

Daily (Now mostly weekly at best) Blogg – Part 8

Blogg continued as Part 9 - [Click here](#)

Sunday 29th April 2018

I did not sleep well on Wednesday evening despite being quite tired after spending the day tidying up the garage and the workshop party to clear some space and partly so it did not look such a tip when John and Andrew arrived with the Enfield on Thursday morning. It was mainly the prospect of getting my hands on the Enfield that kept me awake. At 8:30 the phone rang – Johns car had broken down and they could not come. I was not about to be denied so by 10am I was on my way to Exeter in the van and back home by 4pm after pleasant lunch and relatively easy drive. Very pleased with the Enfield. It starts easily and the engine is very quiet mechanically and seems free of leaks. I only took it for a very brief run as there was a major traffic jam just down the road but no serious issues arose. Back in the workshop I have dealt with tow of the major sources of rust – the exhaust pipe and the silencer bracket. Both have been painted for now. The former will probably be replaced by a new chrome pipe in due course and the latter will be powder coated along with a few other parts.

I had already bought a new speedo gearbox as Andrew had warned me that the one fitted was u/s. Easy enough to fit but it only served to prove that there was a further problem and though I now have a working odometer, the speedo itself is very spasmodic. Having messed around for a couple of hours without sorting it, I have placed an order for a new cable and speedo head just to be sure. Thankfully bits for Enfields are very cheap. In the interim I have rigged up an old mobile phone which has a speedo app and wired in a USB adapter to keep it charged. During the tidy up on Wednesday I found a rather nice period rack which is now fitted to the Enfield and looks good. Somewhere I also have a pair of canvas panniers which could also be useful additions. Hoping for a longer test ride on Monday.

Saturday was the VMCC autojumble at Shepton Mallett which I attended. It was quite a productive day. I managed to hand back some books to Simon B, recover my MZ Rider back numbers from Mike Taylor and pass over his 40th anniversary MZRC sweatshirt. Partwise all I bought was oil, rubber gloves and a couple of bags of s/s bolts. Most of the time was spent helping at the 'trade' gate and talking. I did deliver on my promise and take the MOV with me to show to David Childs who seemed very happy with the bike. Sad to say this may be the last VMCC a/j at the B&W showground anyway. They are unable to provide a date for Autumn 2018 and will not put in writing a date for Spring 2019. General feeling by the Somerset section is that they will renege on what they verbally promised for April 2019.

Sunday was the Moonraker trial and boy was it cold. I rode the TS250 up to the start at Wroughton and had to stop at Beckhampton to put on a bodywarmer I had thankfully placed in the top box. Mike Davis had to cry off due to bad back so I did the route on my own. Only 9 controls allowed so I was back at the Rat Trap by 1pm and home by 3pm. I had no comfort at all on the ride up or the actual trial, no sore bum and no aching shoulder. However within minutes of starting the trip home my neck began to ache and I had to stop couple of times because of the pain. I guess I must have trapped a nerve or something and even now sitting here typing it's still nagging me. Hope this is not something that is going to persist.

Monday 23rd April 2018

On Sunday we had the section St Georges Run lead by Dave Waldren across the Mendips and finishing for lunch at Cheddar – deja-vu as we were in Cheddar last weekend. I had planned to

ride the ETZ250 to lay the ghost after its previous problems. However, in the end I rode the Mastiff as it rain was forecast and it was already dirty. Pleasant day out and the bike performed well, once again averaging 68mpg. This made the weekend total mileage over 300.

Today I tackled a number of small jobs. The ETZ250 now has the top box which came with the Mastiff and the TS250 has the small white topbox removed the ETZ. The wheels on the KLX250 have now been replaced by the wheels with the trail tyres. This turned out to be easier than I expected as the ground clearance was high enough to make sliding the bike lift underneath less of a struggle than with the Mastiff. I am looking forward to doing Keith Johnson's off-road ride next week to see what difference it makes to the recce we did last week when the KLX was on road tyres.

I have drained and refilled the forks on the T100 and topped up the gearbox oil level which was quite low. I also checked the tappets; a couple were slightly slack but fortunately none were tight so no hint of valve recession. I removed the plugs to make the job easier and they were a nice shade of brown.

The Venom was unwrapped from its winter hibernation and flatly refused to start initially. Draining the sump of over ½ pint of SAE40 helped it to spin more easily and it then started readily. I will need to fit a battery before I can use it in anger, in fact I think I actually need to buy one as think its original battery is now on the TS250.

This afternoon an old friend John R came to visit and we spent a pleasant afternoon looking at the bikes and chatting. John has had MZs in the past but has moved into scooters more recently now owning a couple of LML's which are basically Vespa's made under licence in India. John still has an ES250/2 Trophy which he bought as a project many years ago but has never got round to starting despite some badgering from me. He is unsure what to do with it and to help him decide I am going to visit him shortly to have a look at the bike and make an assessment of what needs doing.

The results of the Felix-Buke road trial were published on the Cotswold section website today. I managed to win the Post 1960 class and Richard won the modern bike class so he is well chuffed. Mike's son Simon beat his old man by 3 marks which pleased him no end. We did better in the team event than I was expecting coming second to the KOB Experts team but 18 marks behind them, I would like to claim that they only won because of all the bonus marks they got for their early machines but the truth is that they did it on merit with only a total of 5 bonus marks – respect.

I am looking forward to Thursday when John and Andrew are coming to visit and bringing the Bullet. I have been reading a book by Mick Walker on the Royal Enfield marque and he has some very complimentary things to say about the 350 Bullet. I am really looking forward to getting my hands on it.

Saturday 21st April 2018

The chain of the KLX250 has a split link – when I managed to find it under all the muck. It has now been cleaned oiled and is back on the bike. I am studying various diy methods of making a chain oiler as it clearly needs one. Not sure you can use the type that works with a manifold connection due to the fuel injection.

I took the Mastiff for a trip to Charlton (about 50 miles return) for the VMCC lunchtime gathering on Thursday and it performed well. The seat is a bit narrow and hard so I have made up a pad to

see if that helps. It ran onto reserve during the trip, conveniently right by the Sainsbury garage in Chippenham. It took only 9.5 litres to brim the tank and the total capacity is 12.5 so a 3 litre reserve. – Nice facts to have established.

On Friday I took the T100 for a ride and it was frankly horrible. I could not get a reliable tickover and when I opened the throttle wide the motor just cutout. Curiously the latter seemed to improve when I played with the ignition advance. Somewhat dismayed I decided it was time to strip and check over the carburettor. As soon as I removed the slide one of the major problems became apparent – I had been running the bike with the choke on all the time. – doh! I had not realised it had a choke as the lever was on the frame rail under the seat and not immediately obvious. The wonder is that it ran as well as it had been given it was on full choke all the time. Anyway I found little else wrong with the carb but I did clean the jets and the needle before putting it all back together. The bike was transformed I am relieved to say. It will now tickover and on a run to Melkham that evening it ran really well and as a bonus, the dynamo supports full headlight easily. Two (hopefully) minor problems were noted; the first was a slightly clunky gearchange so I will need to check the oil level. Mike who has a later Triumph TR6 tells me that a my box may be normal as his clunks as well – we shall see. The other thing is the front forks which seem stiff in action and top out easily. I suspect they may need topping up as well but first I need to read up on how to do it as the nacelle covers the fork crown.

Today Mike and I rode to Abergavenny to meet up with the Somerset section who are off to Dolgelleau for the twin Dragon Weekend. Slight hiccup in Usk when we found the road was closed but we managed to find an alternative route via Raglan. After coffee and a bacon roll we followed the TD route as far as Builth Wells where we stopped for lunch before heading for home. Just over 200 miles in total. The Mastiff performed well returning 68mpg but I still found the seat hard and will have to work on this if its going to be used for long distance runs. Its ok for the first hour or so but thereafter the bottom begins to complain after 20 miles or so.

Tuesday 17th April 2018

The dynamo on the T100 is now charging with its original regulator. Not really sure what the problem was. I just checked the wires from dynamo to regulator for continuity and that connections into the regulator were the correct way round – which they were. When I started the engine the dynamo initially did nothing then suddenly the ammeter recorded a charge. The charge was sufficient to balance the lights at moderate revs so I am now a happy bunny. As the weather was still miserable and I was busy with other things, the bike still has not had a test run.

After much agonising, I finally made the decision to buy the Royal Enfield from Andrew Long and it is now paid for. John Hill has kindly offered to deliver it; he and Andrew are due to coming up on Thursday 26th April. Something to look forward to and time to tidy up the workshop and garage to make room for the Bullet.

The Mastiff has been treated to a set of longer dog bones (135mm rather than 125mm) which has lowered the back end by about 40mm and made it a lot easier to mount and dismount. The dogbones were left over from my Baghira days. I was planning to use them on the KLX250 so I will need to get another pair made up. Hopefully my neighbour Mike will be able to do the honours again. I rode the Mastiff round the block after the suspension change and as it was dusk I used the lights only to find that I had no dipped beam. Both dip filaments had failed! Luckily I had a couple of spare BA20d bulbs in stock. The next evening I rode the bike to the VMCC meeting at Chippenham and found the lighting very poor on the return trip in the dark. I have ordered some LED replacements on eBay which I hope will improve matters. I still found the

levers uncomfortable – the clutch lever required too much of a reach and the brake lever had a twist as it came closer to the bar. Somewhat nervously I had another go at both in the vice and to my relief they did not snap and are both much improved. I plan to use the Mastiff for a run on Thursday and it performs well, I will use it for a run to Builth Wells on Saturday; more on this later.

On Friday we took the caravan to Cheddar for the VMCC Cheddar weekend. This involved a social run on the Saturday done in dry weather and the Cheddar Trial itself on the Sunday. Despite a dire weather forecast the latter was dry until the last 15 minutes after which it poured until Monday morning. I used the 4spd TS250 for both runs and it ran well, Need a clean now though as the roads across the levels were pretty mucky. We came home on Monday after a very pleasant short break.

Today I went on a rehearsal of an off-road run being organised by Keith Johnson. It was an ideal chance to try out the KLX250. Some of the tracks we used I was familiar with but most were new to me and I had only the vaguest idea where we were for much of the day. One pleasant surprise was riding the byeway which runs right past Stonehenge, They are planning to close this in the not too distant future so it was an opportunity not to be missed. I was very impressed with the way the Kawasaki performed both on road and byeway. It made the riding so much easier than on road bike even though it was still wearing road tyres. Somehow it gives you much more confidence and is a lot less tiring. Strangely enough, despite the wet weather this spring which did provide some muddy sections with deep water filled potholes, the major problem was dust on the gravel sections meaning we had to keep well apart. Altogether we did about 90 miles over half off-road – a great day out. The pressure washer came into play yet again and I need to remove the chain to give it a proper clean.

Monday 9th April 2018

We washed down the bikes used on the F-B yesterday as they were somewhat muddy after tackling 7 green lanes and a couple of fords. I rode the KLX250 down to Tesco's and filled the tank which we had been brimmed and the trip zero'd immediately before we started. It had covered just over 80 miles on 4.1litres of fuel – 88mpg. Richard was amazed as he reckoned he had been trashing the bike at times. Very happy with that and in my hands 100mpg should be on the cards when used for normal road riding.

I collected the T100 dynamo from Paul Lydford today and it's now fitted back on the bike. My repair to the lower fixing bolt seems to be working ok. I have checked the dynamo itself and it's producing a charge but it's not reaching the battery so tomorrow its seat off and trace all the wiring. I suspect that the regulator (which is an old Lucas mechanical type) is faulty.

Sunday 8th April 2018

Quite a lot to report since I last updated the blogg. The Mastiff is now insured and taxed. The former was a pleasant surprise as my new broker (RH Insurance) have accepted I onto my classic bike policy and the additional premium was under £3; moreover they do not make any admin charge. I have only done a quick ride round the block so far and it seems to be ok, My son Richard took it for a longer ride as he wanted to compare it with his Baghira. Hi was not impressed with the tyres but other than that he thought it was ok. Still not sure exactly what I did to fix the electrical problem so its short journeys for now to build up some confidence.

The VMCC ride on Thursday was a bit of a disaster. I rode up to the start at South Cerney in convoy with Mike and Terry. All seemed well though for some reason we were doing a steady

50mph which is not ideal for the ETZ as that is just below the power band (3500rpm) in top gear. It will just about hold that on the level but any head wind or gradient and its down to 4th whereas if I had been controlling the speed we would have been at 55mph and inside the power band. I fancy that for club runs this bike would be better fitted with a gearbox sprocket one tooth lower. When we started the run proper the bike was reluctant to start which I put down to the fact that it had cooled down more than expected and needed the choke. Eventually it ran ok but within a mile it chugged to a halt with what appeared to be a flat battery – dim idiot lights and suchlike and refused to restart. I sent the others on their way and pushed it back to Coutts Café on the basis that if I was going to wait for recovery, I may as well do it where there was coffee and a loo.

Back at the café I decided to check it over just in case it was something I could fix. No faults found with wiring but the battery seemed to have recovered and it started ok so I decided to try and ride it home. A mile or so down the road and we ground to halt with the same symptoms. However, this time I checked the fuel tank -plenty, and the plug which was a nice colour and sparked ok but dry which was a bit suspicious. However, it did start ok up ok so we ran for another 2-3 miles before it did the same thing again. Finally the penny dropped and I checked the fuel flow which was a bit feeble so I blew through the tap which helped a bit. We set of again and this time when the engine stopped, I opened the filler cap and within seconds the engine picked up and ran perfectly so I was able to get home fine by periodically slackening he filler cap. Missed a good run because of a poor diagnosis of the problem; it's still a mystery why the idiot lights went dim just because it had run out fuel! I have since cleaned up the cap and just in case a spare is in the top box but the bike now needs another longish run to prove its reliability.

Paul Lydford rang on Friday to say that the T100 dynamo was ready and I hope to get down to Shaftesbury early next week. Cost is £118 which is about what I expected given it needed a new armature and doubtless other parts.

Today was the Felix-Burke road trial in the Costwolds. My son richard had come down from Shrewsbury to take part so we put the bikes (KLX250 for him and TS250 for me) in the van so we could travel up together. The weather was a bit drizzly but did not really affect us much; it was the heavy rain over the last two weeks which made the green lanes a bit hairy. Normally we ride as a group of three (Mike D, Bill L and me) which is fine but this year we had Mike's son Simon plus Richard. A group of 5 is a nightmare to manage in terms of getting signed off at the 12 controls. Based on an average of 1 minute per person to answer the questions and get the card signed that's at least 1.5hrs of waiting and makes no allowance for the fact that others may be ahead of you in the queue. You only have 4 hours to navigate round the notional 60 mile route (nearer 75 actual miles) which calls for a pretty high average speed on iffy roads and lanes. With a group of 5 we felt there was a risk we would not complete the course so we split into a group of two (Mike & Simon) and a group of three (Bill, Richard and me). My group actually got round in 3.5 hours so our judgement was probably correct as we only stopped a couple of times for a 5 minutes breather and had no machine problems. Mike & Simon were not so luck as they did not get back until near 3pm and were out of time at their penultimate control. I don't think the Three MZkusteers team will be winning anything this year. Indeed, I suspect that we will not be lifting any trophies between us neither Bill nor I did very well on the questions we had to attempt at controls with no Green lane option. Still We had a good day and Richard now wants to come down for some of the other events later in the year.

Tuesday 3rd April 2018

Later on Sunday I stripped down the ETZ125 engine which I took as a swap for the ETZ250 silencer. As expected it has suffered water ingress to the crankshaft area and the main bearing were pretty much seized up. The big end assembly had also been mostly under water judging by the tide mark on the flywheels but it seems to have survived better and may be salvageable. I have cleaned it up and oiled it pending a further survey. The only other damage was a broken friction plate in the clutch. Rather than rush into reassembling it (I already have the main bearings and seals in stock), I have put the parts in a box and left it for now in the vague hope that a better crank assembly will turn up.

On Monday I went to Didcot to look at the MZ Mastiff and the deal was done so it's now in my garage. It was fitted with a top box on top of a massively heavy homemade rack and a side frame to keep his camping gear out of the back wheel. All these bits were quite rusty and in part accounted for the poor appearance I remembered. However, it is a one -owner bike with an extensive service history and a current MoT. More to the point it is much lower than the Baghira's so I can climb on and off easily. Today was spent removing the bits I don't need and generally tidying things up. I don't know what the original electrical problem was, Dave thought the ignition switch was faulty but in part it may have been a flat battery as it was totally dead when I got it home. The battery itself is quite new and seems to have successfully charged overnight. I traced all the leads from battery to switch and re-made all the connections plus replacing all the fuses. There are now signs of life so I am hopeful it will start and run tomorrow. Anyway, the picture shows the Mastiff at the end of a day's labour:



I think it looks pretty good for a 17 year old bike with 24k miles on the clock and I plan to get it insured and taxed shortly. One thing I had never really noticed before is the alloy wheels – every other Baghira or Mastiff I have seen has spoked wheels. That is a bonus because the spokes invariably rust and look awful. While I had the camera out, I took a picture of the ETZ250 with its

black tank. Looking at the picture makes me think that the Givi top box removed from the Mastiff would look a lot better on the ETZ250 than the white box currently fitted.



Sunday 1st April 2018

On Thursday I went to Bratton to have a look at Rob Parker-Norman's Supa5. This has been a long time waiting but he works away for 2-3 weeks at a time and when he is home there are always other priorities for him so finding a day when we are both free is never easy. Anyway his bike is now running again. The original problem was almost certainly a coked up plug but I have a feeling that this may be due to a dodgy coil. The spark is fairly weak even with a charge battery. The main problem possibly caused by excessive and enthusiastic kickstarting was that the clutch had come loose on the crank taper. Had to pop back home to get the correct tools but once to hand it was a 5-minute job to re-torque the nut and all seems to be well.

Both the ETZ250 and the KLX250 are now fully road legal as of 1st April though the latter did cause me some grief with DVLA which may yet have consequences. Today was the first dry day we have had for nearly a week so I took the KLX250 for its first trip – about 35 miles. I enjoyed the ride and the long travel suspension certainly soaks up the bumps. The seat is quite narrow and hard but was ok for the hour or so I spent in the saddle. Not sure how it would be on a longer trip which is a pity as the bike pulls well and cruises easily and smoothly at 55-60; probably go a lot faster but that's good enough for me. The only issue I found was a tendency for the engine to stall approaching or waiting at a roundabout or traffic lights. Funny that the V50 had exactly the same tendency. I did a search on the internet and it seems I am not alone with this; opinions vary as to the cause. For now I have increased the tickover speed from 1250 to 1400 rpm to see if that helps.

Whilst typing this I had a phone call from a friend whose MZ Mastiff I was tempted by last year. In the end I did not buy it because I felt the condition did not justify the asking price and subsequently I had heard that he had sold it. Seems that this was untrue and he had actually kept it as winter hack. It now has some sort of electrical fault so he wants to move it on and has offered me first refusal. I must admit I am a bit tempted I need to think it over carefully, if its cheap enough (which seems to be the case) It may be worth buying as a winter project.

Tuesday 27th March 2018

On Sunday I drove down to Exeter to deliver the V50 to Andrew Long. I went via Yeovil to drop off some bits to David Childs which he loaned me when I was having clutch problems. I had hoped that he might produce some of the bits for the MOV which I am still waiting for but nothing was forthcoming. Ah well patience is a virtue. Andrew's wife Alison had very kindly made lunch which was enjoyed by John Hil and another friend Ern who had brought my chiming clock back after fixing it. We had a good old chin wag and it was near 6pm before I got home. Anrew is selling a couple of his other bikes; a 1992 Kaawasaki KLE500 trail bike and a 1966 Royal Enfield 350 Bullet from India which Alison bought for him as a wedding present about 11 years ago. I took some pictures of both to see if I could drum up any interest locally. In fact I thought the Enfield looked rather interesting and am a bit tempted. Pictures of both are below in case anyone is interested.



