Ray had converted to use a 5spd crankshaft and a 12v alternator. He never quite finished it so I shall look forward to seeing what he did and trying to finish it off. If it works, then I will use it in my TS250 project bike.

Thursday 11th February 2016

I seem to have done it again! I met up with a neighbour walking the dog this morning and he mentioned that he had found a pile of old motorcycle magazines whilst tidying up his office. As he is partially blind they were of no use to

him and would I like them? A couple of hours later his wife delivered the pile shown in the picture. There are Motorcycle Mechanics from issue 1 in 1959 up to circa 1971. Classic Bike from the 1980s, The Motorcycle and Motorcycling from 1953 up to the late 60s mostly show numbers plus a few other odds&ends. My wife was thrilled so I shall have to scan through them quickly for any gems, then move them on. Still it's a nice problem to have.



I gave Martin a guided tour of my toys so while the garage was open I had a look round for any parts which would contribute to the TS250 4spd project. Quite rewarding as I found a correct s/arm and spindle, a pair of the correct

headlight ears. I also found a 16" front wheel with tyre all in good condition and a matching brake plate for the 32mm forks. What I did not find was the correct rear wheel, the one I have is from an ES250 but I did find an ES250 rear sprocket and cover. If all else fails I can fit these bits to the garden bike and 'borrow' it's rear wheel assembly. Looking promising and I shall have to do a test assembly soon to figure out what else I am missing. The aim is still to make this a zero cost project.

Wednesday 10th February 2016

It's mostly been a few days of messing around with engines. Firstly, my friend don brought down his Supa5 to have the drive side crank seal replaced because he reckoned it had consumed all its gearbox oil in the space of a 100 miles. However, in typical fashion Don had made this judgement of no oil by dipping the gearbox level through the filler orifice. Whilst this may be entirely feasible it's not the orthodox way of doing it and does depend on having created a reference dipstick to start with. Further questioning established that the engine had not been leaving a permanent smoke trail of blue gearbox oil – a point he had begun to wonder about himself. Anyway I drained the oil and we collected near 800cc so it was far from empty and not clear if it had been full to start with. More to the point the oil was clear and fresh, no trace of petrol contamination which usually goes hand in hand with a blown seal. I

removed the primary drive cover anyway to check the condition of the bearings and because the clutch adjuster was excessively tight. The only odd thing I noticed was the clutch which was of the type normally fitted to 4spd engines, though they are interchangeable – oh yes and the clutch securing nut was only finger tight. Anyway we sorted out the obvious problems and put it back together without changing the oil seal. A slight gamble but I dislike disturbing an engine unnecessarily.

Thus left the bike lift clear for the G5 so that I could strip the carb to investigate rich running at lower throttle openings. On the face of it the carb was perfect all the jet sizes and settings to book but I did discover that the pilot jet could be screwed further into the block, which I duly did along with dropping the needle one notch. A test run indicated that this may have been the problem as it ran much better on my test route and the exhaust tailpipe was no longer wet. When the weather improves I will take it for a longer run as everything else seems fine.

Today I decided to give the TS125 motor which came as part of the hoard a clean-up. While I was at it I drained the gearbox and 2 pints of rusty water came out which was a bit of a surprise. Nothing for it but to totally strip the motor. What a mess, it looked horrible with thick red sludge over everything excepts the crankshaft, piston and main bearings which were perfect as was the barrel. I decided I would use the pressure washer to clean the worst of the muck off and this proved quite successful in getting rid of the sludge. Then it was a case of painstakingly cleaning the rust from each individual component and assessing whether it was usable or not. Amazing very little had to be junked and I managed to find replacements for practically everything needed from my spares stock. I am a bit concerned about one of the gears but otherwise I have enough bits to rebuild the engine. Wish now I had taken some pictures before I cleaned things up. The amazing thing was the total lack of anything resembling oil It was just water and red sludge.