On Monday I took the ETZ250 for its MoT which was not without incident. The bike did not seem to be running all that well and whilst stopped at the traffic lights, I noticed a pool of petrol under the bike. I promptly turned the petrol off thinking it was a stuck float or suchlike and carried on to the test centre only turning the fuel back on when the engine started to falter. Turned out to be the new fuel pipe I fitted only a few days ago which was not firm on the carb end. I scrounged a couple of hose clips and all was well. The bike passed without incident and there was no further sign of oil on the disk. I have been running the bike on 50:1 petrol as a precaution until I was sure the oil pump is working so not surprisingly it was smoking a bit. I topped it up with a gallon of neat petrol on the way home to weaken the mixture in the tank and also checked the adjustment of the oil pump which had been left deliberately rich. I was able to establish the pump was working so it will be neat fuel from now on and hopefully no seizures and less smoke.

On Tuesday I drove down to Shaftesbury and dropped the T100 dynamo off with Paul Lydford. Seems most likely the armature is duff; anyway, it's now in good hands. He will ring me when its ready but most likely I will pick it up from him at the Shepton autojumble in April. In the interim I think I have successfully fixed the dynamo clamp by tapping the hole to 7mm. Searched hi and lo for a 7mm allen head set screw and could find nothing remotely suitable so I have made one with a hexagon filed on the top. Seems to have worked; time will tell.

I also brought the TS250 into the workshop to check it over as it entered for the F-B trial in 10 days. Needs a good clean and some tidying but it went well on a rip to Melksham to pick up some pills for the dog and I filled the tank while I was out. The major result for Tuesday was the collection of the TS150 trail bike by the courier. He finally turned up around 9:15pm having already been down to Truro and was then on his way back to Stafford. Not my ideal job that's for sure but he seemed pretty cheerful and he was loaded and gone within 10 minutes.

Saturday 24th March 2018

I collected the T10 on Tuesday and it has been inspected by Mike and by Terry both of whom are well impressed. I have not ridden it yet as the weather has been a bit iffy but I have been playing around with it. Fitting a new battery has fixed most of the electrical issues. There was a slight hiccup as I inadvertently connected the battery up the wrong way and had no stop or tail lights. Turns out this bulb is an LED which is polarity sensitive. Connecting the battery the right way round fixed that problem. As the regular is the original Lucas tin box I doubt this has done any harm fortunately. The remaining issue is the lack of charging. I tried the easy options and flashed the dynamo but that did no good. I checked the wiring and everything is in order; no broken wires or bad connections system.

I took the dynamo off the bike which turned out to be relatively easy and tested it on the bench. I can get it to run as an electric motor which normally means all is well but it still won't charge so it will have to go to an expert for checking over. I will probably take it to Paul Lydford in Shaftesbury as I want him to check over a magneto I have bought as well. Removing the dynamo revealed a problem and probably the answer to a rattle that occurs at tickover. The bottom bolt fixing the battery retaining strap was missing. I tried replacing it but the thread is stripped and getting access to helicoil or tap larger is not going to be easy unless the engine comes out of the frame. I will consult the expert (Terry) when he comes back from Kings Lynn and I am sure we will find a way to repair it. In the interim, I have made a blanking plate to cover the hole left by the dynamo so the bike is still rideable. Never a dull moment with old bikes.

I am still waiting to hear from the courier who is booked to take the trail bike to Wrexham so that, along with a wheelbarrow full of spares is still hanging around. However, tomorrow I am taking the V50 down to Exeter for Andrew Long so that will be out of my hair. I can then put the trail bike and spares in the van to get them out of the way. I plan to go via Yeovil to visit and return some surplus parts from the MOV project to David Childs. I was hoping that I might pick up a few of the other parts he has promised but this seems unlikely based on a conversation earlier today.

The KLX250 is still sat in the garage. I have got it insured now but it hardly seems worth taxing it so late in the month. I did have a minor panic about the bike when I found that the DVLA regards the bike as being black whereas right now it's clearly green. It did come with another set of plastics which were in fact the originals the spares set was green and already fitted. Not sure now whether to refit the original black plastics which would keep the colour scheme as per the registration or leave the green ones in place; more on this later.

The ETZ250 has been tried out and seems to go fine. I did find traces of oil on the front disk so I stripped the calliper but could find nothing wrong so I cleaned up the pads and reassembled. I did some oil on the bottom of the fork so I wonder if it came from a leaky fork seal. Something to keep an eye on. The original red tank does seem to be holding petrol since I made the repair but I'll give it a longer period to be sure; the replacement black tank looks ok funnily enough. The tank is currently filled with a 50:1 mix and the bike is smoking nicely so I hope that indicates that

the pump is working. It's booked for an MoT on Monday and I plan to tax it from 1st April if no other issues arise.

Saturday 17th March 2018

Quite a lot of activity today. First thing was to move the bikes which are scheduled to move on out of the workshop ready to receive the new toys. I had also decided as part of this clean sweep to bring the ETZ250 I restored 3-4 years ago into use. So it was brought up to the workshop for a checkover. Just as well as I found a number of things that needed attention. The first was the lack of a neutral light but this was just a loose wire on the switch. Then I noticed the tachometer was not working although it did flick sometimes if you pushed the cable. This was due to a badly worn drive gear which I replaced – now works fine. Then I checked the gearbox oil as I vaguely remembered there had been a leak at some time traced to loose primary drive cover screw. To my surprise, instead of a lack of oil, there was nearly a pint too much! No idea how I managed to overfill it to that extent. All I can think of is that I filled it twice.

With these tasks completed the engine fired up easily and sounded fine. It was reluctant to idle initially and needed the choke to keep it from dying but once it had warmed up a little it was fine. I checked the charge rate and it was running up to 14.2v which is fine. Unfortunately, I noticed after returning from lunch that there was a smell of petrol in the workshop. Sadly it seems that my repair to the pinholes in the petrol tank was not successful. I had used araldite expecting that the internal sealant (Tapox 16) would actually block the holes. This has proved incorrect as the araldite had dissolved by the pinholes and the whole lot peeled off very easily. I now have two possible solutions, The first is in hand and involves using JBWeld to seal the affected area externally. I will need to leave this for a couple of days to fully cure. If this does not work then I have a spare tank I bought a couple of years ago. Its very sound and in quite good condition but its Black whereas the present tank (indeed the entire colour scheme) is Orange.

Today was also the day when I was due to collect the KLX250. I was a bit concerned that the threatened snow would prevent the vendor from taking it for MoT or me from getting to Mere to pick it up. However, though it did snow a little it was not enough to cause a problem and the bike plus a collection of spares is now in the workshop.

The spares fall into three main categories. Category one is a selection of plastics including three



mudguards, one of which is new. Category Two is a spare front and rear wheel shod



with the original dual purpose tyres plus a pair of off-road only nobblies. Category three includes the original silencer, a spare swinging arm, a petrol tank and a larger rear sprocket for more serious off road work. This is the only rear sprocket showing any wear so I suspect it was the one used for most of the 900 odd miles it did under its first owner.

The bike is presently fitted with new Bridgestone Battleaxe road tyres so having a complete set of wheels to swap to trail type tyres is a novelty. I rather suspect that if/when I fit the off-road wheels, they will stay on the bike. The plastics are another matter, I may well fit these to keep the originals in better condition when I come to sell it. This would also give me a chance to try another colour scheme. The original silencer is unlikely to get used as the one fitted is a new original Kawasaki part anyway. The old one was taken off because it was very noisy having been modified in some way.

Friday 16th March 2018

I went to look at Rod Western's Triumph T100 on Tuesday 13th March. It's a beauty and I immediately agreed to buy it. It has not been used for some time so will need some recommissioning but I did enjoy a short test ride on it without major incident. I have paid for the bike but collection will have to wait as garage space is an issue.



I did another review of my current stable and three bikes were candidates for disposal with an intention to move on two. The first was an easy decision. Though the ETZ251 has been going well, it is not really my ideal bike and I already have an ETZ250 restored and as yet unused. The other two were the TS150 trail bike whose role is about to be taken by the Kawasaki and the Guzzi V50 which though now running well does seem to need more attention than I like. Added to which the role for which it was intended, longer distance trips like the Twin Dragon, are not going to happen this year anyway. In the end I could not choose between them and decided that both should go. If I need another long distance tourer in the future then I will simply buy one.

The ETZ251 sold very quickly on Gumtree and was delivered to its new owner in Farrington Gurney today. He is 90 years old though does not look or act it. I confess to being a bit concerned about the transaction; I tried to talk him out of it but he was adamant. If he changes his mind he will be able to move it on easily as I had plenty of interest from the advert. The other two bikes more or less sold themselves without needing to be advertised. The V50 is going back to Exeter,

not to John Hill but to his neighbour and mutual friend Andrew Long. I am taking it down there on 25th March. The TS150 is scheduled to go to another MZ riders Club friend in Wrexham once we have sorted out a collection strategy. As part of this deal the TS150 was MoT'd today. This is probably the first MoT the bike has ever had. It's a 1979 model and has been off the road since 1981 which would have been before it needed its first MoT1

Sunday 11th March 2018

Over a month since I last wrote up the blog and it's now difficult to remember what has been achieved over that time. In no particular order I can recall the following.

The V50 was taxed from 1st March but due to the bad weather has so far only done a very short test ride which thankfully identified no issues. The ETZ251 has been used for a couple of trips the most recent being to Chippenham for the VMCC meeting last Thursday. I had not been impressed with the headlight so fitted a new reflector which did not seem to help much. However, when I started the engine the lights brightened up considerably so I guess the battery has a dodgy cell. However, the others seem to be holding up well and the battery has always remained strong enough to start the engine. One thing I did notice on this first night ride was the headlamp beam which is set too low. I had ride under main beam all the time and never got flashed once. Must remember to correct that.

Over the past couple of weeks I had convinced myself that I needed a new (as in brand new) bike of the dual purpose type. Two bikes finished up on my short list, the new Royal Enfield Himalayan and the Honda CRF250L. Strangely, because of some massive discounting by a local company (well Yeovil actually so not that close) both bikes were pretty much the same price. Last week I had test rides on both. My heart said go for the Himalayan, it was a nice ride, lowish for an off road bike with 21" front wheel and well equipped but quite heavy at 180kgs. The CRF250 was 25kgs lighter and looked prettier. It also went well and I had virtually made my mind up to order one last Saturday when I got an unexpected email. This was from a guy who had advertised a Kawasaki KLX250 on eBay a couple of weeks ago (well before I decided to go for a new bike). I popped in a bid at the last minute as it looked promising and was in Mere only 21 miles away. I did not win and thought no more about it. However, the email advised me that the winner had reneged on the deal and it was available if I was still interested. By Saturday evening I was the proud owner of the bike shown below. I don't pick it up until next Saturday as part of the deal was an MoT. The bike is just 3 years old with two owners and has only 972 miles on the clock. Most of the miles were done by the first owner on army land as he was the Army's motorcycle display team instructor. The second owner had an accident shortly after buying the bike which meant he was unable to ride. So I have a virtually new bike for less than half the cost of the CRF250L or Himalayan.



Browsing through the classified ads, I had also noticed a Triumph Thunderbird for sale not too far away which seemed reasonably priced and in the photos looked promising. I arranged to view the bike today as it would enable me to carry on to the MZ club meeting at Ham. In the flesh the bike was scruffy (the photos were clearly not recent) and it was a bit of a bit. Many of the parts, though Triumph were from other later models. I knew much of this from the photos so could have dealt with that if the price had been right but the vendor was unable to get the bike running and the few times it coughed briefly into life it did not sound very healthy. I made my excuses and left.

This may have been fortuitous because in conversation with Rod Western at the MZ meeting I discovered that he has 1955 Triumph Tiger 100 for sale which sounds a lot more promising. I hope to view this early next week whilst I am still in the mood to buy. Rod also has a couple of MZs (both ES250 Trophies) he is thinking of selling so I said I would take some photos and details with the intention of finding a buyer.

The buying frenzy has also got me thinking about the bikes currently in the stable and I am pondering on whether to move one or more on to make space for the new batch. There are three candidates: the TS150 trail bike, The Guzzi V50 and the ETZ251. Any one of them would sell easily but do I really want to part with them!

Wednesday 7th February 2018

Writing up the blog has been a bit spasmodic as Mrs F has kept me busy decorating the kitchen, fixing a new cooker hood and getting quotes for new carpets among other domestic chores. In each case I must admit these things were well overdue but not top of a chaps todo list.

Anyway, I found time to go back to the factors and discuss the oil pressure switch. They had ordered in a new one and it behaved in exactly the same way!. Eventually he found an old stock item which did work the way I wanted and had about the right pressure settings. I am still unclear as to whether the original switches were all faulty or if some switches work a different way – somehow I doubt this. Anyway, the new switch was fitted and all was well until the next day when it all stopped working again. This time the fault was with the bulb holder in the instrument panel. It worked fine if you removed the panel to investigate but stopped working as soon as the panel was replaced. In the end I got fed up with fiddling with it and extended the wires to an external warning light – problem solved.

While I was in garage therapy mode I decided to refit the frames for the panniers on the V50. Bit fiddly but eventually the job was completed. Then I found the rear indicators had stopped working. Not really sure what the problem was but after slackening the fixings and checking that the cables were still connected everything started working again, then one or other stopped as I tightened up the brackets. Eventually I found that the angle of the indicator stalks was critical and now everything is working again - but I wonder for how long. Whilst fiddling around investigating I found a section of the wiring loom under the mudguard where the outer cover was worn away. For the moment it does not seem to be causing any problems but to get at this area to splice in any new cables needed is a major task so I have decided to ignore it for now.

As a bit of light relief, I had a look at the ETZ125 engine I took in p/ex for an ETZ251 silencer. Externally it looks quite tidy and seems to have a full set of electrics, including the later style electronic ignition. Initially it would not turn over so I removed the head and barrel, both of which came off easily with no signs of piston seizure. The engine would still only turn a small amount in either direction and the limiting factor seemed to be the conrod and bigend. However, rocking the conrod suddenly freed things up and the engine now spins over quite easily with no obvious graunching noises or stiffness. Neither is there any up/down play in the big end so I am not really sure what the problem is or was. I don't have any particular need for such an engine at present so I am resisting the temptation to split the cases to investigate. It's a lot easier to store a complete engine than boxes of bits. If I get really bored some time I may have a play.

Monday 29th January 2018

The saga of the indicator repeater light has been joined by the lack of an oil pressure warning light – something that I suddenly noticed the other day. The oil pressure bulb was fine so it was a question of delving into the wiring to check things out which meant removing the tank. Eventually I found a broken wire in the cabling that connects to the 4-way flasher switch. This has now been fixed and I finally have a RH indicator repeater light. I was not impressed with the mess of cables connecting the 4-way flasher switch so I have removed it and all its associated cables completely as its something I would never expect to use on a bike anyway.

However, the oil pressure warning light remains a mystery. The culprit has to be the switch as earthing the cable direct to the frame makes the light work. However, the new one I bought this morning does not work either. I cannot believe I have been sold a dud but the shop has agreed to swap it. This time I will take my meter with me to make the replacement switch does work.

I have pulled all the bikes out of the workshop to give the floor a good clean and repaint it. The floor paint I used does not seem to be very durable even though it was a top make. This gave me a chance to take a photo of the V50 in its new minimalist guise. The tank and seat are just resting on the frame as I am still working on the wiring. I now have back the carrier frames which are

powder coated in black. Not sure yet whether to put them back or not likewise the screen but this cannot be refitted until the wiring issues are sorted anyway.



Saturday 20th January 2018

Steve has made a lovely job of the powder coating for the V50 which I collected Friday morning. First task was to refit the crash bars – not difficult but a bit fiddly to get the bottom bolts engaged. Next job was to strip the front end to replace the headlamp shrouds as the old ones were damaged and poorly welded. Again not a difficult job but the left hand fork leg was very reluctant to slide down and I did not want to use too much force in case I had overlooked something. Eventually it came out and swapping the shrouds took only a couple of minutes. With plenty of lubrication replacing the leg was easy enough. The right hand leg came out and went back in easily. Next on the list was the front mudguard but stupidly I forgot that I had predrilled some holes to fit a mud flap. There was little clearance between wheel and mudguard so it had to come off again! The mud flap is now fitted and should protect the front of the engine which is where all the electrics are sited. Last job was to fit the rear carrier which was also quite easy. Bike now looking very smart.

One thing which has been niggling me since I bought the bike was the lack of a right hand indicator repeater light especially as you cannot easily see the actual indicator when riding. I found that the bulb holder bracket was quite easy to remove and pulled out the offending bulb. Of course this was the only size that I did not have in stock so today I popped into Halfords and bought a new one. Only to find that replacing the bulb did not solve the problem; there is a fault somewhere in the wiring which needs investigation. Just to add insult to injury, I managed to drop the new bulb inside the speedo housing and there it remains for now!

Thursday 18th January 2018

I took the TS250 to the MZ meeting in the end not wishing to risk an untried bike of such a long run. Quite a pleasant day with a good turnout (19) mostly on bikes. Met a new member called Mike who has a just refurbished a 1990 ETZ251 which one assumes is totally original as it only has 583 miles on the clock. Mine is also 1990 and has the same round clocks and metal front mudguard as his bike. However, his has a metal rear mudguard whereas mine has the plastic jobby. I am tempted to convert mine to the metal mudguard as I have a brand new one in the loft, but I think I would need to find some other bits to make the switch – research needed. Mike was in need of a silencer for his bike and I had a spare in the shed so he came over today to collect it and brought in exchange an old ETZ125 motor. Not sure what I am going to do with it but I dare say it will find a use or a home in due course. Externally it looks quite tidy, who knows what it's like internally. To avoid me playing with it I have hidden it away in one of the sheds.

The ETZ251 got a longer ride today when I rode it to a lunch meet the other side of Chippenham – probably about 30 miles in total. I treated it with kid gloves – rarely reaching 50 most of the time just in case here was an oil feed problem but I am pretty sure that it would have tightened up long since if that was the case. Terry D told me there was evidence of smoke when I departed the pub so next time it goes out I will top up the tank with just petrol.

Had an email from TPCS this morning to say the V50 powder coating items were ready but Mrs F had the car so it will have to wait until tomorrow.

Friday 12th January 2018

Quite an encouraging few days. I decided it was time to do something positive with the ETZ251 so I rang the insurers (RH Classic) and was pleasantly surprised to find that they lived up to their promise and do not charge an admin fee when making a policy adjustment. Moreover, the additional premium was only a £1 or so which they waived so it actually cost me nothing to add the ETZ251. I completed the V5c to change the ownership and sent this to DVLA. Today it passed its MoT so the only remaining step is to decide when to tax it. I am tempted to back date it to 1st January so that I can ride it to Ham for the MZRC meeting on Sunday. It will need some attention to the lights as riding home in the dark after the MoT showed them to be in the glow worm category and some of the instrument bulbs are blown but neither should be difficult to fix. I also want to be absolutely sure that the oil pump is working. To be on the safe side I topped it up with a gallon of 50:1 petrol before riding to Melksham but I need to be a bit more scientific if I am going to do an 80mile round trip

Earlier in the week I took a few bits of the Guzzi V50 to TPCS for powder coating. The front mudguard, the rear carrier, a pair of new headlamp shrouds the rear carrier and the front crash bar. These are all going to be gloss white (the crash bars and carrier are presently black). The rear carrier frames will also be done shortly but these will remain black and I send them in with a few MOV parts that also need to be gloss black.

Tuesday 9th January 2018

I removed the carb from the Venom today to check it over. Though not as bad in 2016, it was still popping and banging on the overrun whilst in Spain in 2017 and has not been ridden since we got back in October. A plug chop whilst in Colombres showed the overall mixture to be pretty good with the plug a nice mid brown colour. We had already eliminated a tight exhaust valve as being the culprit and general consensus was that the pilot jet might be a little lean. I was expecting to find that I had fitted the standard 25 pilot jet when I last serviced the carb but when it was stripped I found it already had a 30 pilot jet so that was another theory blown away.

Rather than mess around further with what was in truth an old and worn carb and at 30mm too large for the MSS engine, I decided to fit the replacement Wassel 928 carb I bought nearly 2 years ago. Results with this one were marginal when first tried. As far as I can remember, the main problem was that it would not run smoothly at constant speeds on a very low throttle setting. In the end I built the 930 carb and have used that since. However, an article in Fishtail some time later confirmed my own diagnosis that the problem lay with the pilot jet which was only a 17. The article in Fishtail reported a big improvement by fitting a 19 pilot jet, in fact he bored his out so I did the same to mine about a year ago but never got round to trying it. Anyway it's now on the bike and initial results are encouraging though I have only ridden it a very short distance due to the cold, wet weather and the salt still on the roads. Starting seems to be good and it has a far better tickover than I have ever experienced before on this bike. The road conditions did not permit a low throttle constant speed test so that is yet to be proven but I am hopeful.

Sunday 7th January 2018

For a couple of weeks or so I have been agonising over the option to buy a very desirable early Vintage motorcycle; in fact I had a choice of two, a 1923 Sunbeam 500sv and a 1922 Ivy 350cc 2-stroke. My heart kept saying go on buy one or the other you know you want to. My head kept telling me that I had enough toys needing TLC or more serious attention, and anyway where, when and with whom would you ride a vintage bike. In the end it was this consideration which decided me against buying one. Sad really; when I was younger I could not afford one of these bikes, now I could find the money but the moment has passed.

It was a relief in a way to make the decision and get back to the problems already existing in the workshop. I listed all my bikes and five of them need work before they can be used seriously again. In some cases minor repairs or servicing, in other cases rather more demanding attention. I had already made a start on the ETZ251 and this has now moved from the workshop to the garage awaiting an MoT. Yesterday I brought the Guzzi V50 up to the workshop for its turn. Pleasingly it started easily and ran reliably on both cylinders so the major fault does seem to have been sorted; though I have yet to give it a decent run to provide the final degree of confidence. Mostly it's the cosmetics which need attention so I have removed various parts some of which will be going for powder coating on Monday and some which may be left off altogether for now like the ugly crash bars and leg shields, the panniers and frames. Actually, it looks much smarter without these though the panniers were jolly useful. The main benefit is that you can clean the bike properly. The front forks need attention and I want to check the steering head bearings but these tasks will be left until the powder coating items are returned. Amongst other things the headlight shrouds are being replaced so the fork legs will have to come out anyway. Its back in the garage now to make space for the next bike on the todo list.

The regulations for the 2018 Colombres rally came out a few days ago and after some discussion, Mike, Bill and I have submitted our entry forms which have been accepted and the ferry booked. This time we are just going to do the touring holiday which is 6 days with 5 nights at the Parador Nacional de Corias in Cangas del Narcea. We go out on 30th September and spend the night of 1st October at our usual hotel in La Franca before starting the tour on the 2nd. We spend the night of 7th October back at La Franca before catching the ferry home on the 8th October. Pity to miss the actual rally, but last year we found it was a bit déjà vu whereas the touring holiday was new and exciting. Prices have gone up considerably since we started going to Colombres and its likely that this combined with anno-domini means this will be the last trip.

I spoke to John May today and he is going to do both the tour and the rally with about 6 others so we will have quite a few friends out there and no doubt many of last year's entrants will be back. One of the benefits of the touring holiday (in my view anyway) is that the numbers are lower and everyone stays in the same hotel so you get to meet everyone and make friendships.

Anyway, that inspired me to try and sort the carburetion on the Venom which is now in the workshop.

Thursday 4th January 2018

I did manage a ride on Boxing Day. Firstly up to Whitminster for a brief visit as the weather was due to clamp down later in the day. There was a good turnout and I met up with a few MZ and VMCC friends but left shortly after 12 noon whilst many were still arriving so I probably missed a few. On the way back my route passed within a few miles of Codrington so I popped into the Wishing well to say hello to the Bristol section. It had been really cold all day and by the time I left the promised rain had arrived. Coming up through Sally in the Woods it turned to sleet and then snow. Amazing what a difference coming up just a couple of hundred feet can make.

I arranged with Mike to meet at the Chippenham M4 layby on 1st January with the intention of riding in convoy to The Daneway at Sapperton for the traditional New Years Day meeting. When I left it was cold and overcast but dry. By the time I got to Chippenham it was blowing a gale and the rain was horizontal. We decided to chicken out and I returned home getting thoroughly soaked – I need a new jacket the old one is definitely no longer waterproof. Annoyingly about an hour later the weather cleared and it was a fine afternoon.

Yesterday I swapped the bikes around and brought the ETZ251 up to the workshop. I refitted the tank which have been previously cleaned and left to dry out. The tap has also been serviced. I put in a couple of litres of fuel just to make sure all was well and the bike started first kick. There were no obvious fuel leaks so I put the rest of gallon in with the intention of taking it for a brief test ride later. This is yet to happen as the weather is still very wet and windy. General tidying up was carried out which included sorting the seat cover. This was a new one in good condition but it had simply been put on top of the original cover and looked dire. I removed the old cover completely and fitted the new cover properly so now it all looks good.

Saturday 23rd December 2017

Not much activity on the riding or general maintenance front for some time. I did plan to ride the TS250 to Berkeley for the MZ section meeting on 10th December but it snowed heavily and I chickened out by taking the car. In practise only two other people tuned up, both also in cars. We had a good natter and made our way home. Road conditions were not too bad and the worst of the snow was around Tormarton on the A46 but it would been a miserable journey on a bike.

Yesterday we had a ride over the army ranges around Imber. This was a two day event organised by group of keen trail riders; friends of Paul Richardson and Jim Gaisford. Fridays event was juts a limber up with any type of bike acceptable, On Saturday they planned to do some more challenging stuff. I took the TS250 Jim was on his M20, Tony Page on a 1938 Ariel and a couple of other guys on older road bikes. The majority were riding proper trail bikes, mostly Serows and a sprinkling of other makes I did not recognise. AS we had visitors due to arrive early afternoon, my pass was only valid for the morning so I bunked off when we got to the Urchfont Junction. I managed to keep up with the pack but they seemed to me to be setting a cracking pace, a view confirmed by Reg Cox later. Not that we missed much of the views as it was so foggy it was hard to see the track at times through misted up glasses. It was ok but I was not sorry I had o cut it

short. I bet Pete Tyler wished he had done so as well. Apparently he took a tumble not long after we parted and had to be tended to by the paramedics. I spoke to him this afternoon and he is a bit bruised but no serious damage. They had to go back with a van to pick up his bike.

The TS250 got a power wash and a general clean up today and was sprayed with ACF50 to try and keep salt damage to a minimum.

Sunday 3rd December 2017

Things have looked up on several fronts during the last few days. I put the Baghira on Ebay around 5pm on Saturday evening and by 9pm it was sold. Sad to see it go but it just had too many downsides to be a serious long term resident in the garage. Funnily enough it was actually bought by a dealer from Frome. Glad about this as it does have some issues (all declared in the advert) which he will be able to resolve.

Fired with enthusiasm, I decided to investigate the V50 ignition problems and it seems like my diagnosis of a dodgy condenser was correct. Rather than replace it, which is a fiddly job requiring crawling around on the garage floor, I wired in a second condenser alongside the coil. A quick test showed a much improved spark and the bike started using the LH cylinder only – but not for long as the tank had been removed to give access. I made up better quality lead with everything soldered and shrink wrapped. With the tank back on petrol turned the bike started instantly and settled to a steady tickover. I wonder if the problems I have had with a fading tickover right from the word go can be laid at the door of the condenser. Would be nice but best not to get too excited yet. I'll check the bike in a day or two to see if it is still a twin. If so then I may start work on its winter makeover.

Going for broke, I decided to drain the smelly old fuel from the ETZ251 and give the tank a clean; I have left it to dry out for now as it leaving it and the seat off gives me a chance to clean it up. Looks like it has been sprayed with waxoil or suchlike as it quite mucky underneath but at least it has kept most of the rust at bay. The tap was stripped, cleaned and a new filter fitted; the original one had almost completely rotted away. Makes you wonder just what is in petrol these days. When work slackens off on the MOV project I will give the ETZ251 some more TLC.

Thursday 30th November 2017

A couple of responses to the Baghira advert. One guy offered a swap for a 1993 Yamaha XT350 which was tempting but then the correspondence dried up. Another guy asked about removing the restrictor but I have heard nothing since. I'll leave it for another few days or so, the weekend tends to bring more interest. Otherwise I may put it on eBay.

The Guzzi V50 saga continues. It ran perfectly when I rode to Ham for the MZ Club meeting about two weeks ago. I planned to ride it today for a VMCC wandering to Sutton Benger then SORN it ready give it a bit of a makeover during the winter. It was very reluctant to start and when it did it was on the RH cylinder only – deja-vu. There is a very weak spark on a new plug but not enough to make it fire. This is exactly what happened the last time I used it for a run. After that I replaced the coil which did not help matters. Fiddling with the wiring to the points and the condenser connection solved the problem at the time but clearly not for long. My suspicion now falls on the condenser and I plan to wire in an extra one externally to see if that helps. Must talk to John Hill as he was planning something similar.

Anyway the ride will now take place on the TS250 – why do I bother with any other makes.

Monday 27th November 2017

I rode the TS250 to the café in Bathford. Mike and Terry were there plus Dave Waldren and Chris Towler. Officially it was for older Japanese bikes and a fair number of them did turn out but there was a variety of other machines as well. I think Christine was very happy with the numbers who came and it was a pleasant session. The bike went well so should be good for any winter excursions.

Pondering on the bike collection (as I do from time to time) I decided that I would put the Baghira on Gumtree to see if there is any interest. I did offer it for exchange on the MZRC website back in September but have never had any response. If it sells well and good, if not it can just stay on Sorn. I plan to Sorn the V50 at the end of November and give it a bit of a makeover. Nothing too dramatic as that is usually the kiss of death for a bike. Just want to tidy up a few things and possibly treat it to some new exhaust pipes as the old ones are very rusty.

Saturday 25th November 2017

A friend has given me a rear carrier for the TS250 which I fitted today. My plan is to Sorn and mothball all the bikes for the winter except the TS250 so I also gave it a checkover. There is a lunchtime meet organised by Christine Shaw from the Bath Classic Club in Bathford tomorrow and I plan to take use the MZ to give it an outing. Cannot remember the last time I used it, probably back in August as the Velo and Guzzi have been centre stage for the last few months. Not done anything further to the ETZ251 though it has attracted a lot of interest and a couple of people have asked if it's for sale.

Monday 20th November 2017

Took the V50 for a short test ride today. Actually it was a shopping trip as it's panniers make it ideal for that sort of thing. The speedo is working fine again and the droning noise has gone away – and its still running on two cylinders.

I have run out of things I can do to the MOV Velo until some more parts arrive so I dragged the ETZ251 into the workshop to check it over. The failure to start was due to a blocked fuel tap. The air line soon cleared both main and reserve feeds though I did forget to remove the filler cap. The air pressurised the tank so once the blockage cleared petrol came out like a fountain for a short period: really old very smelly petrol. My study is above the workshop and I can still smell it! The bike started very easily once it got fuel and sounds fine. The tickover is a bit fast and I fancy the timing side crank seal may be leaking bit as the revs are reluctant to drop sometimes but it may settle down once it has been given a run. The bike was last taxed up to October 2014 and had little if any use in the preceding year so it needs a good shake down run.

Everything else seems to work fine, all the electrics work and the charging light goes out though I check it properly with a meter on it eventually. I have removed all the brackets associated with the fairing as this is most unlikely to be fitted – not unless a replacement screen can be found anyway. This enable me to put the headlamp back in its normal position. Along with a bit of cleaning the bike is already looking much tidier.

Saturday 18th November 2017

Seems to be the week for people to give me MZs or parts thereof anyway. An old friend of mine was given an ETZ125 which had been fire damaged then left outside for a lengthy period, He only wanted a couple of bits for his trails ETZ250 and brought the rest round to me. To be honest most of it was pretty far gone, the fire had destroyed anything inflammable aft of the engine and it was just a rusty mess. In the end we did salvage some useful parts including the engine which

has only done 20k miles according to the speedo. I am checking over the bits before offering them to other club members. The only thing I will likely keep is the twistgrip and the rear brake torque arm to use on the MOV Velo.

Mick the welder has repaired the V50 speedo gearbox and I left it for a couple of days immersed in oil to make sure the lubrication had penetrated – there is no obvious way of oiling or greasing it which is probably why it failed. It is now back on the bike awaiting a test ride but I think it will be ok. Maybe next week I can have a go at the EZ251

Wednesday 15th November 2017

I have temporarily solved the speedo problem on the V50 by mounting an old mobile phone in a waterproof case and using its GPS function to power a 'speedo' app. It worked fine on the trip to Ham for the MZ monthly meeting though it gets through battery life pretty quickly. I do have a power pack which includes a USB socket so that may have to be fitted if I don't get a replacement speedo drive. Not heard from Mick which possibly means he was not able to do the repair but don't want to pester him as he is busy decorating at the moment. Not really worried as the riding season is pretty much at an end and I am having increasing problems with my right shoulder making even short trips painful. I keep putting it off but I guess I will need to visit the doctor as it is clearly not getting better on its own.

The picture below is of a 1992 ETZ251 I picked up yesterday. The owner, who has had it from new, cannot ride any more and wants it to go to a good home. It has only done 17k miles and is basically very clean and original; MoTs back to 1995, full tool kit and even a security lock. I will check it over when I get time and then decide what to do with it. He does not want to sell it, preferring a donation to the Motor Neurone Disease charity. The amount to be agreed once I have had a chance to look it over.



Tuesday 7th November 2017

Stripped the front end of the V50 yesterday investigating the speedo issue. It was not the cable nor the speedo head itself. The problem was with the speedo gearbox driven by the front wheel. It looks very much as though it had seized and the metal driving tag had snapped off. I spent some time trying to figure out a way to repair the mechanism without success. Looking on the web, a new one is going to cost around £60 so its back to thinking of ways to repair it. Welding is a possibility but its well beyond my skills with the arc welder. I'll have a word with Mick at dive club tomorrow, he was boasting the other day that he now had a TIG welder.

Sunday 5th November 2017

Well the source of the droning noise on the V50 is finally clear. It was very noticeable on the ride into the Forest of Dean today and then on the way home I noticed the speedo had stopped working. I slowed down a bit and lifted my visor and the droning had stopped and did not reappear for the rest of the journey. Just as well I delayed changing the wheel bearings as it would have been a waste of time. Prevarication rules!

Don't know yet if it's the speedo or the cable, most likely and hopefully the latter as that would be the cheaper option for a repair. Another bike needing work dammit.

I suppose its time for confession as well. I have been tempted by the idea of having a Triumph 650 twin (had a 500 twin years ago and did not like it overmuch – too buzzy). I got wind of a 1960 T110 pre-unit bathtub model in Bristol which I viewed earlier this week. Very nice but it had been restored many years ago and never put on the road. In my view it needed recommissioning with no certainty of what would be involved. So after some good nature bargaining, we agreed to disagree on a price. In something of a knee jerk, I went to look at an Ariel 650 Huntmaster locally.

This also needed recommissioning as it had not been used for about 8 years. At best it was oily rag cosmetically but started easily and sounded fine. It belongs to a friend who is terminally ill with cancer and the sale is being handled by his son. A difficult situation as there is the moral dilemma of reaching a satisfactory price without feeling that you are robbing a widow. In the end I did not make an offer as it was clear that the family view on its worth was far in excess of what I would have been willing to pay. I hope they are proved right and in any event I suspect they will not actually sell the bike until after Dave is no longer with us to avoid upsetting him.

Saturday 4th November 2017

Well the V50 went well on the Autumn Leaves run did not miss a beat all day. One worrying thing though was that my right shoulder still aches after about ½ hours riding. This happened a lot in Spain and I put it down to the handlebar layout on the Velo and was planning to swap to a set of higher rise bars. The V50 has a very armchair riding position with easy rider handlebars and yet is giving me the same problem. I may have to consider consulting the doctor about this as it does not make for enjoyable riding.

I rode the V50 today for the first time since the run and filled it up while I was out, ready for our Forest of Dean Run tomorrow. It did about 140 miles averaging 57mpg and the plugs were both a nice light brown so things are looking good on the V50 front.

The other issue is the continuation of the droning noise I first noticed in Cornwall. It is almost certainly connected with the wheels or the tyres as the frequency changes as you speed up and slow down but not with an change in engine speed. Applying the brakes does not get rid of it or alter it appreciably either. So far I have not been able to positively identify the source,. The back wheel spins easily and emits no undue noises; certainly nothing like the one I am trying to identify. There is a rubbing noise from the brake pads at the front but not really more than you should expect, Removing the calipers got rid of that noise and I could not hear anything else untoward. The tyre, though a close fit to the front mudguard, is not actually touching. I did feel that the wheel bearings were a little rough and will change these soon – maybe that will prove to be the source of the noise. Otherwise I am baffled.

Thursday 19th October 2017

Nearly a month to catch up on and I shall not try and do this all today. The Colombres rally went well and I will post some more detailed information about that later. In summary, we did about 1200 miles over 12 days of actual riding. We had no roadside breakdowns and none of the bikes burnt any oil (though they did leak a bit to mark their territory as someone put it). Mikes bike and mine averaged around 65-70 mpg, Bills did significantly better, possibly around 90mpg most likely due to its new and tiny 276 carb. We had a great time but all agreed that doing the touring holiday and the whole rally was too long an event for us golden oldies. If we go again then we would most likely do the tour and perhaps the first few days of the Rally. Somehow it all gets to frenetic towards the end of the week when the number of participants nearly doubles.



The Velo still needs a clean but I gave it a minor service and oil change today (36171 miles) and I also got round to fitting an oil level indicator to the chaincase as I repeatedly had to drain it on the holiday due to the engine breathing through the drive side main bearing. Now I can see when it gets too high and can bend the plastic pipe down to give the chaincase a wee. I would like to include a catch tank to keep the level constant but am concerned that it could siphon out all of the oil. I'll have to consult that clever Mr Dixon.



Next on the list was the V50 as I will need it for the Autumn Leaves Run this Sunday. Replacing the coil was easy enough but gave no improvement. There was a spark but the engine flatly

refused to run on the LH pot. I removed both plugs and compared the sparks and the RH plug was noticeably brighter. Swapping the wires from the points reversed the situation so the problem clearly lay with the points or capacitor. I had done the work thus far in the rear garage but it has no electricity or lights and by now it was raining so I had to indulge in some swapping round of bikes to get the V50 into the workshop. Removing the points cover is easy enough but being low down requires one to crawl around the floor to get at them. The MOV is currently on the bike lift minus both wheels so the floor it had to be. I could not see anything obviously wrong but the wire from capacitor to coil seemed a bit loose on its connector. I pushed it on harder and also tightened the nut holding the connectors in place. I must say that this assembly felt a bit flimsy and did not inspire confidence. However, when I started the engine it immediately ran on two cylinders. To be sure it was a fix, I rode down to the garage and filled up the tank and came back along the bypass running up to 60 or so without difficulty. It felt strange riding a LH gearchange bike after 2 weeks on the Velo and the handling felt odd, not helped by wet slippery roads. When I checked the tyre pressures later there was only 14psi in the front and 25 in the rear. Why the wire came loose on the capacitor is a mystery, it had run perfectly for circa 500 miles in Cornwall. Even more of a mystery is why fitting a new plug sorted the problem on its last run but had no beneficial effect once back in the garage. Anyway, I will give the bike another run tomorrow just to be sure – otherwise I will have to find another bike for Sunday.

Friday 29th September 2017

I spent a short while playing with the V50 today. I swapped the plugs from the LH (troublesome) side to the RH side and it worked fine. Using the former RH plug (which had been trouble free) in the LH side it would run but was popping and banging at times. I tried a succession of other plugs in the LH cylinder and finally found one that would just about run properly with only an occasional hiccup. I tried a set of Iridium plugs which are supposed to be the bees knees but the engine would not run on either cylinder using them – very odd. All rather inconclusive unfortunately and I ran out of time and enthusiasm. I have now ordered a new coil on the basis that it will either cure the problem or establish that the problem lies elsewhere.