Sunday 7th February 2016

Quite a satisfying weekend though also quite a lot of tedious work. Saturday was mostly spent (in between dog warden duties) completing the strip-down of the 4spd and 5spd engines left over from the hoard and cleaning up the worst of the muck from the crankcases. I ran out of time and there is one half of the 4spd crankcase still to do. I also need to find a source of fluid for my cleaning bath. Up till now I have used a mixture of paraffin, old petrol and the odd bit of diesel. However, what's now left has very little solvent power and you could almost stand parts up in it as it has slowly congealed. The cleaning fluid commercially available seems to be water based and I am dubious about this for a number of reasons. Paraffin became very expensive for some reason and I have yet to find a local supplier. Petrol and diesels are now relatively cheap but even more carcinogenic and a petrol is obviously a fire hazard given my workshop is attached to the house. Hohum.

Anyway today the famous 5 went to the Bristol Bike show at the Bath & West showground near Shepton Mallett. Met lots of friends and enjoyed a walk round the exhibits. No lightweight AMC bikes at all, in fact no jampot stand. Did find a set of crankcases for a 1959 M14 but that was the sum total. MZs were almost as rare, one very scruffy ETZ125 in the auction with a suggested value £200 but it was green with mould and in pretty much the same condition as the stuff I got from Whitminster. There was on display a very oil rag condition 1939 DKW 500 twin belonging to Henry Body; I wanted to take it home a to love and look after it. Overall, I got the feeling that with a few notable exceptions the quality of the stands was lower this year. Many were just a random collection of bikes with no theme or decoration and in some cases, nothing to say which club or organisation were displaying. I managed to keep my wallet reasonably secure spending less than £20, must be a record for me. All I bought were a couple of garage jacket,s a litre of fork oi,l some s/s washers and a few drills.

I picked up the 4spd forks from Ollie Harris and these have already been stripped down. The bottom sliders are toast, but one stanchion is pretty well perfect, the other usable if essential. However, I have one good stanchion in stock and a good pair of sliders. The really pleasant surprise was that I found I in my MZ dealers toolbox the special tool for undoing the nuts which hold the oil seals and secure the bushes on 4spd forks. Made the job really easy and nothing got damaged. I now have a pair of serviceable and presentable 4spd fork legs. Ollie decided he did not really

want the Supa5 frame so I have brought it back home, I will probably keep it and use it to provide the bits missing from the 4spd frame.

Friday 5th February 2016

Took the G5 for a test ride today. Mostly it went fine but there is clearly something amiss with the carburetion. It won't start unless given a good tickle, the choke alone does not help at all. Once warmed up it's running far too rich



especially at low throttle setting making slow riding very uncomfortable as its hiccupping and threatening to stall. Accelerating and pulling hard is no problem but when you throttle back to cruise it starts missing again only clearing if you give it a handful. I took a picture of the silencer and you can see just how wet the exhaust is. I had the carb apart recently all the jets sizes etc were correct so not really sure what the problem is. Pity I sold the 250CSR as I could have swapped the carbs over to see if that was a quick cure. At least I would then know it was a carb problem rather than something else. I am reminded of that old

saying that 90% of carb problems are electrical!! I spoke to my friend Mick on Wednesday evening and he was raving about how well his CSR was going – maybe I sold the wrong bike!!

I decided I would MoT the Revere as its old certificate runs out in 4 weeks. Pulled it out of the back of the garage and put the seat back on. It was a bit dusty (obviously did not clean it after its last run) so I gave it wash down and it has scrubbed up quite well. Checked it over but there was really nothing to do except top up the tyres. I managed to get an MoT appointment for 4pm today so it now has a 13 month ticket. I enjoyed riding it and I am still not sure whether to keep it or move it on. If I do I get the feeling I will regret it later even though I have no plans for the coming year for which this this would be the only logical choice.