Tuesday 26th September

The V50 has been put away at least until after the Spanish holiday. The Venom is now in the garage and being serviced ready for Spain. It occurred to me that I have never checked the fork oil so I drained both sides and replenished with a whole 2.5 flozs (71cc). When I measure what came out it was as near as dammit 70cc on both sides though the oil on the RH leg was much dirtier than that from the LH leg. Tyres needed a little air and gearbox was spot on. I drained and refilled this before we went to France and I added some graphite so it will be good for another 2-3000 miles. Likewise the engine oil was changed before France and the bike has done less than 500 miles since so I have left it for now. I will take my can of 20/50 with me and if we do a lot of miles I may give the bike an oil change during the trip.

The battery had gone flat again and would not take a charge so I have replaced the 2x6v cells with a modern 12v sealed battery which fortunately just fitted in my rubber case. When I checked the 6v batteries later, one was perfect, the other was totally dead. I do have a spare 6v cell but it's a 7ah type and will not fit in the rubber case alongside the 5ah cell. I guess it can be used on the MOV as I doubt it will get converted to 12v and I do have a spare rubber case.

Monday 25th September 2017

I rode the V50 on a VMCC run on Sunday. Despite the fact that it had run quite well on Thursday, it popped and banged and was clearly only firing properly on one cylinder. I pulled into a layby only a few hundred yards from home and decided to change the plug on the side I thought was giving trouble. It immediately ran on two cylinders and continued to work well right up until the lunch halt. When I tried to ride home, it was back on one cylinder again – same side. Another change of plug and all was well; did not miss a beat on the 40 mile trip home. When I got back the RH plug was very lean still though perhaps a bit less so than previously. The LH plug was leaner than it had been on Thursday as well. This morning when I started the bike it was popping and banging again, I imagine it is the same side again but I did not have time to investigate. Beginning to look as though the LH coil needs replacing as well and I will have to raise the needle another notch on each side to richen the mixture. There is a real risk of burning a hole in a piston otherwise. However, this will all have to wait until I get back from Spain as there are too many other things to sort out this week.

Saturday 22nd September 2017

Most of my motorcycle related activity recently has been with the MOV which is recorded in a separate blogg on the website. I had not ridden or even started the V50 until last Thursday when we had a VMCC lunchtime meet at the Wishing Well, Codrington. The forecast was a bit mixed and during the early part of the morning it was cloudy but quite dry. That was until I got on the bike at 11am when it started to drizzle, then it started to rain, then it poured accompanied by quite strong winds. Fortunately it dried up in the afternoon. My gear was very wet but only a little made it through to me thank goodness. We have another run on Sunday so I just hope it's all dried out by then.

I filled the bike up on my way to Codrington and was then able to work out the fuel consumption over the last two days of the Cornish Week – 52mpg. Not so good but not surprising given the sooty plugs mentioned below. Funny thing was that the plugs at the end of the run today were the opposite. The nearside one was a light brown – just marginally weaker than I would like. The offside plug was white and far too weak. I fail to see how the very minor changes I made to the pilot air setting could have moved it from sooty to bleached – I think the bike has a sense of humour. During the run there was a slight hesitation when pulling away but the fading tickover never manifested itself despite getting stuck at a series of temporary lights for longish periods. It was however, too fast by my judgement; showing round 1700rpm on the tacho. Other than that it ran well.

I have enriched the offside pilot mixture ½ a turn but made no other changes. I will check the plugs at the lunch stop on Sunday's run. If it is still excessively weak, I will have to raise the needle another notch though it is odd that only one side is so weak.

Changing the subject, my insurance renewal is due whilst I am in Spain so I chased up my brokers to get the renewal invitation. I asked for two prices one to include everything and one without the 2004 Baghira. As I suspected the Baggie is a problem, the premium is £213 if it is included, £120 if it is not. I can actually get the Baggie insured on its own for less than £93 so I do not fully understand the situation. Out of interest I got a quote from a company called RH (who I think are a front end for Equity Red Star). They advertise in the VOC magazine and have been mentioned favourably (in terms of premium charged anyway) on the Velo forum. They quoted £108 (£98 without Legal Protection) or £243 if the Baggie was covered. However, it is not a level playing field as RH don't include breakdown insurance. On the other hand, my Green Flag cover includes bikes so would I be paying for something I don't need if I stayed with Peter James. One

compelling benefit of RH is that they do not charge an admin fee (presently anyway) for changes and given the frequency with which I have changed bikes in the past this could be advantageous. I have a week to make up my mind one way or another; decisions decisions!

I spent an hour or so checking over the Venom today, not so much the mechanicals as the toolkit and spares etc. I also fitted the route holder which has a nice new plastic sleeve you can actually see though. One disappointment was that the battery was nearly flat even though I charged it a couple of weeks ago. I started the engine and the lights all worked perfectly well so not really a problem other than that they flicker at low revs. I will charge the battery just before we leave and I imagine running it every day will keep it topped up. Bit disappointing as the battery is actually two 6v units in series inside an old rubber case. They are not cheap, are supposed to last well with minimum maintenance and are not that old. I do have another 12v battery but it's a modern type and does not look as good. Might be prudent to take it with me to Spain just in case.

Sunday 10th September 2017

Well we did manage to pack up most of the camp on Friday night, albeit the awning was still a bit wet and will remain that way until we get a dry spell. At the moment it's spread out in the conservatory to try and minimise any mould forming.

I chickened out of going to the MZ meeting today as I have done enough riding in the wet in the last week or so and staying home would give me a chance to look at a couple of the issues I found with the with the V50. Firstly, I could not find any explanation for the swishing noise. Both wheels spin quite freely with just a little rubbing from the pads on the disks and nothing like the noise I heard. I tried running it in gear on the centre stand and nothing untoward occurred. It may be load related when the machine is carrying my weight but that is impossible to simulate so for now I have to give up on this but at least it would seem not to be anything serious.

The intermittent starter button action has I think been traced to the button itself as testing everything downstream indicates all is working properly. I have tried lubricating the handlebar switches and this has marginally helped. If it gets worse I will have to wire in a separate starter button using a horn switch or suchlike; should not be a difficult job.

The fading tickover has also not been positively fixed as yet. I checked the tappet clearances in case these were too tight preventing one or more valves from closing properly. The tappets on the LH side were perfect, those on the RH a little tight but not I think sufficient to cause the problem. I have reset them anyway just to be sure. Looking at the plugs, both were very black which surprised me given the reasonable fuel consumption. The last time I checked they were a perfect colour but this was after a longish run at 50-60mph. All week the V50 has been running quite slowly down narrow country lanes with little opportunity for a thrash. This suggest that the mixture is too rich at the bottom end so I have weakened the pilot mixture setting a little and fitted a pair of new plugs. Tickover now seems a little more reliable but a longer ride when the weather improves will be the acid test. Overall, not a terribly successful day.

Friday 8th September 2017

I am typing this in the caravan at the Monkey Tree Caravan park near Newquay as we approach the end of the Cornish Week which started last Friday. Normally I would be far too busy breaking camp and packing everything away ready for a swift departure on Saturday morning but the rain is lashing down at present so packing will have to wait for while, possibly a long while. It has been a good week but it would have been so much better if the weather had been kinder.

We came down a day early to miss the worst of the traffic in warm sunny weather which lasted until the early hours of Sunday when the heavens opened and the Sunday run had to be cancelled. Monday's route started in drizzle but brightened up at lunchtime and the afternoon and evening were warm and dry. We went to Falmouth via devious routes then to Coverack for lunch by even more devious routes. Tuesday was similar weatherwise but this time we went to the North Coast via a very pretty village called Blisland on the edge of Bodmin Moor which is apparently the only village in Cornwall with a village green. Lunch was at Tintagel and home via Padstow with a visit to the lifeboat station.



Wednesday was a day off and I took Mrs F on a mystery tour to give her and the dogs a break from the caravan site. We fitted in a ride on the King Harry ferry which crosses the Helford river and a visit to Peter Smith's 7.25" gauge stem railway which runs through his extensive garden just up from the beach at West Portholland. A cracking day made all the better by fine weather and a BBQ in the evening. Thursday's run was to St Just via Stithians Reservoir and was the opposite in weather terms as it was dry until early evening. Friday's run was to Charlestown which is a quaint little port just below St Austell and the location for much of the Poldark series. I thought I had got this right and left Charlestown around 1330 in cloudy but dry not having seen any rain all morning. By the time I had covered the 20 miles back to the site it was pouring and had been since midday. Just shows how different the weather can be between the North and South coasts in Cornwall.

Anyway, enough of weather, what about the bike. I took the Guzzi V50 with me and it has proved an excellent choice which is rapidly becoming a favourite of mine. Its very flexible and will plonk around in top or 4th gear at just over 2k revs quite happily pulling away sweetly when road conditions allow. On the rare occasions we were on better roads it ran up to an easy 60mph with lots in hand. It's not the smoothest of bikes, you can feel the vibes at times but they are not

intrusive and it gets smoother beyond 55 or so. It has started first time every time during the week apart from the morning when I found I had knocked the kill switch whilst removing the cover. Worrying but easily sorted. Fuel consumption has varied between 56-60mpg. I would like a bit more but talking to a couple of other V50 owners this seems to be the norm.

Of course there are a couple of issues hopefully minor. The starter seems reluctant to operate a problem that has got worse during the week and may well be water related. Not sure if it's the contacts in the starter button or in the actual starter relay but investigation will have to wait until we get home. I have also become conscious of swishing noise audible at low speeds. It sounds like something is rubbing as it coincides with wheel rotation but I cannot seem anything in the tyres and neither seem to be touching anything. It may be one of the front pads but I cannot spin the front wheel as the bike is very nose heavy. I noticed it on the Monday and it has neither improved nor got worse during the rest of the week during which the bike has covered about 350 miles. The third problem relates to the tickover and is something I have been struggling with ever since I got the bike. Though it will often tick over like a swiss watch, it will equally often slow and stall for no obvious reason. Before coming away I set the carbs up using the colortune and the plugs were a perfect colour. Bizarre and clearly it needs a more in depth investigation. Fortunately, its more of an irritation than a serious problem as it has an electric leg and always restarts easily enough.

Well the rain has stopped and the sun has emerged so I guess I had better think about packing up the camp.

Saturday 26th August 2017

Quite an exciting week. The ES175/1 found a new home very quickly and was collected on Tuesday. It has gone to Exeter to join an MZ RT125 (1959 flavour) already in the new owners garage. Not really sad to see it go, somehow it just never gelled with me. The timing was perfect because on Wednesday I had a phone call from David Childs in Yeovil to say that he was now ready to show me the MOV Velo and when would I like to come down. So of course I was on his



doorstep on Thursday morning accompanied by John Hill who is a mutual friend and had performed the original introductions. Bit of any eye opener, David has an Aladdin's cave of Velo parts and the MOV had been almost totally dismantled over the many years he had owned it. We had to look in a lockup store about 10 miles away as well as in his garage and loft to find parts of the bike. Quite exhausting and by 4pm we were all getting tired so I settled for the 80% or so we had found by then and came home. David is going to call me when he has found the missing items we had noted up to that point and I will let him have a list of anything else significant I find later. As this is a major project I intend to start a new diary devoted to the topic so it will most likely only get the occasional mention in this blogg henceforth. A picture of my van when got home is alongside; spot the bike!

On Thursday evening, I rode the Baghira over to Chippenham for the VMCC meeting and it played the same trick as last time. If you just potter along letting the bike gain speed steadily, it runs fine and will cruise at 60 or more quite happily on a whiff of throttle. Open the throttle wide for a burst of speed to overtake and it misfires and threatens to cut out completely. The symptoms suggest a carb problem – probably dirty fuel so I will need to figure out how to clean the carb, ideally without having to strip the whole back end as that is the only way to get the carb off completely. The other slight possibility is that it has something to do with the restrictor washer which was fitted so that Curtis could ride it on an A2 licence or it could be a perished diaphragm in the second carb preventing the slide from rising properly. Only way to find out is to investigate but time is a bit precious at the moment what with the MOV project and the Cornish Week starting next Friday so it may have to wait. In fact I need to decide which bike to take to Cornwall, TS250 or V50.

Sunday 20th August 2017

Over a week since last I put finger to keyboard. Its late afternoon and the rain the met office promised duly arrived almost to the minute at 4pm so no real excuse not to write up the happenings of the last 10 days; all I have to do is remember what I have down in that time. Saturday 12th was the A/J at Shepton Mallett. I managed to source a few consumables for the store room and I found a pair of headlight ears for the V50 at a bargain price. These have been cleaned up and sprayed with primer for now. The old 'ears' have been badly welded at some time and are quite rusty but they work so there is no urgency, just an opportunity thing as they were a lot more expensive on eBay. On Sunday I rode the V50 to the Salutation for the MZ monthly meeting. It went very well and once back while it was hot I drained and replaced the engine oil and set the carbs using the colortune device. Prior to doing that one plug looked a bit richer than the other. Jumping ahead, on Thursday it was a VMCC mid-week run to Woodbridge (about 25 miles each way using the pretty route). The V50 went well again cruising happily at 60mph indeed it feels smoother and nicer at that speed than at 50mph. When I got back both plugs were the same mid brown colour so I think this aspect is now sorted. I have yet to refill the tank to do another consumption test. The last one suggested mid 50's but I did have a fuel leak and I am not sure I actually brimmed the tank. The only residual problem at present – more of an annoyance really, is the fact that it will sometimes stall when slowing down in a high gear with the clutch held in, This may be just bad riding practise, as if I change down through the box and select neutral as I stop a steady tickover results. It always restarts easily and settles immediately to a reliable tickover so I am puzzled rather than worried and I already know how to work round it.

On a different tack, Ray Cattle was at the Salutation and I brought home with me what he says is the last remaining MZ bits in his shed – we shall see. In the meantime those bits are now gracing my storeroom just in case of need, Ray also very kindly gave me an O-6-0 tank engine for my model railway project. More about that on the railway Blogg. Thanks Ray.

I put the K75RT on the MZ website just to test the water with an option to do a deal for a Mastiff. I was contacted by a club member from near Preston and after the usual dickering, the bike is now sold and on its way to its new home as I type. It was not without its tribulations. I had already had one of those day when things kept going wrong; the toaster packed up and defied my efforts to repair it. Mrs F was not impressed when she did not get her breakfast tea and toast. Then I found that the wind had blown over our patio umbrella dismantling the patio table in the process but I was able to fix that. Finally when Andrew was ready to depart, the K75 started, there was a click and then nothing. The idiot lights did come back on but went out as

soon as you put the headlight on or operated the starter – all the symptoms of a flat battery – just what I needed. However, a joint investigation identified that one of the battery leads was slack. The screw was tight but it was slightly too long and just needed a washer to allow the lead to be properly tightened. Seemed like hours but in reality took only a few minutes to diagnose and fix. I have never removed the battery so that lead has been loose during my whole period of ownership. A miracle it had never given trouble before and a blessing in some ways that we found it when we did. Andrew would not have been happy if it had happened on his strip home.

Today was another VMCC Sunday run but I could not fully participate as I am chief dog warden for the weekend. I had planned to ride out this afternoon to Elkstone to meet up with everyone else at Reg Eyre's house to look at his bike collection. However, looking at the forecast it was obvious that the morning was going to be the drier part of the day so I rode up to Cricklade to the start at Bill Little's house. Had coffee and biscuit (thank you Lynn) and when the others departed just after 11am, I pottered back via Malmesbury, Sutton Benger and Chippenham. Nice ride on the Baghira this time and when I filled the tank at Calne, I had done 105kms on exactly 1 gallon. 65mpg again. Once sorted, all my bikes seem to give 65mpg; lets hope the V50 gets closer to this figure when I top it up next.

Not sure if I have mentioned it before, but there is a possibility I may be getting an MOV Velocette in Meccano set form. Still waiting for the vendor to confirm when I can go and look at the parts but at least communication has now been established. I have also decided to sell the ES175/1 and have put adverts on the MZRC website, Gumtree and today it went on eBay. Would be nice if it found a new home prior to having to start the MOV project.

Wednesday 9th August 2017

Bit of a mixed bag over the last week. Highlight was probably the Somerset Signpost Trial which we (Mike D, Bill L and Terry D) all took part on Sunday 6th August. The weather was kind, though dark rain laden clouds kept rolling over it remained dry and we had a really good run round mid/south Somerset visiting a lot of places I have never been before. I took Mike and the bikes in the van and was glad of this because it was quite a tiring day and a 60 mile ride home would probably have been a bit much. Even so I was quite tired the next day.

Sunday evening brought a bombshell in the shape of an email from the chap who bought the K75 telling me that he had discovered it had been a Cat D insurance write-off in 2013. He was not happy about this, understandably so the bike is now back in the garage and he has his money back. I had no idea about this write-off business, certainly it was not something mentioned by the previous owner and there is nothing on the log book to give a clue, nor did my insurance company mention it when I first insured the bike. It seems that Cat D is mainly used when the bike suffers cosmetic rather than structural damage but the cost of repairs exceed the market value of the vehicle. I guess someone must have bought the bike from the insurance company and repaired it. If so they made a pretty good job. It was in superb condition with no evidence at all of accident damage. In any event it has covered over 5000 miles since the write-off and been through 5 MoT's without a single advisory. Annoying because there will now be two more previous owners shown on the V5c and its going to be several weeks before I will get it back in my name and can think about selling it again. Cannot even ride it as I cancelled the insurance when it was sold, just hope we don't suffer a break-in and the bike gets stolen. I think b*****r springs to mind but a lesson learned. I shall always ask about write-off history when I buy another vehicle and probably pay for a vehicle check just to be sure.

On Tuesday the rain held off long enough for me to take the V50 for a longer test ride – my usual route to Neston for coffee with Mike D. It went very well and is amazingly flexible, ideal for pottering around country lanes yet poky enough to maintain a good turn of speed on main roads. I have decided to keep the bike and will get started on improving it cosmetically.

Thursday 3rd August 2017

Just got back from Cirencester after doing the results for the Anglo-Dutch Trial. All went well and hopefully that is done and dusted for another 4 years. These guys are amazing with their timekeeping. The winner managed to get around the course with 5 time checks losing only 4 marks (one mark each for every minute early or late). In fact there were 3 riders with only 4 penalty marks so I had to resort to the tie break rules to separate them. I wish I could get even close to that result when I ride in time trials.

The K75 went to its new home on Tuesday and to be honest I was not sorry to see it go. Getting it out of the garage to the drive for collection I very nearly dropped it again. The Guzzi V50 now seems to be sorted after a lot of tinkering over the last week. As usual, it was a combination of things. The mixture was too weak and eventually this was cured by raising the needle one notch. However, it was still a bit stutter pulling out of corners and roundabouts and I could not get a stable tickover. Eventually traced this to a dodgy coil but not the one I had earlier diagnosed as faulty. I managed to prove the point by switching the wiring over and the fault moved to the other cylinder. I have now fitted the new coil and the bike runs really well with a rock steady tickover and nice milk chocolate coloured plugs. I took it for a slightly longer test run including a stop to fill the tank and thoroughly enjoyed the ride. Next task is to use it regularly for shopping trips and short local journeys to establish its reliability. Hopefully it will pass this test and become the successor to the K75.

Wednesday 26th July 2016

Not a great deal to report. perhaps the most constructive thing I have done is to paint the garage floor with some nice shiny green paint. We built the garage in 1983 so it's only taken me 34 years to get around to the job. Longest part of the job was the preparation; moving everything that was on the floor outside and cleaning up. Looks nice I must say and will encourage me to keep the garage tidier in future. I also painted the window frame in the garage which has been bare wood also for 34 years.

On Sunday I drove down to Exeter to see John Hill and also met up with Andrew Long who lives just round the corner. I took back the bottom yoke which Andrew kindly gave me as it was a TS150 type. To my surprise and pleasure he turned up a bit later with the correct yoke so I will be able to fit the later forks to my 4spd TS250 in due course. I now have Johns Guzzi V50 in the garage and have started a tidying up regime as it is pretty scruffy. Getting the bike to run properly has also been a challenge which was odd as John had ridden it to Crediton and back (20 miles) for an MoT on the Friday. I can't seem to get it to run reliably on both pots. I have to keep swapping the plug on the LH cylinder. However, I am slowly working through the bike and there is no desperate hurry as I cannot tax it until next week.