Wednesday 3rd February 2016

On Monday Dan Searjeant picked up a Supa5 frame, 4spd engine (on the basis it was the most complete of those left) and a load of odds& ends. The last frame is going to Ollie Harris next Sunday. We are meeting at the Bristol Bike show to exchange bits. He gets the last Supa5 frame and I get back the 4spd forks from one of the frames he took on Saturday and which he has no use for. I will start a checklist but I reckon I will find most of the 4spd bits I need already in my sheds and it will be fun hunting up anything missing. Must resist the temptation to start the project too soon. I am going to try to make this a project that actually costs nothing or as near as I can get to that budget.

Been a bit restricted for a couple of days as we have had workmen in replacing the fence in the orchard after our terrier managed to escape recently. They did a great job but it pays to monitor things and I did have to get a couple of things altered. They finished at lunch time today so this afternoon was spent tidying up. We will be having a spectacular bonfire shortly with all the old wooden fencing and wood from the trees/bushes which had to be cleared for the new fence.

On the bike front, I was able to get at the Velo and replace the petrol pipe after which the bike started easily. Smoked badly though as I forgot to drain the sump. I also found the new tyres I bought for it a few months ago so that's another job on the todo list. Major achievement so far this week was to get an MoT for the G5 which was done this morning. The tester felt that the front wheel bearings might be a bit grumbly but otherwise it sailed through and he not make any advisories on the certificate.

Had an email from Ray Cattle to say he was having a final clearance of his garage and taking all his remaining MZ parts to the next Bristol Section meeting. Shall have to take the van and some money as I won't be able to resist the temptation.



Sunday 31st January 2016

Life slowly getting back to normal and I was able to get the Matchless on the bike lift for a bit more maintenance. I stripped the carb and found nothing obvious wrong with it. The float is not punctured nor does the cut-off needle does not seem to leak. Everything looked very clean inside so I decided not to bother draining the tank completely, just ran a pint or so through the taps into a glass jar. This was clear no signs of water or debris. Bike started easily enough and I think I may be at fault in giving it too much of a tickle. I am going to experiment with my starting technique. The gearbox cover which is a non-original piece of alloy though quite well made, has now been painted black and looks much better. I checked the battery and found some of the wiring was not too clever so that has been tidied up. The battery itself is a sealed type of only 4.5Ah, far too small for comfort so I have swapped it for a bigger one I had in stock. I removed the headlight lens to sort out the pilot light – just a blown bulb – and straightened up the speedo which was off centre and very annoying. I also found some 5/16" s/s bolts to replace the rusty ones holding the headlamp. Oh and I pumped up the tyres, both were under 20psi, probably not far off the mark for the front but rather low for the rear. I was rather expecting this as it felt a bit squirmy when I rode it yesterday. Final job was to make up a small toolkit with spare plugs and fuses. Tomorrow all being well I will get it booked in for an MoT.

I have had one reply to the latest listing for the Hoard (which is now really down to a heap) and a chap is coming down tomorrow to pick up a bike and engine. I have decided I am going to keep the remaining 4spd frame and engine as a future project so all being well there is only one frame/engine plus a few odds & ends to dispose of. Think that's a good result and far better than letting it all go for scrap.

Saturday 30th January 2016

Stuart Bottjer came on Friday 22nd and took away the 1981 Supa5 frame plus an engine and various other bits which reduced the hoard somewhat. We had a long weekend away visiting family in Cambridgeshire so that put paid to any further collections until today. Early this morning Ollie Harris was on the doorstep and has taken away two of the 4spd frames and a pair of engines. Later in the day Andrew Long and Joh Hill came up from Exeter and filled up John's trailer with the TS150 rolling chassis, another TS125 frame, a collection of TS125/150 engine parts and a few other odds and ends. John took a fancy to a windscreen whilst looking at my bikes told him he could only have it if he took away a full fairing which came with the stuff I bought from Dennis Poulter's estate. He wasn't too keen on the idea but Andrew offered to put it on Ebay to sell it so it's now out of my hair as well.

After lunch I did a further stock take of what was left and took some fresh photos. An email has now been sent to the three other people who enquired about bits. The patio is actually looking quite clear as I was able to put away in the shed many of the odds and ends now that so much of the other stuff has gone.