On the way home I looked at the Norton Commando I had seen on eBay. It was quite nice but I found it very hard to start and once running it was incredibly noisy. On balance, I decided that a Commando was not really the bike for me and have dropped that idea. I did make an offer for a 1959 Thunderbird and the garage said they would talk to the owner and get back to me on Monday. It's now Wednesday with no response so I think I have my answer.

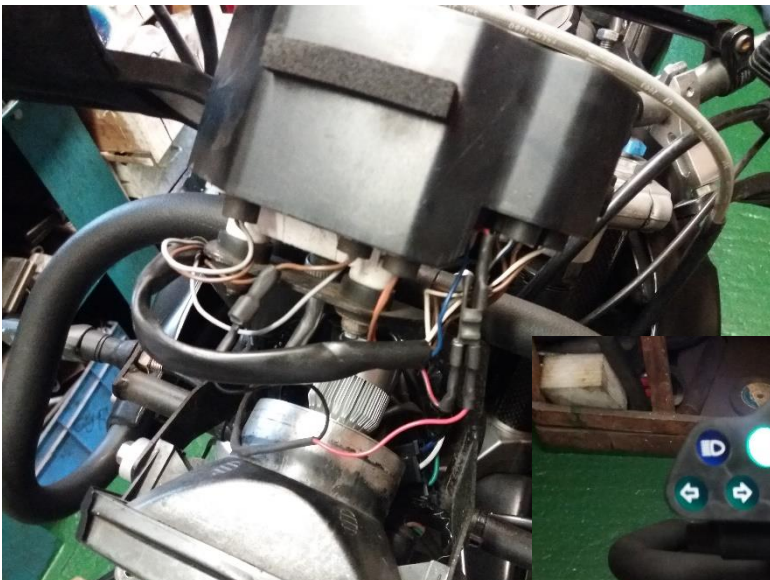
However, yesterday I spoke to a friend of John H who lives in Yeovil. He is selling a 1938 MOV Velocette in kit form which sounds interesting. I am due to contact him again at the end of next week when he has had a chance to sort out the parts. Suits me as my van is being used by the kids for a caravan holiday in the New Forest next week and it's currently loaded with camping gear.

Had a phone call about the K75 last night and the chap turned up today to look at the bike. The deal was done within a few minutes and a deposit paid. He will be back on Tuesday to pick it up. Not sure whether to be pleased or sorry but too late to agonise over that now. Curiously the chap who bought it had been here before and bought my R26 BMW. The hunt for a the K75's successor is now a priority but of course there is absolutely nothing remotely suitable for sale at present. On the other hand, if I wait until the autumn, more bikes at affordable prices will no doubt appear and I still have plenty of other bikes in truth. Maybe the V50 will come good but I am a bit doubtful.

Friday 21st July 2017

On Saturday 15th July I rode over to Pewsey as a day visitor to the MZ Hants section Summer camp. Pleasant day out and a chance to catch up with a few old friends including Dave Stavris who still has not sold his Mastiff. Seems like I am not the only one who felt it was a bit tired as one chap drove all the way down from Yorkshire, took one look at the bike and left without even stopping for a cup of tea. However, he has someone coming to look at it on Monday so maybe it will find a new home before I get tempted to make an offer I would probably regret. On Sunday I went over to Neston to help Mike D fix his dead (i.e. no sparks) 1966 Triumph TR6 twin. Turned out to be a broken wire from the ignition switch which was fairly easy to identify and fix. Flushed with success we looked at his 350 Ducati single which had suddenly stopped charging. Having

looked at the wiring loom it struck me that it was very similar in layout to the Baghira and sure enough it was a dodgy fuse between regulator output and battery. In this case the fuse had got hot and partially melted the casing enough to stop current flowing. Not clear why this had



happened but a new fuse restored the charging for now anyway. The big difference between the Ducati and the Baghira was that the former had a charge warning light so Mike new he had a problem. There was a receipt in the Ducati's paperwork for the supply of the CWL so I looked them up and ordered one for the



Baghira which I fitted on Wednesday. Cost a whole £12.59 and works like a charm so now if the Baggie blows a fuse again I will know straight away rather than finding out when the battery goes flat. Fitting was easy enough once I had figured out where to break into the wiring loom. In the end I used the feed to the neutral light as the input side and found a convenient earth wire from one of the speedo lights. I wired then with double connectors so that I can plug in a charge lead for the phone or similar.

During the week I have had a couple of chats with John Hill discussing amongst other things my desire to replace the K75 with something that would do the same job but would be a lot lighter to live with at home. He told me he was about to sell his ex Italian police Guzzi V50. I did actually have a ride on this about 18 months ago and was not too impressed at the time. Mainly because the carbs were not properly tuned and balanced and it was simply not very nice to ride especially as the roads were wet and slippery. Since that time he assures me he has sorted it all out and it now runs well. The outcome is that I am going to collect the bike next Sunday to try it out. If I now like it then I will buy it otherwise I will sell it for John. As the picture shows, it is a bit cosmetically challenged but look to have superb seat and a very armchair riding position suggesting it would be very comfortable. Even has a pannier especially modified for your gun!



Alongside the K75 replacement I have also developed a yen for another British bike to support the Venom. Two models are currently in favour, either a Norton Commando or a pre-unit Triumph twin preferably a Thunderbird. I have seen one of the latter I am quite keen on and discussions are ongoing. There is also a Commando in Tiverton which on my route to John Hill's house in Exeter so I may just have a look at that on Sunday.

Tuesday 11th July 2017

I took the Baghira on the VMCC mid week run on Thursday 6th July. We started from Lacock and meandered up to the garden centre on the Avening road just outside Nailsworth. Nice route some of it on lanes I had never been on before. The bike would not start after the coffee stop. The battery was flat but we managed to bump-start it. I had been running with the headlight on and I thought initially that the slow running had drained the battery and that it would recover. All was well until we came to a halt after one of our number had a minor spill. The engine stopped again and we could not get the bike running, attempts to bump start simply resulted in the clutch slipping so I had to be recovered home. Turned out to be a blown fuse which isolated the charging system from the rest of the electrics so everything appeared to work until the battery finally died. Fixed for now but no idea why the fuse went so I shall have to keep an eye on that. There is no charge warning light on the bike but Paul Goff sells an LED gadget which shows the voltage state of the battery, green for of through orange to red if flat.

On Saturday my son Richard and grandson Curtis rode down from Shrewsbury on Baghira and ETZ125 respectively. They came to take part in the VMCC White Horse trial which I was helping to run on the Sunday. Richard has no idea how to read a map and I was despairing of how they would fare but after working out a route on the map he figured out a way to use a combination of the maps and the GPS function on his mobile phone. It worked too because he got round all 12 controls with only one mistake. I was mighty relieved to see the pair of them get back and quite proud of them too. They rode back to Shrewsbury on the Monday but had to delay their departure to get Curtis's bike MoT'd as it ran out on the Sunday. The trial itself went well and everyone had a good time. The weather was kind, sunny but with cloudy spells to cool it down from time to time. Sunday night was busy working out the results but they are now issued so it's all over for another year. We had 29 entrants in the end, 5 on the day which is ok but a few more would be nice to make the effort more worthwhile. It seems to be the same story everywhere. Few events get more than 30 entries these days and sadly I think many will simply disappear from the calendar as the organisers get dispirited. Few riders it seems want the challenge of reading a map and working out their own routes, most just seem to want to follow someone else from one coffee stop to the next.

There has been reasonable interest in the Skorpion with two people wanting to do a p/ex for it. Both offering 2-stroke MZs, a Supa5 from Paul in Staverton and a 301 from a chap in Bordon. I was a bit tempted by the Supa5 having looked at it on Saturday but someone else turned up today and bought it for cash so it has now gone to its new home in Melksham. The money is in the bank topping up my bike fund. This afternoon I took the K75 to for its MoT. After weeks of dry hot weather it finally started to rain about ½ hour before the test was due so I had to dig out my wet weather gear. It passed ok and it was a nice ride despite the rain but it is heavy. However, I still have no idea what to replace it with so I shall keep it until the right replacement has been found. Just wish I knew what that was. I am in the lucky position, having sold a number of bikes over the last 6-9 months, to have a reasonable bike fund but nothing appeals so far. Even more sadly I am not making much effort to find anything. Hopefully the right machine will turn up.

Tuesday 4th July 2017

I think monthly rather than daily would be a more accurate title for this blog and I had to make myself sit down to type up something today. I should have collected my thoughts to present the update in some logical order. However, that's not going to happen so I'll be jumping around a bit for sure.

France was a great success, the journey over on the Bretagne was smooth and passed very quickly we boarded around 8pm and by the time we had eaten and had a couple of beers it was time for bed. By 8:30 am we were on the road and got to our b&b at Huelgoat around midday. The owners were lovely and very helpful. We had the use of Paulo's garage to keep the bikes secure and the use of the premises all day if we wanted even though we were only on b&b terms. This proved a godsend as the temperature was exceptionally hot even by their standards 39 degrees C for the first 2 days after which it did cool down a bit but never dropped much below 30 degrees. It was too hot to ride long and far both for the Velos and their riders. We rethought our routes and did much shorter trips one in the early morning till about 11am and again in the evening after 6pm. The time in between we explored the local cafés and bars or just had a siesta. On the Thursday we drove down to Reminiac for another 3 nights b&b at Mototaranis run by Brit expats Ken and Lesley. They were just as hospitable and I cannot praise them enough. The weather was a bit cooler by then so we did some longer runs with long lunch breaks and getting back around 4pm. The last day we spent at a superb motor museum at Louheac. Then it was back to St Malo for the ferry crossing home, This was a daytime trip and though only about 10 hours seemed to go on forever. The Velos never missed a beat and seemed to take the hot weather in their stride. In total we did about 400 miles – rather less than the 700 or so we had planned but



still very enjoyable. The picture shows Ken and Lesley – our hosts at Reminiac – Note the drip trays under the bikes as the Velos were determined to mark their territory.

Almost immediately after getting back it was time to load up the van and the caravan to take Mrs F to a dog show at Windsor. My job was purely to tow and set up, I was then sent home with Barney so that a friend could stay with her in the caravan. However, this was actually beneficial as it meant I could take part in the VMCC Cotswold Weekend trial on Saturday 1st July. I took the van as it was a 200+ mile day overall. Mike came with me and Bill met us at the venue in the Forest of Dean. We had a good ride round with no major hiccups but no results as yet and I somehow doubt we will have done very well. It was a time trial but with a twist. Instead of being monitored on how close we could get to a set average speed, we had to estimate at various locations on the route how far we had travelled and what average speed we had achieved. Even

though we all three rode together, our estimates varied wildly. Still it was a cracking route and nice day. On Sunday evening, I returned to Windsor to break camp and bring the caravan home which we did on Monday morning. Doing it that way I avoided any rush hour traffic on the M4 and we were back by noon. No more caravanning until the end of July when it goes to the New Forest for a holiday with the grandchildren.

At the end of June I Sorn'd the Skorpion and taxed the Baghira as I had not overly enjoyed the Skorpion. I rode it to Tilshead on the 29th June and it was a cracking ride on the main road across the plain but once the speed drops below 45 you are constantly changing gear to avoid chain snatch and the lean forward riding position becomes annoying. I took the Baghira out today for its first ride and it felt much nicer than I remembered, The riding position is much better with hi rise bars pulled well back and the footrests in a comfortable position. I have fitted the bean bag seat pad since the last time I rode it and this was a great success. It felt comfortable even after a 20 mile ride whereas the standard seat made my bottom ache after only couple of miles. Though it has the same Yamaha XT660 engine as the Skorpion and does snatch if you go too slow in a high gear, it is nothing like as obtrusive and will run down to 40 or a bit less before needing 4th gear. Though I had done nothing further to address its other problem of seat height this did not present problems today. I was able to climb on and off without any issues (the latter has always been the more significant problem). I came back with a big grin on my face.

Long time readers of the blog may remember that I bought the Skorpion from Derek Pickard at a favourable price with the understanding that he could use it when he came over from OZ for a holiday later this year. Unfortunately, Derek had major surgery for cancer in early 2017 and though he has the all clear his recovery is slower than he would like. This means he may well not be coming this year and that he is unlikely to be able to ride a bike anyway. We discussed the matter and he has agreed that he is happy enough for me to sell it given I don't really like it and he is unlikely to be able to ride it even if I kept it for him (which I offered). When he does come over, we will review what I have in the stable to see if anything else is suitable for him.

So the Skorpion is now advertised on the MZRC website and on Gumtree. Having made this decision has brought up the subject of the K75 which I was thinking of selling if the Skorpion had found favour. It's due for an MoT very soon which I will now get done and hang on to it until such time as I have found an ideal replacement. Trouble is I have no idea what it might be as absolutely nothing is tickling my fancy as yet. The only drawback to keeping the BMW is the amount of space it occupies and its weight when trying to move it. Need to dwell on that a bit.

Saturday 17th June 2017

Nearly three weeks without finding time to write up the blog as I have been so busy and I am having to make time tonight as I am off to France tomorrow. No way I can remember everything covering 3 week period so I'll probably be adding things later as the memory kicks in. The caravan holiday at Newbury was very pleasant. Mostly I was on dog warden duty whilst Mrs F was stewarding at the dog show. My first rideout on the TS150 was scuppered by a flat front tyre but I did manage to get a new one in Newbury. Funny thing was I could not and still cannot find

out why the original tube goes down. Out of the wheel and blown up hard it stayed up for days! I went up to see Dave Stavris at Didcot on the Thursday for a natter and took his MZ Mastiff out for a test ride. In hindsight I should have bought one of these instead of the Baghira as it has a much better ride height. I was tempted to buy his bike but I felt the asking price was too high for its rather poor cosmetic condition and I hate haggling with friends. If he still has not sold it by the time I get back from France I may think again.

The TS150 did not behave particularly well on the trips I took out. The motor pulls like a train provided you keep the revs up but every now and then it seems to bog down and takes forever to pick up again. It has done this ever since I rebuilt the bike and swapping carbs has not improved matters. However, I have been consulting with friends and experimenting since and I think I have fixed it. It now has a proper K&N type air filter and a newish (<300 miles) 22mm carb from a TS125. This still did not fix things until I raised the needle 2 notches to richen the mixture at the lower throttle openings. Now it feels much more lively and on a test run I did not experience any of the bogging down despite trying to provoke it. I have probably lost a bit of the top end performance by using the smaller carb but since its main job is trickling along green lanes, I think I will leave it alone for now.

On 11th June I rode the Skorpion to the MZ section meeting at Ham and had a cracking ride. There have been no repeats of the problems I had when I visited Cross engineering so I am pretty sure that must have been the low fuel level and the steepness of the hill. It still smells quite strongly of petrol when parked in a closed garage though there is no obvious signs of leakage. Ethanol affecting the fibreglass tank is still a concern. I rode it again on Wednesday when I did the first of three sessions checking out the White Horse Trial locations. Again it went well but it is not an ideal bike for riding narrow country lanes you have to keep it above 3k revs to avoid the chain snatching. For the second & third sessions I rode the TS250 4spd and it was far better for the job and a delight to ride. In total I have clocked up over 200 miles in route checking and done all 10 green lanes plus a couple of extra ones when I got lost. Managed to stuff it in the bushes on one steep slippery section and it took me a while to get out from under and sort things out. No real to me damage apart from my ego and a few aching muscles. I carried on and did the other 6 controls without problem so the bike does not seem to have come to any harm.



I am ashamed to say that the Velo has had very little attention apart from an oil change and checking the gearbox & chaincase levels and the tyres. It was picked up by Bill on Thursday as he wanted to get the bikes loaded up early. I get picked up with my luggage on Sunday afternoon.

Tuesday 30th May 2017

Monday was seriously wet which scuppered my plans to sort out the garden before going away in the caravan later in the week. So I decided to spend some time on the ES175/250 to sort out a few issues which emerged when I road tested it after fitting the 250 motor. Main one was an oil leak which I traced to the gear change shaft. Naively I thought it was just a worn O ring so I was a bit surprised to find the one I removed apparently in good condition. Even more surprised to find that my stock of new O rings were in fact 1.5mm thick rather than the necessary 2mm.

Eventually I found a correct size ring and was able to reassemble. Then I found the clutch would not work properly so it all had to come apart again. The reason was pretty obvious and the wonder is that it worked at all when I did the initial road test. I had fitted a later type clutch to the engine when I rebuilt it as I didn't have a decent older type in stock at the time. Turns out that the thrust scrolls are specific to type of clutch though they look superficially the same. Fortunately, I now had a correct clutch and spacer so it all went back together successfully the second time and the clutch now works fine. However, the oil leak is still present which I rather expected. The clutch cover is not in the best of condition and I imagine the hole for the change shaft is worn beyond the limits of the O ring. I did consider using the cover from the 175 motor but that does not have a groove for an O ring so would most likely leak even worse. This also explains why very little oil came out of the 175 motor when I stripped it – most had long since leaked away. For now there is not much I can do about it so it's a case of keeping a drip tray in situ and topping up when I want to ride it.

Happily the other two jobs went a bit more smoothly. The rear wheel now has new bearings and the headlamp has a 6v bulb to replace the rather dim 12v previously fitted. The bad weather prevented another test ride on Monday and other things have taken priority today so it will have to wait until we get back from Newbury on 5th June.

I am conscious that its only 3 weeks till we go to France and the Venom has not been on the road since last October. So this morning I rode it to Melksham to pick up some pills from the Vet. It started reasonably easily given that I did not bother to drain the sump first and once running seemed fine apart from a slightly dragging clutch. I was tempted to put the bike in the van and take it with me to Newbury but common sense prevailed and it is now on the bike lift for a checkover and service. Instead I have loaded the TS150 trail bike which will allow me to get away from the dog show and enjoy the Berkshire countryside for an hour or too each day. It also needs a good clean which will also help to pass the time. Had a quick look at the OS map for the area and there seem to be loads of Green Lanes not too far away.

Sunday 28th May 2017

We got back from Weymouth on Saturday having had a great time. The event was very informal, you just turned up at the start which was at Bagwell Farm where we were camped, signed on and joined the group for the day. We used the drop off system rather than route cards so I only have the vaguest notion of where we went but the roads were quiet and the scenery stunning. Rod Hann lead on two days and on the Tuesday we had a very nice lunch provided by Carol at their house in Leigh just South of Yeovil. He has a huge garage/workshop and some really nice toys. John and Nick lead on the other two days I rode though sadly I did not get their surname. Total mileage for me was just over 350 and the bike (TS250) did not miss a beat all week. Because we were travelling relatively slowly I could only just squeeze tow gallons of fuel in by the end of the second day having covered 170 miles in total; Happy with that. On the Friday I skipped lunch as I wanted to pack up the awning before the threatened rain arrived so I rode from Yeovil to Bagwell on my own down the A37 which is fast but very hilly and with a gale force head wind. When I filled up back home it took 2.5 gallons to refill for 182, still pretty impressive. We did not arrive until Monday afternoon so we missed Sunday's Weymouth Run and the Monday ride which went to Swanage and Purbeck. Maybe next year I will get things better organised. Numbers taking part dropped steadily during the week from a high of 27 on Tuesday to 12 on Friday as people gradually drifted home. We had the site virtually to ourselves until the Friday when it suddenly filled up (being the Whitsun weekend). We were quite glad to leave and if it's the same next year I may well pack up and leave on the Friday. I have just penned a letter to the editor of the VMCC Journal about the event (with Rod Hanns blessing) hoping it will encourage others to take part.

The MZ club Ramsbury Run on the Sunday was great fun but there were no MZ club members, just my friends from the VMCC (Mike, Terry & Bill) plus Mike's son Simon riding his dad's Ducati. I made a slight change to the route from last year and we had sunshine all the way though heavy rain was forecast for the afternoon and it did cloud over we only got the odd spot on the rip home. Cracking day and we met up with Dave and Carol Stavris at the Crown & Anchor for lunch. Dave is selling his MZ Mastiff having bought a Jawa 650 which he is very pleased with.