During the week I decided to let my friend Mick have the 250CSR and delivered it to him on Thursday. Due to the other commitments I had not actually ridden either bike but it was increasingly clear that the 350 was the one I should keep principally because of its local connections. With so much stuff cleared from the garage I could finally get at the bike and took it for a brief ride down the road. It stopped as I was heading back with what seemed like fuel problems, sure enough, it had run onto reserve and was soon going again but sounding a bit lumpy. I suspect there is some cr*p in the carb so it will get clean-up tomorrow. Think I will also drain the tank completely and fill it up with fresh fuel. All being well I will take it for an MoT early next week.

Thursday 21st January 2016

Busy week and no time to write up the blog till tonight. My plan to ride the two AMC bikes on Sunday morning came to nothing. Overnight we had a frost and they salted the roads. By mid morning it had warmed up and was drizzling steadily and I had no wish to ride my new babies on wet salty roads. I did ride the CB400A to the pub for lunch – only two of us on bikes. Wished I hadn't later as some of the chrome was spotty with rust when I checked it next day. I had to give it a hot soapy wash and then spray it with to try and contain the damage.

On Tuesday Richard and I went up to Whitminster and retrieved the cycle parts for 6 MZs. One was an almost complete bar engine TS150 the others were TS250s or Supa5s. After a struggle we managed to get all of them in the

van – hopefully without damaging it too much. Back home we stacked them up as best we could on the patio covered with tarpaulins. I think Richard's face says it all!



On Wednesday I dragged it all out again, tidied up various bits & pieces and made up an inventory with pictures of each frame. Remarkably, five of them had registration plates and all of them were found on the DVLA computer. The most recent taxation date was 1990 and some were last on the road as far back as 1981; no wonder they were all in such a state. A copy of the inventory I prepared can be found [here](#).

I put an advert on the MZRC website and on the Facebook page and several people have responded so far. The TS125/150 stuff, the 1981 Supa5 and two of the TS250s are all spoken for. I have others interested but I have put them on hold until I can see more clearly what is left. Tonight I had to give some serious attention to the engines firstly to loosely assemble them to see how complete (or rather incomplete) they were and then to allocate them to frames. It will be strictly one engine per frame at least to start with to be fair to everyone. Each engine I looked at, even those which appeared to be reasonably complete turned out to be already dismantled and only loosely screwed back together. What I finished up with was 3 sets of Supa5 crankcase sets. One which was virtually complete bar crank and piston, one with some gearbox & clutch bits and one bare set of cases. The 4 spd engines were slightly more complete, two had cranks although seized. The third is just the inner crankcase pair with some gearbox internals. I guess all of it will be of use to someone. I had been hoping to finish up with enough bits to build spare 4 & 5 spd engines for myself but it's beginning to look doubtful unless someone just wants frames.



Saturday 16th January 2016

The severe frosts of the last couple of nights has got me worried about the batteries on the bikes. So today I have removed as many as can easily be removed and stored them in the workshop which is attached to the house and fairly warm. Some are on charge and the others will get their turn as the charges become free. I took the charges to the bikes where removing the batteries was a chore and slowly each of these is getting a topup. Main concern was the Revere which has stood for months and has battery of unknown age. However, even before putting on charge it did start the bike after churning over for a while so I guess it's still ok and it will be left on charge overnight. I also found that water is dripping from the tin roof of the rear garage. It's the condensation that freezes overnight then thaws and drips as the temperature rises. There is a lining under the tin but it's beginning to deteriorate and does not soak up everything any more. I have sorted out some more waterproof covers and tried to make sure that all the bikes have decent protection. The trick is to open the garage up whenever conditions allow to let the air circulate and dry things out – another chore.

Bought some nicer fixing bolts for the reinforcing plate on the G5 rear mudguard and a few s/s nuts to replace the worst of the rusty originals. The swinging arm I painted last night looks quite tidy for now and the next job will be to remove and repaint the lower parts of the shock absorbers. Curiously, the top covers are fine as is the lower chrome cover. Whilst in the garage I found a number 25 monobloc pilot jet in my box of Amal carb stuff. This is now on the G5 and made a big difference to the running. The pilot air adjuster is now about where it should be instead of being screwed almost fully in. All being well I will ride both the new bikes tomorrow to see how they perform and which takes my fancy.

Richard Warne came round on Friday to pick up some MZ bits and kindly volunteered to help me load up the rest of the bits from Whitminster. I have spoken to George and Tuesday is pencilled in for the visit. Between now and then I have to come up with a solution on where to keep the frames and.

Friday 15th January 2016

My friend Mick the welder came round to look at the bikes on Thursday and is really keen to get his hands on one of them. I think he would have liked a decision there and then but in reality I have only had the bikes for two days and I need a more time to get both running properly so that I can make a sensible decision. Work has progressed well on

the G5. I have given the clutch the same treatment as the 250CSR and it is now acceptable in operation. The exhaust system has also been removed then re-hung in what I consider to be its correct position. It had a downward slope when it first arrived due to the use of some non-standard and in the event totally unnecessary extra brackets. Having sorted these items, I had a go at the ignition timing which was too far advanced in part because the points gap was too wide. The inlet pushrod was also too slack and has now been corrected. Checking the carb identified that it was loose on its mounting studs so the nuts were tightened up. I was hoping that this would solve the problems but the engine was still very reluctant to start and when it did constant tickling was still needed until it warmed up a little.

The symptoms suggested to me a blocked pilot jet so today the carb was removed from the bike stripped and cleaned. The pilot jet was totally blocked and quite hard to get clear. Indeed, I am not convinced that it is fully clear even now. The bike does now start quite easily and runs much smoother. Setting a reliable tickover is proving difficult and I need to find a replacement pilot jet as the air adjustment screw has to be nearly all the way in to get the best tickover. I think there are some old Monobloc carbs in the rear garage. As far as I can see the charging system is working fine as ammeter is showing a positive charge even with the headlight on.

Attention was now turned to the cosmetics. There were a couple of places where the frame was rusty so I gave them a rub down and sprayed them with Hammerite. This is just to keep the rust at bay for now. If the G5 does become the bike of choice, then some bits will be removed for powder coating or at least a proper paint job. The other thing I have sorted is the split in the rear mudguard. A brass plate has been fitted behind the split and is bolted in place making it acceptably rigid. I drilled a hole at the top of the split to stop it spreading further. Tomorrow I need to get some nicer bolts with shallow rounded heads to make the repair less obvious. I will also get a couple of cans of petrol as I think both bikes are ready for a test run. However, the cold weather is a great deterrent and I must admit that I could have gone out today on the 250 but simply could not face the prospect of getting kitted up for a ride; definitely getting old and wimpish.

Wednesday 13th January 2016

The clutch action on the AJS is now just about acceptable. I started for once by reading the manual on clutch adjustment then worked through the system having lubricated the cable as best I could. I have a really flash cable oiler but have obviously put it in a very safe place as it was not on the shelf where it normally lives and failed to emerge after a thorough search of the workshop. Anyway the clutch action is now much improved to the point where I could ride the bike which hopefully I will do tomorrow. I topped up the oils in all three orifices as well. I also realised that the side stand is a home made item and will probably require some attention; it does not inspire confidence. Last act of the afternoon as far as workshop time was concerned was to swap the bikes over and the G5 is now on the bike lift. I had been warned that it was prone to wet sumping so I drained the crankcase, and about ½ pint came out. In fact I took the wrong drain plug out initially and inadvertently drained the oil tank as well. When I measured the total amount of oil it was close to 3 pints – the book says it only holds 2 ½ pints so looks like it may have been overfilled. Easily done if you top up when cold and without giving the sump a chance to clear.