Sunday 21st May 2017

Finally got the 250 motor sorted well enough to take it for a test ride and no major problems. The bike seems to steer and handle ok so I guess my fix for the front fork is adequate, All four gears are present and no especially worrying noises were heard. The engine even ticks over

nicely. Its very flexible with top gear usable to very low speeds but of course it is still running the 17t sprocket from the 175 motor and the 175 carb. A few problems to be resolved; the clutch cable had to be modified to get it to fit and is really too short. The whole cable assembly on this era of MZ is different to the later models and to replace the cable means removing the clutch side engine cover which in turn means draining the gearbox. However, the cover needs to come off anyway as the gear change 'O' ring needs replacing as its leaking like a sieve. I also need to find a 21t gearbox sprocket to raise the gearing and fit the appropriate speedo gearbox. There is no urgency for this, the other jobs are higher priority.

My attention has turned to the 175 motor which is now partially stripped. Just as well I replaced it really as it is a bit of a chamber of horrors. The middle piston ring is broken with no sign of the missing part. There is a small scratch down the bore – but no other obvious damage. However, I have another barrel and piston/rings which I intend to fit as this barrel has missing fins so no great problem. The rattling noise you could hear when the engine was running is clearly from the big end as it has quite a lot of play. That is a disappointment but not really a problem as I had no particular plans to use it anyway. What may be a bigger problem is the barrel studs. Two are original and two have been replaced, I assume because the original threads were stripped. The replacements are not central to the original crankcase holes and are eccentric as well. After some tinkering I have managed to adjust them so that I can get the barrel to fit but if the engine is ever to be used seriously, a better repair is needed. Another aspect which needs investigation is the kickstarter assembly which has far too much play and there are signs of scoring on the crankcase inner wall. I do have another complete k/s assembly that appears to be in much better condition so it may just be a simple swap of parts. The other issue is the clutch operating mechanism. One of my main reasons for stripping the motor was to remove the clutch cable and take some measurements to make a new one as they don't seem to be easily available from my usual suppliers. It looks as though Joe Bodger has been at work in this area as well because the cable is permanently fixed to the operating arm. Normally there is slot to slide the nipple out of engagement. The actual arm looks very similar to the later type so I am hoping I can find a spare in my collection of parts to see if I can replace it.

Fortunately I found a scrap but complete clutch cable in the box of spares that came with the ES175 so I was able to use that as a donor to make a new one. That's about it for now, Tomorrow we are off to Weymouth with the caravan staying at Bagwell Farm. This is the same venue that was the base for the Weymouth week which died a couple of years ago. However, it seems that a number of people still go down anyway and it has resurrected itself on an informal basis. We shall find out in due course but we will have a good time anyway.

Wednesday 17th May 2017

We had a good ride on Sunday round the Cotswold on the Signpost Rally. Managed to find all the locations and I think we got all the clues answered correctly. The quiz at the end was another matter altogether but hopefully everyone else found the questions equally difficult. We were lucky with the weather during the event but about 20 miles from home the heavens opened. Fortunately my riding kit is pretty weatherproof. The TS250 went well – no problems all day during which did about 140 miles. Just as well I fitted the bigger tank.

On Monday I took the TS250 and then the Skorpion for their MoTs. Both passed fine so that's one job out of the way for another year. In the post was the DVLA reminder about the tax on the TS250 so I was able to renew that as well. I took the ES175 for a short run round the block on Monday and though it was a bit sluggish, there were no obvious problems. Yesterday I removed

the 175 engine and fitted the 250 motor. Bit fiddly as the 175 electrics would not fit properly and in the end I had to use a dynamo from a later bike. That was a disappointment as the earlier dynamo incorporates an automatic a/r unit which I was looking forward to trying. The bike is now pretty much back together and I have had it running. It makes a funny buzzing noise at low revs which clears as soon as you blip the throttle. Seems to come from the barrel/piston area which surprises me as the piston was a good fit and I used new rings and small end bearing. Might be the fins resonating as this motor does not have any rubber damping inserts. It has been pouring with rain all day so a test ride will have to wait. One thing I noticed when I changed the timing side crank seal was that this motor has the gearbox oil feed to the main bearings. I was not expecting that but of course I don't know the age of this engine which could well be a later version. I will be stripping the 175 motor in due course – will be interesting to see how that is constructed.

Saturday 13th May 2017

I had set today aside to attempt a fix on the ES175 front fork. I moved the bike to the rear garage and relocated a few other things to give me plenty of working space and in case I had to leave it partially stripped and immobile. First stage was to remove the wheel and the shock absorbers and bolt in place a piece of angle iron to lock the swinging arm to the top suspension mount. I checked that the actual arms were level at the pivot pin – which thankfully they were. Then checked the wheel spindle which was out of true in the same direction as the wheel lean. This confirmed our initial diagnosis that the problem lay with the ends of the swinging arm. Next stage was crude but effective. I used a 4ft bar with a 15mm mandrel in in the spindle hole on the RH fork and levered it downwards to straighten up the twist. I then did the opposite on the LH side to get the holes parallel. It took several attempts but eventually the wheel spindle was as near as dammit parallel and the holes were still lined up so that the spindle would slide through. When I put the wheel back in it was pretty much central between the shock, perhaps very slightly closer to the LH shock but nothing like as obvious as before I started. I decided to call it a day at that point other than to adjust the handlebars to make sure they were still parallel to the forks. They are only held by a simple pinch bolt and getting them lined up is often a trial and error task. Took the bike for a ride round the orchard and all seems well. In fact I seem to have rekindled my enthusiasm for the bike and next week I plan to fit the 250 motor as the 175 felt distinctly sluggish and does rattle a bit.

The news on the TS250 front end was not so good but it was as well I moved it today as I found the front brake was full of oil again. I had parked it badly and the oil from the leaky RH seal had found it's way into the drum. Changing the oil seals a while back clearly has not worked and my plan to fit the later forks has been scuppered as the bottom yoke kindly provided by Andrew Long proved to be from a TS150 and is too long. I will have to remember to park the bike in such a way that any leaking oil drops well clear of the brake. However, as a temporary measure, I have wrapped some thick felt round the bottom of the tube held on by cable ties to soak up any oil.

Wednesday 11th May 2017

Seems to have been a period of little achievement and disappointments so far in May. I have done a few miles now on the Skorpion and I am still unsure about it's long term future in the stable. It handles and steers brilliantly and the ride is ok but a bit hard. There is a clonk from the front end somewhere which I have yet to identify. The motor seems very rough to me particularly at lower revs but smooths out at around 4k revs which is 60mph. Anything below 3k revs and it snatches horribly though this does seem to have improved marginally since I adjusted

the chain. Worst problem was a refusal to start on Tuesday night. I thought it was a dodgy plug again and was mentally preparing myself to strip half the bike to gain access. I left the battery on charge all night and initially it was still as dead as the proverbial dodo next morning. However, by keeping it churning over the engine did eventually stagger into life but would only run on full choke for ages. It was not a happy bunny when I rode it and stopped completely after a mile or so. Although there seemed to be plenty of fuel in the tank I switched to reserve and with full choke again it did fire up and get me to the garage where I filled the tank. During the rest of the trip to Bath it never seemed happy but got me there and home again. Today I rode it to the VMCC club night at Chippenham and it is beginning to improve, not quite so snatchy and no starting problems though it does give a gentle pop on the overrun sometimes. It has all the hallmarks of dirt in the pilot jet system but getting access to the carbs to strip and clean is not a trivial job on these bikes. I think I will just keep riding it and see if I can flush out the dirt. One thing I was able to observe was that the headlamp beam adjustments I made after my first (and last) night trip were partly successful. On dip the beam now shines more to the left and does give some illumination of the nearside kerb. However the dip pattern is very odd with a very pronounced cutoff in the centre making it pretty useless in my view. The main beam has a better pattern but I had clearly set too low as and was able to ride with this on all the time without getting flashed. I will try adjusting it up a little but given the poor dip pattern, I may have to settle for what I now have. One thing is clear, I do have the standard mod of a Yamaha TRX headlamp so no improvement from the direction.

The ES175/1 is now back in the garage to attend to the things found faulty when I tried to sell it a while back. Most of the jobs were easy enough but the leaning front wheel is still defeating me. I sent for the cavalry in the shape of Terry Dixon and after due consideration we think the problem is a twist in the swinging arm itself. This was the only bit I did not replace when I rebuilt the bike and found considerable accident damage to the frame and bottom yoke assembly. I have advertised for a replacement or even to borrow one to prove the theory but not hopeful anything will turn up. I have a backup plan which I will probably have to put into action; this will either fix the problem or break it completely.

The MoTs for Skorpion and the TS250 are both due on 12th June so they are booked in for test next Monday as that will be within the 30 days to retain the existing expiry date. Just hope the TS250 survives the Signpost Trial on the Sunday. About the only good news recently was the results of the Felix Burke Trial; I won my class and Mike D won his class. Just as well don't ride in the same class.

Monday 1st May 2017

Couple of small jobs done today. The larger petrol tank is now fitted to the TS250. With the tank bag covering most of the paintwork, it looks ok and will give me a much greater range on a tankful. This will be useful on 14th May when I hope to do the Cotswold signpost Trial which starts at Kempsford well over 40 miles away.

The K75 has now been mothballed having been SORN'd yesterday. It's too big and heavy to move it to the rear garage and takes up a lot of room in the workshop so I have parked it behind the caravan and fitted two bikes covers to keep it protected from the elements and two security locks to protect it from the tealeaves.

The Skorpion was taken for a test ride this afternoon. The steering, handling and braking are just as good as I remembered when I rode it briefly in October. I was riding with an open face helmet it sounded noisier than I remembered and there was also a tinkling noise most apparent below

3000rpm and when the road surface was rough (practically everywhere on our local roads). It sounded as though something was tapping on the silencer and my first suspicion was the centre stand spring which I tied back with some cable ties. Didn't make a jot of difference so back in the garage I put the bike on the centre stand and ran it in gear where it was obvious the noise was associated with the chain in some way. Turned out that the rubber strip which sits on top of the swinging arm was worn through at the top end where it is hidden by the frame. I managed to patch it temporarily and also adjusted the chain which seemed a bit slack. Later a test ride proved the noise was gone. I imagine I will have to keep replacing this piece of rubber as the chain runs very close to the s/arm at this point and will keep cutting through the rubber. Anyway, nothing too serious so a longer test ride is on the cards for Thursday.

Saturday 29th April 2017

Things have moved on pretty rapidly in the last 24hrs. Martin Burwin concurred with the idea of using the old selector, having had problems with poor quality ones himself. Richard's engine has now been rebuilt and is ready for collection. Richard agreed to let me experiment with the new selector and it seems our (VMCC team) theory was correct. By grinding a very small amount from the tip of the new selector, normal gear selection became possible. What seems to have been happening was that the oversized tip was pushing the support end of the selector too tightly against the side of the selector drum stopping it from moving freely. I think I could have used it after modification but decided to err on the side of prudence and use the old on. The pictures show the story and how little I had to remove to get it to work.





The lower picture shows the gear cluster with the new selector (LH side). You can see that they are pretty much in line. Before grinding the new selector was well out of line with the others.

On a different and more pleasant subject, I have swapped the bikes around ready for 1st May. The K75 is going on SORN and the Skorpion is coming out to play. Battery is charged and tyres pumped up and it will be taxed tomorrow; of course rain is forecast for Bank Holiday Monday just to spoil my fun. While I was sorting things out I decided it was time to give the Venom a quick checkover. It would fire once but flatly refuse to pick up and keep going but after 20 kicks or so it did burst into life. When I went back later in the day it started first kick so hopefully if I run it more regularly, it will continue to behave better.

Friday 28th April 2017

Richard Darlison's Supa5 engine is still in bits. I stripped and rebuilt the gear cluster at least 6 times using my special sectioned crankcases so that I could better see what was happening. This established that any combination of old and new gear parts worked perfectly well provided the old selector was used. Any combination involving the new selector simply would not change gear but I was unable to see why. I took both selectors to our VMCC meeting last night and no one could see any obvious difference between the two parts so it must be a miniscule variance causing the problem. We did have one theory but to test it out would require the part to be modified slightly which would negate any chance of getting a refund. OST2RAD have now replied basically saying they have no better parts they could send. Richard is consulting Martin Burwin to see if he could supply better parts. Failing that I will probably rebuild it with the new OST2RAD gears and the old selector.

As a light relief I decided it was high time to rebuild the TS250 4spd engine with Supa5 type crank which has been hanging around for a while. This was a project originally started by Ray Cattle several years ago and bequeathed to me when Ray gave up motorcycling. It needed new crankcases as Ray had modified the originals to take an ETZ alternator which I could never get to work properly. He had also used roller bearings both sides which I was not happy with and an old ETZ250 crank with suspect clutch tape. Over the last 12 months I have collected all the bits

needed. In the rebuild I used a good Supa5 crank and a 6206 journal bearing on the timing side to provide lateral support. This modification means that the main bearings run on petroil rather than being lubricated by gearbox oil so the original oilways had to be blocked. Curiously I discovered yesterday that the ES175/1 and ES250/1 both used petroil lubrication with a Supa5 type crank and 6206 journal bearings both sides so our project was not as radical as it originally seemed and might even work. Next step is to find a rolling chassis to try it out.

Tuesday 25th April 2017

Well the Twin Dragon run is over for another year. We were very lucky with the weather. The first 2 days were sunny and warm. The third day when we transited from Dolgellau to Rhosmaen was patchy but we did not see any rain even though it clouded over a few times. However, for the reasons given later we chose to ride off-piste, those who did the official route through the mountains did get some hard showers. Snow and high winds were forecast for the Tuesday and we did see evidence of this on higher ground, but in practice we rode the whole way home under clear skies though it was cold. Mike's BMW R75/6 lost all its gears on the second day – cause still to be determined. His bike went in the backup van to Rhosmaen from where he was recovered home. So for the Monday he rode pillion with Terry which is why we chose a main road route rather than the numerous forest roads on Dave Boons route. Pity because these are one of the highlights of the weekend but safety comes first, On the Monday we stopped at the Dolacauthi gold mine and I exercised my NT membership card and had a conducted tour of the mine – fascinating and more about this another time. The K75 ran like a dream all weekend and averaged 64mpg over 460 miles which I was very happy with. The rear disk is now polishing up nicely since I replaced the pads so hopefully it won't need replacing. To help the process I used the rear brake extensively all weekend – barely touching the front except for long steep descents to avoid cooking the back brake. Torn now about what to do with the K75. I had more or less decided that I would sell it after the TD because it is so heavy but it went so well and is so comfortable for longer runs I am tempted to keep it on SORN and just tax it from time-to-time should a suitable run arise. My intention is to tax the Skorpion from 1st May and get that sorted to see if it is a suitable long term replacement for longer journeys like the TD.

Other news is not so good. The bits I ordered from Germany for Richards Darlinson's Supa5 engine all arrived on Friday lunchtime – superb service considering I only ordered them on Tuesday. We had made the right choice on crankshaft as the one supplied was the correct supa5 type not an ETZ version. As I had a spare afternoon and all the parts, I decided to make a start on the rebuild. All went back together with no obvious hitches but when I tested the gear selection I could not easily get the lower gears though if I could get past 3rd, the top two selected fine. So it all had to come apart again to see what had gone wrong. Nothing wrong with the assembly so I stripped the replacement gears (it was a 3rd gear issue which caused the rebuild) from the shaft and examined the parts. I then had to reassemble it twice more to establish which item was actually causing the problem. There were two faults – the slot in the new 1st/3rd slider gear was .5mm too wide and the new selector was .75mm too wide. In practice I think the selector is the major problem as the problem was most evident when just this item was in use. My theory is that the extra width is making it jam against the next selector on the rod preventing proper engagement. The pictures below show the problem and I have now emailed OST2RAD seeking a resolution. This is not just annoying in respect of this particular engine but worrying because if gearbox pattern parts are not reliable repairing MZ engines is going to become a lottery. I may have to give up repairing other people's engines as I don't want this hassle every time.



You can see the .5mm feeler gauge in the slot. The original parts are on the left with minimal clearance at the slot. In the other picture it clearly shows that the extra width of the selector is on the side which would abut the adjacent No 11 selector.

As I was typing this I received a message confirming that OST2RAD have received and read my email. Now we wait to see what they have to say.

Wednesday 19th April 2017

Over the weekend I put together a spares list for Richard Darlisons engine which proved difficult to procure from a single supplier. Eventually we had to compromise and split the order between OST2RAD and Mainzweirad. Bits should be here by Friday but I am away on Saturday until Tuesday on the VMCC Twin Dragon Run so the rebuild will not get done till next week. However, I have completed the dismantling and cleaned up the crankcases and other parts which is normally the longest part of the job.

The Baghira now has its original silencer and the popping & banging on the over-run seems to have gone away. I also fitted the new rear tyre today. Getting the wheel out proved easier than I expected given that its not QD and has an endless chain. Getting the old tyre off was a nightmare and putting the new one on not much better. The Centre well of the rim is very narrow and

trying to get both edges into it was hard. However, the new tyre is now fitted and without puncturing the tube than goodness. Refitting the wheel was a bit more daunting but doubtless will get easier with practise though I hope I don't have to do it too often. The only other issue is the speedo cable which had been badly routed resulting in the outer cable stretching. The inner is now too short to engage with the drive shaft inside the speedo head. I have emailed Grahams in Taunton about a spare as I cannot see any easy way of fixing the old cable.

Saturday 15th April 2017

Not a lot to report this week. We dragged Curtis's ETZ125 out of the greenhouse and made him give it a good clean. He had not bothered to keep it well washed down over the winter before putting it into storage and the salt had got a good hold on some parts, especially the front wheel spokes. This was annoying as I rebuilt the wheel only last year with brand new spokes. Sadly they were chrome because I could not get s/s spokes at the time. Never again chrome spokes are total rubbish. The bike also proved to be troublesome over starting when hot and losing tickover. In the end it turned out to be a dud battery which I replaced. The 125 is now back in Shrewsbury and the Baghira is back in my garage. Richard and Curtis had carried out a few mods some of which I like and some I am not so sure about. The new battery, LED headlight bulb, the replacement indicators and some of the touching up of paintwork are great. The tail tidy I am not so sure about and the aftermarket exhaust is a definite no-no. The standard exhaust and a new back tyre are on the todo list after which I will decide its future. Its MoT'd for 12 months and still insured on my policy so it could be ridden if I taxed it. However I have yet to get the Skorpion on the road and the ES175/1 still needs work.

Monday 10th April 2017

Quite a busy week. On Thursday we had our first VMCC mid-week run of the year and rode down to Porchester on Chichester Harbour to look at the Roman fort. Good turnout and cracking weather. I rode the K75 and deliberately did not top up the fuel to try and see how far it would go before hitting reserve. As this is a warning light rather than tap it was a bit of a risk as I had not as yet established that the low fuel warning light actually works. Clocked 187 miles without the light coming on. However, when I switched on the engine a couple of days later the light was glowing when the bike was on the side stand but went out when it was upright and the engine fired up. This established two things, the warning light does work and the bike will do normally be good for 200 miles as it has a 21l tank with 5l reserve. Not refueled it yet to establish what it does on a longish run but previous checks suggest 55-60mpg which I can live with.

Not so good was the situation with the back brake. I have noticed a grating noise at times when wheeling the bike around the garage which I thought was due to rust on the disks as mostly it is not apparent after a run. On Thursday it was more prominent than usual and I noticed that the outside of the rear disk was rather scarred and worn whereas all the other disks were quite smooth. With some difficulty I stripped the rear caliper a job that obviously had not been done for some considerable time and found that one pad was down to the metal and the pad material on the other side was detached from the backing plate. A new set of pads has been installed and I just hope the disk is serviceable. As you might expect I then serviced the front calipers. Both needed a good clean but were otherwise ok. Glad I found this before the Twin Dragon run in two weeks time. Another 600 miles of metal-metal contact would undoubtedly have trashed the rear disk.

On Friday we took the caravan down to Cheddar for the Somerset Section weekend event. I took the TS250 and we had a nice social run on the Saturday stopping for lunch at Oakham Treasures

near Portbury. Fascinating place which reminds golden oldies like me of our childhood. On Sunday we did the Cheddar Trial. We being myself, Mike and Bill who came down for the day all MZ mounted. On reflection we should have entered a team. Nice route spoilt only by the inevitable impossible questions and special tests. My bike suffered questionable braking over the whole weekend due to the offside fork oil seal leaking again and some of it running into the brake drum. It did work just about adequately but makes a groaning creaking noise which is a bit disconcerting. I will have to clean up the linings or more likely replace them but reluctant to do the latter until I have fixed the leak. The bottom line is to replace the forks but getting hold of a decent set of the early 32mm type will not be easy. More likely I will have to swap to the later 35mm forks which will be a pity as they will make the bike look like a Supa5 rather than a 4 speeder.