Starting the bike was nothing like as easy as the 250CSR. Initially it was totally lifeless even with a tickle and full choke. I checked the plug which was very dirty but sparked well. Finally got it to start by really flooding the carb via the tickler but it was hesitant spitting back and unwilling to keep running unless I held the tickler down. It also kicked back at times. Suggests to me that the ignition timing is over advanced so I will need to read up on this.

Last night at the pub my friend Mick the welder was very excited about the prospect of viewing the bikes today, he is very keen to buy one or other but I am not yet in a position to tell him which I am prepared to part with. Looking through the paperwork which came with the bikes the 250CSR has been in use for some time with lots of receipts for engine work about 3 years ago and a load of MoTs. It has had 10 previous owners since 1983 when it was presumably re-registered under its original number. The dating certificate states it was sent to a George Wiles in Hull and the regn number FAT537C is a Hull marque. The G5 is more interesting to me anyway as it was originally shipped to a dealer in Warminster only 8 miles away. As recently as 1995 it was still in Wiltshire as I have amongst other paperwork a receipt from Taylors in Chippenham for a service and MoT in December that year at 6671 miles. It is still

only showing 6689 on the speedo so it has had virtually no use since that time. The owner at that time lived in Banbury and it looks as though it was inherited by his daughter-in-law who eventually sold it to George in Scotland. There is even an insurance certificate showing the value of the bike in 1995 was £1500. It is not worth a great deal more than that today so I suspect it had received a comprehensive and expensive restoration around 1995. Supporting this theory is the presence in the same envelope of the transfers for the side panels – never fitted. In terms of provenance and local connections I am beginning to prefer the G5 for retention – assuming I can get it running properly.

Tuesday 12th January 2016

Forgot to mention that after collecting the first instalment of the MZ hoard I went on to Ham for the MZ monthly meeting. The usual natter about bikes and things and a chance to catch up with everyone else's doings. Ray Cattle had obviously read this blog as he very kindly turned up with a tacho mounting bracket for heinz57 and a f s/s plate he had turned up as the air cleaner cover for a Supa5. Really nice job but very heavy; still it will look pretty good on heinz57. He also offered me a 4spd engine which he had modified to take a 5 speed crank. All being well I will pick it up at the next meeting.

On Monday Terry Dixon came round and helped me unload the two frames from the van. I found an ETZ125 rear wheel which fitted the TS125 sprocket carrier to make the frame TS125 a bit more mobile but this was only partially successful. I had not noticed that there were no rear shock on the frame. Indeed thinking back I did not see any rear shocks on any of the frames and very few front fork legs, wheels or tanks so these must be the items robbed for Georges sons projects. Anyway the two frames are now stacked beside the conservatory under tarpaulins until I have time to investigate them more thoroughly. I checked the V5C George gave me against the TS125 frame number but they do not match – damn! I have sorted the engine spares into 3 categories, TS125/150, TS250 4 speed and Supa5.

There are probably enough bits to build a 125 engine other than a crank – not even a damaged one. These bits are boxed up and put in a shed pending disposal as I doubt I will want to do anything with them. Their appear to be 3 of the 4 speed TS250 engines; two apparently complete though both are seized and the barrels/heads removed. There is another pair of crankcases with some gearbox bits clutch etc and a dismantled crank which is well rusted and unlikely to be recoverable.



Initially I thought the Supa5 engines were promising as two appeared complete but a quick inspection identified neither had cranks and only one had any gearbox internals. With the bits I have already in stock I could almost certainly build one good engine from this pile. I would need more cranks before I could build any others. It's beginning to look like what I will finish up with is a pile of re-usable bits all of which will need a deal of cleaning up. Still treasure but needing a lot of shedroom and I will defer picking up any more stuff until I have addressed the issue of storage or found a home for at least some of the bits. The additional frames would have to live outside right now so they may as well stay where they are. Spoke to George about this and he is not concerned if it takes a while. Told him about the V5C and he thinks it belongs to the other TS125 which though registered in his name is owned by his son. He is going to talk to son to see if he is willing to part with it.

On brighter note Stuart the courier turned up at 8am this morning with the two AMC lightweights so the MZ hoard was stacked away as far as possible to make room for my new babies. As expected they are not quite as pristine as the photos suggested but no unpleasant surprises. In fact the 350 looks better than it did in the pictures. For the moment I will be concentrating on the AJS 250CSR as this is the most sorted and has an MoT. As of 4pm today it also has insurance so can be legally ridden once I am happy with it. Once I had found and reconnected the battery it started quite easily though with lots of oil smoke from the exhaust. This did not happen later so I am hoping it was just wet sumping. Of more concern was that the electrics went dead whilst I was experimenting with lights and the emergency start position. The fuse was not blown but the fuse holder had partially melted. I found no other problems and rewired that section with a different fuse holder and insulated the connections with shrink wrap. It has started and run very sweetly since so fingers crossed it was just a dodgy connection in the battery box. Pleasingly the charging system seems to be in good order with a positive charge even with the headlights on. I think I saw a modern electronic regulator tucked away under the seat. The only thing which is stopping me riding the bike is the clutch action which is stiff to the point of being unusable. Checked the 350 and that is even worse. Priority for tomorrow is to investigate this.

Sunday 10th January 2016

Spent Saturday tidying the garage and moving out everything which could safely be moved elsewhere. Today took the van firstly to Bristol to have a look at Roy Groves Venom. It looks pretty good already and will be a nice bike when he has finished it. He expects this to be around March and then wants to run it for a couple of months to make sure it's sorted. Exactly the sort of bike I would want to buy. I will keep looking as I would prefer an MSS but I doubt I will find one better. Then it was off to Whitminster to look at the MZ spares I found out about on Boxing Day. What a hoard. There are 7 or 8 frames all but one well stripped, most are TS250s (or Supa5s) and two are TS125s. One of the latter is virtually complete though it's not clear if it's actually available or not – may belong to someone else in the family.

Sadly much of the stuff is in poor condition the as the sheds it is housed in are derelict but there is a lot of it. Far too much to bring back in one trip so I loaded up all the engine and other loose bits pieces lying around plus a Supa5 frame and a TS125 monowheel. The picture shows how loaded the van was and there's more engines in the

cab! I plan to go back for the remaining stuff once I have sorted and stored the first batch. My cleared garage is now



full again.

Friday 8th January 2016

With the workshop relatively clear and not wishing to start any major jobs I decided to work on the ES250/1 engine. It's now reasonably clean having been dosed with paraffin and wire brushes. I found a new TS250 clutch basket so rebuilt the clutch for a second time using this. I also made a spacer for the crankshaft as the early clutches are different in this respect. To do this I looked out a later 5 speed clutch to get the measurements. When I tried it on the crankshaft it seemed to be a perfect fit so I have now left it in situ and rebuilt the rest of the bottom end using a later TS250 primary drive cover. Though it looks quite different, more angular less rounded, it lines up perfectly around the periphery, the fixing holes and the two shafts. This cover has a different clutch operating mechanism to the earlier cover and may well be more suited to the later type clutch I have fitted. Anyway it's all back together, the gears select and the kickstarter operates correctly.

Flushed with success I cleaned up the barrel and the 2nd hand piston I had identified as being a good fit. It went on with no trouble and turning the engine over slowly there were no nasty noises and the piston lines up with the port correctly. I can see no reason why it will not work. The head needs a minor repair and is now with Terry Dixon; knowing him it will be back very soon. I imagine I will transfer the dynamo etc from the ES175/1 motor so left that side alone for now though I do have an early type a/r dynamo which I may be able to use. I can use the 175 dynamo cover and speedo drive at least until I can source the correct parts. More significantly putting the engine together highlighted the fact that I don't have the correct inlet manifold or carburettor. I can use both items from the 175 motor but to get best performance I will have to find 250 components. Still quite a satisfactory days work, useful information gained and no apparent show stoppers.