Today I went over to Corsham to have a look at a collection MZs and spare parts. The main attraction is a substantially complete Wilf Green 300. There are two other ETZ 251 rolling chassis and another ETZ frame plus a substantial number of parts but it was difficult to assess exactly what was there or its condition as the storage unit was quite dark. It's on eBay with 2 days to run but no bids so far and I think it unlikely it will sell as the starting price is £1200. Bit tempted but having just got rid of a significant load of MZ stuff do I really want to start over again. I truth only the 300 is of interest and I already have a near perfect ETZ250 which I have yet to ride; far more sensible to spend £100 fitting a 300 conversion.

Another good reason for not adding to my MZ collection right now is that my grandson Curtis has decided not to pursue his A2 licence for now because of the escalating cost for what is really only a luxury. I am sad for him but not sorry. In my view it would be better for him to spend his money getting a car licence right now as that will improve his job prospects. Indeed that was the reason I gave him the bike on permanent loan in the first place to avoid him needing to buy a bigger bike. I am taking his ETZ125 back to Shrewsbury on Saturday and bringing my Baghira home. Now I have 9 bikes again and will need to seriously review the stable.

Sunday 2nd April 2017

I am getting seriously behind writing up the blogg. Exactly 2 weeks since I put finger too keyboard. Life just seems to get in the way and in truth with no major project on the go there is not a lot to tell on a day to day basis. I have ridden the K75 quite a lot for shopping and local trips to make sure it's in good fettle for the Twin Dragon Run on 21st April. Couple of social runs on the TS250 as well to flush out any residual issues (none found) before the Felix Burke Trial which took place today. Bike ran like a dream all day apart from a short hiccupping spell on the homeward journey. It cleared when I gave it a handful of throttle and ran fine the rest of the way home. It was almost certainly a blockage of the main jet as it would run ok on a very light throttle. I ran it for part of the day on reserve (see below) and I imagine that was part of the problem. I got over the fuel capacity issue by having a spare gallon can of premix in Mike Davis's top box. We topped up my tank at the first control (The Daneway Inn, Sapperton) and I put the rest in at the finish to get me home. Looking at the tank now I reckon it would take about another gallon. Since we did approx. 155 miles today that would be roughly 75mpg which is ok. Next week at Cheddar we will not be doing such a big mileage and the Saturday run is a social event so plenty of time to fill up in the evening. I will have a spare can in the van just in case. This issue may be resolved shortly as my friend Andrew in Exeter is sending up a Supa5 standard tank for me to try.

Last Saturday 25th March was the VMCC Autojumble at Shepton Mallett. For once my shopping list was very short and I spent very little – wish it was always this way. On Sunday Mark Edlington came down to pick up his ETZ125 engines so they are now out of the garage. Less successfully, the sale of the ES175/1 fell through as the purchaser found some things about the bike he was not happy with; by mutual agreement we cancelled the sale. Still pondering on its future but most likely I will keep it to see if my enthusiasm for it rekindles.

I had the Skorpion pannier frames powder coated in gloss white a while back and decided to fit them on Wednesday. Fiddly job but easier than getting them off and they look quite good. I don't plan to use the hard cases but the frames will keep the throw-over bags clear of the wheels.

Don't think anything will come of it but I have been looking at a Royal Enfield Meteor Minor project in Melksham. This is the 500cc twin which is quite well thought off but also quite rare and not as desirable as the 700cc versions. Bike is nearly complete but very non-standard and has no paperwork. Initial research suggests the frame is 1959 or 60. Engine possibly about the same though it was never originally matched with this frame. Lots of questions arise; do I really want another project, how much will it cost to finish it off and what would it likely be worth when finished. Until I can answer the last two points I cannot figure out what would be a sensible offer should I decide the answer to point 1 was yes. I have to go back on Monday anyway to pick up some model railway stuff I have bought. Maybe a second viewing of the Enfield will clarify things. The sensible decision is to say no but when was I ever sensible over bikes.

Sunday 19th March 2017

Please to say the virus has finally cleared up and I am much improved to the extent that I have actually been out on the TS250 a couple of times. Firstly to Bromham on Thursday for a lunch time meet and today when I rode to Devizes to visit a Train & Toy show (more about that in the railway blogg) and then to Dauntsey to spectate at a VMCC Grassstrack practise day. I deliberately avoided filling the tank before setting off as I wanted to get the bike down to reserve level so that I had an idea of how much would then be needed to fill it up. Couple of surprises along the way. The bike duly ran out of fuel just after I left Dauntsey but nothing happened when I switched over to reserve -doh! Turned out to be a blocked tap which I eventually managed to clear sufficiently to get me the 5 miles to a garage. To my surprise, I could only squeeze in 8 litres of petrol. Not had a chance to measure the fuel consumption on this bike yet but I guess it will be 65-70mpg (636) so prudent to work on a 100 miles range on tankful for now. That will need some careful planning on some events. I ran the bike on the reserve tap all the way home from Chippenham and it went fine so hopefully the tap is now clear.

Earlier in the week Andrew Newband came down to pick up a Supa5 engine and dropped off an ETZ250 cylinder head and a spare ETZ250 tank. The latter was in very sound condition and with some minor cosmetic treatment will look fine on my ETZ250 should my tanl repair not have worked. I put in some fuel on Tuesday and so far it does not seem to be leaking – except from the fuel tap which I have fixed with a new rubber seal.

I picked up the ETZ125 head and barrel on Wednesday and Mark Edlington's engine is now back together again. He will be coming down on 26th March to pick it up. Also n the 26th, the new owner will be coming to collect my ES175/1 which I sold through eBay last weekend. We did not agree terms for the 250/1 engine so that will be sold separately – a couple of people have expressed interest so I doubt it will be around long.

With some better weather around I brought the Skorpion up to the workshop for a checkover. Things did not go well initially. For some obscure reason, the earth wire (-ve earth) is red and the +ve live feed is black. Eventually, after a couple of blown fuses I figured this out and normal electrics were restored but the bike refused to start. Immediate suspect was the plug which involved removing the tank and side panels and the top half of the fairing. It was sparking well but bone dry. After lots of fiddling around and copious squirting of EASYSTART I eventually got it to fire up hesitantly initially but gradually improving enough to warm itself up. It now seems to be over the sulks and has started fine every morning since. One thing I will need to investigate is a short circuit on the headlight flasher. I got round it for now by shoving a piece of blue-tac under the lever.

That's just about caught up – only two weeks until the Felix Burke Trial and the following weekend we are camping at Cheddar – cue for snow and ice. Two more weeks and it's the Twin Dragon run whoopee.

Friday 3rd March 2017

Weather has still been grim so no motorcycling this week and to cap it all I seem to have a virus which has laid me low. Just cannot seem to get warm and my appetite has gone completely. On Monday I took the barrel and head from Mark Edlington's ETZ125 to Steve at TPCS for shot blasting. Don came over with his Supa5 on Thursday and we tackled the timing side crank seal. I think we wasted our time as I am convinced that there was nothing wrong with it. However, as Don said, at least we know what the problem isn't. Sure enough the bike had not improved so I stripped the carb and rebuilt it to factory spec. Even then it did not seem right as I could not hear a click when the slide was closed. Sure enough, the throttle cable was too tight and when I adjusted it the click came back. Once this was done the bike started, ran and ticked over nicely. So simple and so annoying. Anyway, Don was on his way home by noon without incident this time and I retired to bed as I was exhausted by then.

Also on Thursday the parcel of MZ spares arrived from Germany. When I get the head and barrel back I can complete the rebuild of Mark's ETZ125. The parcel also contained a new exhaust system for my ETZ250 which I fitted on Friday. Only took an hour, maybe less but again I was exhausted (bad pun) by the time it was done and retired to bed. I cannot see me feeling well enough to ride to the Red Bull at Sherston on Sunday so I cancelled my lunch booking.

Thursday 23rd February 2017

The Bagihira was duly delivered to Shrewsbury and the ETZ125 was picked up. The latter is now wrapped up and stored in the greenhouse until further notice. Very quiet on the Shrewsbury front, not sure if that is good or bad news. Curtis is supposed to be taking his A2 (I think) test next week so I guess there is no desperate hurry to get the bike on the road and no doubt Richard will be giving it a test run anyway.

I met up with Mark Edlington at the nearby Percy Thrower Garden Centre – that's a name from the distant past for sure. WE had a brief chat and his two engines were transferred to the van. I was back home by just after 3pm. It was an easy enough trip but I must admit the circa 300 miles is enough for me in one day. I have done a preliminary investigation into his two engines and we are due to talk tomorrow to discuss how to proceed.

On another front. I have been in discussion with Andrew Newband from Yorkshire initially about an ETZ250 tank. We have now done deal whereby he has one of my spare Supa5 engines and I get a tank and an ETZ250 head. He is coming down to deliver the tank and collect the engine on

6th March. The head gives me a spare to have machined for a 300cc piston should I ever get that project off the ground and the tank I hope is just going to be insurance in case my repair has not worked. So far things are looking good and I refitted the red tank today. I will leave it for several more weeks before risking putting any fuel in.

Only other garage activity was to fit handlebar mirror to the TS250. Not totally happy with this as it fouls the clutch lever when fully opened. I have played around and possibly got it to a suitable position subject to a road test. If it doesn't work I will have to think again but I do have a cunning fall back plan Baldrick.

I saw Don at club last night and his face has recovered well. He is coming down next Wednesday for another attempt at sorting his Supa5 engine problem. Crank seal first then if that does not work we will try the carb from my engine which is known to be good.

Saturday 18th February 2017

On Friday Don O'Donnel brought his Supa5 over from Wootton Bassett to have a Powerdynamo kit fitted. It was a pretty straightforward job and within a couple of hours the bike was running with its new electrical system. Not terribly well I have to say as the engine was reluctant to drop the revs when the throttle was closed and would not tickover reliably. In fact displaying all the symptoms of a leaking crank seal. However, there was nothing I could do about that today as I did not have the necessary parts so Don took the bike home for now. Poor old Don managed to trip over his trailer ramp whilst tying the bike down and fell flat on his face. We had to clean him up and repair his glasses before he was able to set off home having declined an offer to drive him. Don is 84 years old by the way but one tough Irishman. He rang later to say he had made it ok thankfully but it seems he also broke his nose in the accident.

That took the gloss of the day somewhat but as it was sunny and quite warm I decided to have a go at the ETZ250 tank. I gave it the SofS treatment and it worked like a charm. Some of the heavier deposits under the top took a while but I just turned the tank upside down and left it for ½ hour or so. After a thorough washing out and drying I gave it the sealer treatment. I have opted for Tapox but not sure it was really the best choice. It's very thin, almost like water and seems to take an age to dry. The instructions insist that it has to have an air feed to assist the drying process by helping the solvent fumes to clear. I did all of that but could see last night a couple of small areas where the sealer has run thin. However, the good news is that my external repair held throughout so with the sealer inside as well I should at least have fixed the leak. Looking at the end results where it has dried, I think it must be the same stuff that BMW used inside their airhead tanks back in the day as it has that same red sheen.

The Tapox had dried out by Saturday morning and the leftover sealer was still liquid so I gave the tank a second coating but this time left the patrol tap hole clear so that as much as possible of the surplus could drain out and fed the air bleed in from the top. I also gently played the hot air gun around the outside of the tank to warm it up a little. This all seems to have worked as the second coat dried much more quickly and there are no signs of any bare patches. Just hope my battles with this tank are over.

In between times I had been thinking about the ignition cutout on the TS250. The position 5 system is ok to stop the engine but does mean that I then have to turn the key to the Off position before I can remove it. In this position the engine can be started so the bike is very insecure. I have now wired in a simple on-off switch hidden away from prying eyes which will also immobilise the engine. This also means that when I use the bike without a battery, I can set the ignition switch in the full headlight position so the lights are always on when the engine is running. This is how I run the TS150 trail bike. It was an easy enough job but also not without its problems. At one stage I could not stop the engine despite having two separate cutout systems. After I removed and refitted everything it all worked ok but worryingly, I never found what I had done wrong. Last thing I want is a bike where I cannot switch off the engine after that jammed

carb experience. Last chore of the day was to collect any remaining items for the Bagira and make sure everything was in the van ready for the trip on Sunday.

Thursday 16th February 2017

I rode the K75 to the MZ meeting at Ham on 12th. Boy was it cold though it was mainly my hands that suffered so I am now investigating heated gloves as a possible solution. These would be more versatile than heated grips and avoid the need to do any wiring on the bikes. Had to fill the bike before I set off and I worked out the fuel consumption later as 59.9mpg. Still not quite as good as previous versions of these bikes I have owned (nearer 70mpg was common) but probably all I can expect given the extra weight of fairing and the ABS equipment. I can certainly live with this.

The Whitchurch TS250 has been given an airing this week with a couple of test rides round the block and a 30+ mile ride today to the Plough at Kington Langley. It went well with plenty of power but a couple of minor issues will need investigation. First is the twist grip which is rather stiff and makes my wrist ache. The problem is the British pattern handlebars I fitted. They are comfortable to use being a compromise between the normal MZ flat bar which is too low with the raised seat and the ETZ style bar which is too high and spoil the look of the bike. The problem is that they are 7/8" bars whereas the MZ throttle is made for a 22mm bar which is slightly smaller. The difference is minimal but enough to make the twist grip tight in its housing. It may wear in over time but I am on the lookout for another set of bars just in case. I also felt that it was running a bit rich at the bottom end and when I got home I tweaked the tickover settings leaning of the airscrew quite a lot. Will have to wait and see if this has improved matters but the tickover remains slow and reliable so I am hopeful. The other issue may just be my imagination but I fancy there is more vibration than I normally expect from this model. Not serious or worrying – just different. On the way home I got to thinking about a headlight warning light which is something not normally fitted to this generation of MZs. As the ignition warning light is redundant it occurred to me I could use this and indeed it proved a very simple mod which I implemented this afternoon. I fitted a resistor in the feed wire to reduce the brightness of the bulb because an overly bright HL warning light can be a pain on a long night run.

Progress on the ETZ fuel tank is less encouraging. When I checked it yesterday it has developed some very light rust on the interior surfaces so I tried various things to deal with this. According to the internet you can use vinegar as a cheap rust remover, but frankly this was not overly successful. I had a lot more success with a time expired 2 litre bottle of coke. The Phosphoric acid working quite well on the thinner rust patches but not so effective on the thicker stuff. It was doing this that revealed my supposed leaky seam was not the problem. Pinholes became apparent as the internal rust was cleared. These have been sealed on a temporary basis with araldite mainly to prevent potentially corrosive liquid dripping onto the work service and elsewhere whilst internal cleaning continues. If it stays in place long enough it will also help to keep the Tapox sealer inside the tank long enough for it to cure. Today I finally tracked down a local supply of Spirits of Salts (basically diluted Hydrochloric acid) which should clean out the remaining rust in the tank. That's a job for another day and I am beginning to think it would be better to give up and buy another tank. Tomorrow I have a friend coming down with his Supa5 to have a Powerdyanmo fitted and on Sunday I am off to Shrewsbury to deliver the Baghira to grandson so the tank may have to wait.

Friday 10th February 2017

Still very cold and just some flurries of snow have just started as I write this. However, it has at least been dry so I did manage a brief ride round my test circuit with the TS250. It went quite well and the smokey exhaust seemed to clear after a mile or so. Nice tickover and the only oddity was that it felt a bit squirmy on the roundabouts. When I got back I found both tyres were down to 20psi. Front is now 26 and rear 32 which should sort the problem. I also adjusted the set of the exhaust so that the silencer no longer hits the wheel spindle when the suspension is at minimum travel.

I have ordered some stuff called TAPOX to seal the ETZ250 tank. It is a German product with good write-ups and is supposed to be 100% Ethanol proof. It should be here in a couple of days so I took the tank off today to give it a good clean ready for treatment. I used a litre of the alkaline degreaser that I bought last year with a handful of small-medium pebbles from the drive. Firstly neat then I drained it and strained it to remove any particles then 50-50 with water for a section session. Finally I washed the tank in hot water and swabbed it dry using a piece of wood with a series of paper towel dollies held on with a rubber band. This was all quite successful and the tank seems both clean and dry. Best of all it has not affected the paint which may well not have been the case if I had used petrol or other solvents. Now I need the TAPOX and a warm day to do the treatment – that could be a long time coming judging by the forecast.

Wednesday 8th February 2017

The Blog is not dead it's just that I have been busy on other things and there has been nothing until recently to report on the motorcycle front. Most astonishingly, I have not given any thought whatsoever to adding another bike to the stable – not even looked on ebay. Motorcycles came to the fore for last weekend however with the Bristol Bike Show at the B&W showground at Shepton Mallett. I took the van down on Friday with a couple of bikes and the VMCC section display material. Busy day and I was quite tired by the time I got back around 5pm. We were one bike/owner short due to illness and the stand we had this time was ½ as big again as 2014 so we had stacks of room to let everyone have a good look. Typing this I realised that I did not take any pictures – wonder if anyone else did. I had Saturday off and then spent the whole day on site on Sunday packing up around 4pm; another long day which extended into Monday as I had to unload the van and find somewhere to store everything.

I put the ES175/1 on display and it attracted a lot of attention. Apparently one of the judges spent some time looking at it on the Saturday but it didn't get an award. Amongst the visitors was Paul Drummond with whom I have been exchanging emails for a while since he acquired a basket case E175/1 for himself. We had a long chat and he took a lot of pictures. Another visitor was Andy Westlake who writes for various motorcycling magazines; he wants to do an article on it some time.



I was planning to re-commission the ES175/1 after the show but somehow it finished up in the rear garage again and its place in the workshop was taken by the Whitchurch TS250. I have decided that this is the bike I will ride in the VMCC road trial events this year so it's now on the bench for a checkover. I have fitted the spare Powerdynamo system today so that it can be run without a battery should the situation demand, though it currently does have a battery fitted as this makes testing the electrics easier. By the time I had finished it had got rather cold and was about to rain so a test ride will have to wait.

Thursday 19th January 2017

The ex Rob P-N Supa5 engine is now partly rebuilt. Decided not to fit a barrel, piston & head just yet as I am not sure how or where this engine will get used. In the case of Rob's engine swap, we used his existing top end on my rebuilt bottom end so I don't actually have a top end specifically for this rebuild. Though doubtless I could make one up from the spares. Chances are it will be sold to someone as a bottom end only so may as well leave it that way for now. I have just one final engine to rebuild, a 4spd TS250 but this needs a new crank and I don't currently have one of this type.

Ollie Harris has kindly offered me another tank for the ETZ250. Its sound and clean inside but somewhat dented. At the moment I am swithering over whether to accept his kind offer or give the original tank the 'Petseal' treatment.

Today was cold but dry with strong sunshine. I had a dental appointment which meant that I did not get back home until noon, but I decided to ride to the first VMCC wandering of 2017 at Minety even though I was only in time for a coffee. Nice ride and the K75 went well. Normally I fill the tank at the end of each run but today I adopted a different strategy. I am going to keep

riding the bike until the reserve warning light comes on. This has two benefits. Firstly, I will have a better idea of the range I can expect from a full tank and secondly, the bike will be 40-50lbs lighter when pushing it round the drive and garage. The good news was that my knee is getting better and coped quite well today.

Tuesday 17th January 2017

Decided it was about time I put together the Supa5 engine from Rob Parker-Norman's bike so I brought the bits up to the workshop. I had previously stripped it all down and as far as I can see it's all there. The crank and main bearings are toast but I have new parts bought from Germany back in November. However, I discovered that everything was still filthy. The crankcases were coated in what seemed to be a mixture of oil, mud and glue. Took me a long time to get them anywhere near reasonable and they are now drying off. Work continues tomorrow.