Wednesday 6th January 2016

Painted the remaining items for the Heinz57 and it is now virtually complete as shown in the picture below. I still need to find the bracket to mount the number plate (got one somewhere just cannot find it), a tacho bracket and fit the chain and rubbers. No fuel in the tank yet, want to make sure the paint has fully hardened first so not started it up but no reason why it should not run. Longer term it will need a full wiring harness and dipswitch but that's about it. I also need to clean up the rear wheel and possibly fit the disk brake front wheel I rebuilt a couple of weeks ago. I deferred both jobs for now because it's mainly going to be used in the orchard and is going to get grubby given the wet conditions but mainly I wanted it out of the workshop to make space for the two AMC lightweights. It was never a mainstream project just something to occupy a quiet period without spending a lot of money. At least now it looks presentable. Had a text on Tuesday to say that they were being collected on Friday and should be delivered early next week, possibly Monday.



Sunday 3rd January 2016

Over the weekend I started the rebuild of the Heinz57 and have made quite good progress as you may be able to see in the picture. At least it can now be wheeled around if need be. Presently it only has a minimal wiring loom sufficiently to run the engine and charge the battery. Major work still needed is the rear mudguard, which will be coming from my other blue TS250 (it gets the new one I have just painted) and the tank which needs to be rubbed down and painted. Jobs for another day.



I also need to search the other garage for a few odds & ends which are still missing – main one being the tacho housing. I seem to have two speedo housing but as they are handed you cannot make them do double duty. The race is now on to get this restoration to the stage where it can fulfil its original purpose and go back into the greenhouse before the two AMC lightweights arrive. Unlikely to be until after 17th January so I have a few days in hand.

Below are a pictures of the two new bikes. Both are runners and the 250 (blue one) is MoT'd as well so I hope to be able to ride them shortly and decide which I prefer. Black one is a 1961 350.



Careful study by the knowledgeable will identify that neither bike is completely original in terms of tinware and no doubt the pictures flatter but they seem pretty tidy and up together – we shall see!

Friday 1st January 2016

The New Year started with a run on the CB400A to Bitton on the outskirts of Bristol to meet up with the VMCC Bristol section. I rode up the A46 to Cold Ashton to link up with Mike Davis who was riding his recently acquired and

very smart Honda CD200 Benly. Boy was it cold and windy once I had climbed Swainswick Hill. So much so that I thought the bike had a rear wheel puncture as it was blown sideways by the wind coming through gaps in the hedgerow. We both decided it was better to face the traffic in Bath to come home as the A431 was well sheltered from Northerly weather. I was hoping to meet Roy Groves at Bitton to discuss the Venom he is planning to sell but he was not there. Not a problem as I already have a date with him on 10th January on my way to the MZRC meeting. Among the bikes at Bitton was an IZH model 49 which is a Russian copy of the pre-war DKW NX350. Quite an interesting bike and it sounded well when he rode off – remarkably little smoke for a 2-stroke – maybe a future project?



Anyway by the time I got home it was raining so a perfect excuse to get some more garage therapy. First it was painting a few more items so that I could start the rebuild tomorrow. The rear part of the air box is now gloss black and the front plus the two headlamp shrouds are sprayed in the blue cellulose I bought before Christmas. I saw a bike recently where the air box was two-tone and thought it looked neat. It will also make the can of blue paint go further though I suspect I will need another by the time I get to the tank.

I found the spare clutch which came with the ES175 and have now mixed/matched the two clutches to produce what I hope is one good one. I also found a good TS250/ETZ clutch which I am pretty sure will fit as well if need be. This evening I had a text from a courier confirming an acceptable price to collect the two AMC bikes from Scotland so the deal is now confirmed. As the vendor is away from 9-16 January it's unlikely I will actually get the bikes until late January. However, this suits me fine as it gives me time to sort out the garage and workshop and perhaps sell one or more bikes to make room.