Monday 16th January 2017

Well Friday 13th may not have been a bad luck day but Monday 16th certainly was. I decided to fit the tank to the ETZ250 and get it running expecting that I was nearly at the end of the project. The good news is that the engine started quite easily and sounds really smooth and quiet. The bad news is that I noticed a petrol leak, in fact leaks would be more accurate. The first one was the petrol tap which seemed to sort itself when I tightened the cover plate screws. It was also dripping out of the overflow pipe in the float bowl but I decided to ignore it in the short term as often this solves itself once the engine is running – the vibration makes the float needle seat properly. Then I realised that there was another pool of petrol seeming to come from the bottom of the tank! Off came the tank and it was clear that the bottom seam on the RH side was weeping so I had to drain all the fuel out – fortunately only ½ gallon or so. It was then that I discovered that the clear lacquer I had used was not petrol proof. The tank is now back on the bike to dry out internally and externally whilst I retreated to the kitchen for a cup of tea and a sulk. I guess that petseal or similar will sort the leaky seam but I am not sure about fixing the paintwork. It was only ever meant to be a temporary job as the dents needed filling etc. Possibly it might be better to look for a better tank.

Friday 13th January 2017

Well hopefully not a bad luck day and a few things to report this week, the main one being the sale of the MAC. The ad on Gumtree did the trick and the bike was sold to a dealer in Cranbourne on Tuesday. We had a long chat on the phone and he agreed to buy it sight unseen - which I thought very brave especially as he paid by bank transfer the day before it was collected. It went on Friday so my garage is now looking quite sparse but the bike fund is looking very healthy. No desperate desire to add anything new as yet but doubtless something will appear to tempt me. I advertised it without the electric starter and adjusted the price accordingly as several people had made enquiries about this item. Someone came to see it – also on Friday and we agreed a price so that also has gone.

I finally managed to get an acceptable paint finish on the ETZ250 tank. The transfers have now been applied and it is currently in a spare south facing bedroom to give the paint a final chance to harden before refitting. With that back on the bike it is just about finished. Wonder if it will start easily. Funny from this angle even the dents are not obvious.



On Wednesday I took the Baghira to Phoenix in Trowbridge for the restrictor washer to be fitted. I was back within an hour to pick it up so the bill was not too bad. The bike is still in the van ready to be taken to Shrewsbury. Richard and Curtis are going to put it back together which saves me a job. I also found a new rear tyre in my stock which will fit so that can go with the bike. All in all not really a lot of bike related activity this week. Think I have lost the plot a bit. Between my bad knee and the weather there simply is not much enthusiasm for motorcycling and I am not alone it seems. None of my friends have done much if any riding or workshop activity lately either.

Sunday 8th January 2017

Two weeks without an update – I was reminded of this by Ray Cattle today at the monthly MZ meeting so I decided I ought to write something. Truthfully by my normal standards, very little in biking terms has progressed over the past two weeks. Christmas and New Year have been family occasions and even when time permitted, it was too cold and damp to want to spend any serious amount of time in the garage. It was much more comfortable playing trains in the spare bedroom; perhaps I should start a blog on this but who would care? The ETZ tank still needs painting but otherwise is pretty much complete. I put the battery back on and also fitted a tool roll bracket I found in the spares box. I also removed the old paint and corrosion from the handlebar switchgear so they look a bit smarter; but that's about it. The Baghira is booked in for the restrictor to be fitted on Wednesday and provisionally it will be taken to Shrewsbury on 19th February – Curtis's 19th birthday. The idea is that I bring back the ETZ125 as they don't have room to store a third bike.

Today I had a visit from Ollie Harris to collect some silencers to advance his dad's TS500 twin project. We had a good natter and it seems his brother was heavily into collecting 00 gauge train stuff at one time and is thinking of selling it on. Ollie is going to have a look and let me know what's available. Later in the morning Gary McArthy picked up the purple ES175/1 plus a box of

stuff which was surplus. With him came Tony Bishop and another friend. They had been marshalling at the Exeter trial and were now on their way home to Suffolk. As they arrived early, I was able to jump on the K75 and ride to Ham for the MZ club meeting albeit arriving an hour later than normal. The weather was dour – not cold but raw and wet as in riding in a cloud but to my surprise the turnout was one of the largest I have ever seen at the Salutation. Good crack and then a wet ride home. The K75 got hosed down before being put away to get rid of the worst of the muck and any salt that may have been hanging around.

Not a lot of serious interest in the MAC Velo from either the Fishtail or VMCC mag adverts. Mostly questions about the electric starter rather than the bike itself. I put an advert on Gumtree on Friday night to see if that produces any interest – if it goes I will probably look more deeply into getting a Norton Commando as the garage is beginning to look a bit empty.

One final snippet, at the 11th hour the West Wilts section has been offered a pitch at the Bristol Bike show. Initial reaction was to say too late, but after due consultation we have decided to go ahead. I have nominated the ES175/1 for display so it will need to come out of hibernation. Just about time to order any bits needed from Germany – the show is 4-5th February.

Monday 26th December 2016 – Boxing Day

The saga of the ETZ petrol tank continues. I did buy some more clear lacquer and checked with the shop that it was cellulose based like the paint so there should not be any compatibility issues. I waited until we had a dry sunny day and tried again, not so bad as previously but still not a uniform smooth finish. Hmmm!

My eldest son Richard came down for a few days bringing with him the restriction kit for the Baghira so that my grandson Curtis can ride the bike legally when he is 19. £60 for what is no more than a washer to fit in the inlet manifold. The key part is the certificate the kit contains which certifies the power has been lowered to the requisite level. This has to be signed by a garage so we visited Phoenix Motorcycles in Trowbridge. They have agreed to do the job but suggested that we strip the bike as far as practical so that their mechanic has only the minimum of work to do. So on Christmas Eve we stripped it to the point where the carbs are easily accessible. Not an easy job as amongst many other things, the rear subframe has to be swung out of the way to get the airbox out. The picture shows the end result, but not the fact that the subframe is actually supported by a rope from the roof beams:



The bike is now in my van and I will ring Phoenix in early January to book it in. Today was the annual Boxing Day bike meet at Whitminster. The weather was actually quite good, dry sunny if a bit cold and I had an excellent ride there and back. The only slight difficulty was getting on and off the bike. My left knee started playing up on Christmas day – its an old rugby injury which flares up every now and again. I had not realised that you actually need to pivot on your left leg when mounting and dismounting – trust me you do and when you have a bad knee it's pretty damn painful. Still it was worth it to get out on a bike and to meet up with lots of old friends.

Monday 19th December 2016

Sunday was a bit of a disappointment, I decided to give the petrol tank the lacquer treatment as it had worked so well on the airbox and battery cover. All went well initially and it looked great; then slowly ripples began to appear in the surface leaving a really bad orange peel effect. Not everywhere just in isolated areas. No idea as yet why this happened, the paints are compatible and did not do this with the other items. Anyway I let it harden off thoroughly, rubbed down the affected areas and tried again. In some cases this worked but in one or two spots the same thing happened again. I then ran out of lacquer so the tank is now back in the South facing bedroom to harden off again. I'll get some more lacquer and keep trying but not for a few days.

On Monday I had a day out with some friends riding the byways and tracks on the Imber ranges. We were also able to visit the village itself and curiously met up with a couple of guys doing some research work on graffiti in the Imber Church. One of the guys was well into bikes and lives not far from me in Hilperton – so I have sent him our 2017 calendar. We stopped for an excellent lunch and a long natter at the Rose & Crown in Tilshead. Terry & I rode home from there, the younger members carried on for a bit more trail riding even though it was drizzling. Cracking day.



Friday 16th December 2016

The ETZ250 was recovered from the rear garage on Monday and it is now quite close to completion. The airbox and the batter cover are now finished and I am well pleased with the results I achieved using the clear lacquer as a top coat. The correct transfers conveniently arrived on Thursday and have now been applied. Fitting the airbox to the bike should have been a 10 minute job which ended up taking most of the morning. I had to remove several bits already fitted to get enough clearance. The front mudguard is also painted and back on the bike. I used smooth Hammerite for this mainly because that is all I had left. It's a pretty good finish and I decided not to risk applying the clear lacquer as I am not sure if its compatible. Paintwise the only thing left now is the tank which is going to get the lacquer treatment as well but needs a warm dry day to do the job. I decided to rebuild the top end as a 250 for now mainly because I had all the right bits in stock. This was an easy job though because the engine is already in the frame I had to remove the cylinder studs to get the barrel in place then replace them afterwards.

I had an unpleasant surprise when I tried to fit the exhaust system, The s/s pipe which I had been hoarding for this project simply would not line up with the silencer and the fixing clamps. I have fitted the original, very rusty, pipe for now and will have to order a new one at some point. I fitted the chain and new gaiters (messy job) and filled the gearbox with fresh oil. In theory, all it needs now is the petrol tank and the job is done. However, I am sure something else will crop up. To create some space in the workshop, I have put the bike in the back of the van for now.

On Thursday we had our last mid-week wandering of the year at the Crown in Bishops Canning. It was cold, drizzly and Market Day in Devizes so did not make for the best of rides but at least the big fairing on the K75 kept me dry and fairly clean. On Monday we are doing a ride over the Imber ranges so this afternoon I brought the TS150 trail bike out of hibernation and checked it over. The front tyre was nearly flat and the rear only had about 15psi but these were soon sorted. I topped up the fuel tank and wiped it over with an oily rag and that was about the extent of its attention. The engine started ok and sounded sweet enough when it warmed up so we should have a good day out.

Sunday 11th December 2016

Out of the blue on Tuesday I had an enquiry about the ES250/2 Trophy from a guy in Great Yarmouth. I sent him a write-up and a load of Photos and after due deliberation and a little gentle haggling, the deal was agreed. He came down on Thursday morning collected the bike and was gone within ½ hour or so. Just the MAC Velo to move to a new home and I have reached my target for garage clearance. On Wednesday I collected the bits from the powder Coater on my way to Brinkworth to do a bike inspection for Mark Redding the MZRC Classics officer. A most unusual bike – a Simson Duo which was an East German 3 wheeler developed for disabled people. Colin Hope the owner offered me a drive but I declined in favour of videoing him driving it. Click this link <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3sarra0miwuc8oc/AAAllyLN2kLGTP1q5aHW5Z7ga?dl=0> to see the video.



The ET250 front mudguard has now been repaired and has been sprayed with primer to stop it going rusty. The airbox and the battery cover are at the top coat stage but need rubbing down and couple more coats. I have also bought some clear lacquer to see if I can achieve a deeper gloss finish.

In between times I have been working on the electric train project. The train set I ordered arrived on Thursday evening and I have managed to figure out how to set up the Railmaster software and the various hardware components. I think my decision to go the DCC route was the right one – it will be challenging but well worthwhile. I am now experimenting with various track layouts to get the best configuration. I have far more track than I need to fill a 6' x 4' board so the limiting factor is my imagination. I have assembled three versions so far and I suspect there will be a few more before I start nailing it all down. Got a bit carried away on eBay and have won two more locomotives and another complete train set. I have decided to go for the steam era majoring on the GWR livery (God's Wonderful Railway). A lot of the stuff I have will now become surplus so hopefully I can put some of it on Ebay to declutter and recoup some of the expenditure. I had two strokes of luck as well. John Hill located and sent me a set of brush springs for the HS125 so that is now up and running and I managed to superglue the broken Diesel engine chassis so that is also back up and running. However, I am not sure either are going to figure in the long term layout. Not only are they the wrong era, but they are really too big for even a 6x4 layout.

Tuesday 6th December 2016

Very little to report. Nigel Percy came up from Christchurch with Margaret to collect his engine on Monday. They are old friends from the VMCC world so we had a good long chinwag. My time and enthusiasm at the moment is more directed towards a different hobby, model railways. Not

sure why but I suddenly got the bug to play with trains, must be slowly (or maybe quickly) regressing towards childhood. I found a load of Hornby stuff in the loft which must have been there for at least 25 years since its owner Philip my youngest son is now 41. Given the very cold weather we have had for the last week or so and an indoor hobby became an attractive idea. Sadly, most of the track that came out of the loft was corroded and not really worth saving but I did manage to get three of the 4 engines running and there were a few other useful bits. An advert on Gumtree resulted in my buying a shedload of stuff on Saturday which I am sorting through. I have found that in the model railway world computers are now the way to go (something called DCC) so it could well make a good marriage of hobbies as I do like playing with computers having spent a large part of my working life in the IT world..

First task was to create a suitable environment in which to play trains. They do need a lot of room and setting up on the floor is risky given that we have two excitable dogs. They have to be shut in the kitchen if the grandchildren want to play with the Scalextric. The solution was to adapt one of the guest bedrooms by fitting a 6' x 4' board which is hinged so it can be raised flat against the wall if the bed is required. Sorting this out and building the baseboard has taken the best part of two days hard work. Hopefully the paint will be dry by tomorrow so that I can start laying out some track.

Back to bikes and I had an email from Steve the powder coater this morning to say that the mudguard has developed a hole after it had been soaked and blasted. Sensibly he told me about this before he went ahead and painted it. I will collect it tomorrow along with the airbox and battery box and then decide what to do with it.



Sunday 4th December 2016

Amazingly the parts I ordered from Germany on Thursday morning were delivered before noon on Saturday – under 48 hours! I rebuilt Nigel Percy's engine this morning and he is coming to collect it on Monday – he was quite surprised it was done so quickly. The parcel also contained a crankshaft and bearing kit for Rob's old Supa5 so that can now be rebuilt when time allows. There were also some standard bore piston rings which would enable me to compete the rebuild of the ETZ albeit still as a 250. Not sure yet whether to do that as an interim measure or hang on until I have sorted out the 75mm rebore and the machining of the head.

Saturday evening was the MZRC Bristol Section AGM and Christmas party at Thornbury. I took Richard Warne with me. It was a pleasant evening, far too much food and the raffle went on for

ages but I did win a few useful things. Bikes may start to take a back seat for a while during the winter months anyway as I have reverted to childhood and decided to resurrect an old model railway. Currently I am delving into the subject as much has changed since I last played with trains. Seems they can even be computer controlled which could be fun.

Thursday 1st December 2016

On Wednesday Nigel Percy from Christchurch visited bring with him his Supa5 motor. The original plan was to do a quicky job to replace the broken gear change spring. However, when draining the oil Nigel noticed some bits of metal swarf which he brought with him. The bits were in fact part of the cage of a bearing so clearly something was amiss and a full strip down was needed. The engine came apart quite easily and we found the gearbox output bearing was missing about half of the inner side of its cage. I have never seen this before and my belief is that the broken part of the spring, which sits immediately above the bearing, was the culprit getting caught as it fell to the bottom of the crankcase. Nigel had to leave the engine with me as we did not have the necessary parts in stock to rebuild it the same day. I was tempted to re-use the main bearings as they seemed fine. However, as they were original DDR nylon caged bearings, I was able to dismantle and inspect them closely. Though the tracks were fine the balls in both were pitted and obviously close to failure. So a complete set of bearings has been ordered along with a load of other stuff; should be here before the end of next week. I also found that the engine had been rebuilt at some point in the past without the thrust washers on the selector shaft – I could not find any of those when I placed the order so I will have to 'lend' him my spare set and replace them when they become available again.

On Thursday Rob Parker-Norman rang to tell me he was back home so I took his Supa5 back to Bratton. Nice to get the back of the van freed up, it makes a useful extension to the garage for the lighter bikes anyway. The cold weather looks to be continuing for a while so I decided it was time to remove the batteries from the bikes which are unlikely to be used until the spring. I don't like them getting frosted. All have now been given a full charge and are on the shelf in the workshop. This is attached to the house so never gets that cold even though it's not heated.

Tuesday 29th November 2016

Though the weather has been very cold, -8°C last night, the days have been dry and sunny so I was able to set up the workmate in a patch of sunshine and give the ETZ tank a few coats of Blood Orange top coat. It is now sitting on the coffee table in the lounge which faces South to let the warmth and sunlight harden the paint for a couple of days. I'll then lightly rub it down and put on a couple more coats before a final very light rub down and T Cut. I am wondering whether to try using clear coat lacquer as well. Not something I have tried before but if it works it does give a very deep glossy finish. I might experiment with the back of the airbox when I get round to painting it.

Sunday 27th November 2016

Well the rebuild of the ETZ250 continues albeit fairly slowly during the phase when I refitted the wiring loom & electrics. Though most of it was in very good condition, getting it back in the right place was slow and on occasions confusing. This was because some non-standard bits had been added but so well that they looked original. In the end I had to consult the MZ manual to look at an original mid 1980s wiring diagram. By today I had got as far as I could with the rebuild. Some bits are still at the powder coater, I still don't have all the bits to rebuild the top half of the

engine and the tank is still in primer. So the rolling chassis has been returned to the rear garage to free up the workshop. This is how she looked today:



Friday 25th November 2016

Things are moving quite quickly. The airbox, battery cover and front mudguard are at the powder coaters. The latter to be painted, the former items to be stripped ready for painting. I took the tank to rainbow paints in Westbury to match the colour and I now have two spray cans in cellulose which should be enough for the tank, airbox and battery cover.

Back home I knuckled down and rubbed down the tank using wet&dry. It turned out to be a relatively easy job. I have only removed paint to bare metal where there were deep scratches or rust spots. The bare metal parts have been sprayed with etching primer and then the whole tank has been given two coats of ordinary grey primer. It has now been left to harden off for a couple of days before giving it a light rub down and another coat of primer. The top coat will have to wait until the weather is warmer to avoid blooming.

With the tank out of the way the bike lift was freed up so I was able to start reassembling the cycle parts. The frame is now standing on its centre stand with the back wheel and rear mudguard in place plus a few other odds and ends put back. Tomorrow I want to replace all the electrical components and wiring. These were taken off as one complete assembly and I am hoping they will go back the same way. All being well I will have a rolling chassis by the end of the day.

Wednesday 23rd November 2016

Progress is slow but steady on the ETZ250. The frame cleaned up quite well and there is little if any heavy corrosion so I decided to risk painting it myself and I am quite pleased with the result. I used my usual technique of brush painting Hammerite smooth then applying a coat of sprayed

Hammerite which helps clear the brush marks and leaves a nice thick finish. It is now in the greenhouse hardening off. Flushed with enthusiasm, I have now painted the swinging arm, stand, brake lever, footrest bar, torque arm and the rear light brackets, also with black Hammerite. A couple of small brackets and the brake rod have been painted silver as they were originally zinc plated which had gone rusty.

That leaves me with the airbox, battery cover, tank and the mudguards. I have a NOS rear mudguard which is a bit shop soiled. I am agonising whether to simply touch it up and polish it or have it powder coated. The front mudguard is rust free but the paint is poor, I also have a brand new front mudguard but it's in beige so will need painting. It seems a shame to repaint a perfectly good NOS mudguard so I am tending towards having the original one powder coated. The mudguards were originally black but if I have them powder coated, I am tempted to go for silver. The nice thing about mudguards is that they can be left to the last minute so I don't need to make an instant decision. The airbox and battery cover are more difficult as they are red (orange would be a closer description) and both are aluminium. Cleaning them by hand is difficult, the paint either falls off or sticks really hard and getting it off risks damaging the soft metal unless you use a lot of solvent. Popular rumour is that modern paint strippers are pretty feeble. I was (maybe still am) tempted to have them powder coated black but on balance I think I will ask Steve if he would soak and blast the items for me so that I can spray them the correct colour.

Last item, at least so I hope; is the tank which is painted orange. It's very sound with hardly any internal rust but the finish is poor with lots of tiny rust pimples. There are some small dents. A couple high up on the near side – looks like something has fallen against it or the bike itself fell over. There are also a couple of small dents at the front where the handlebars or levers hit the tank due to the missing steering stop. I am pretty poor at filling dents so if I do it myself, I am inclined to leave well alone, they are part of the history of the bike and I don't think they will show that badly, certainly not as badly as poorly filled dents anyway. I have not looked into the cost of having the tank sprayed professionally but I suspect it will be eyewatering so I am exploring doing it myself. I was quite pleased with the way the tank turned out on the blue TS250. I used cellulose spray cans supplied by Rainbow Paints in Westbury which applied well and is petrol proof. First task will be to prep the tank. I will attempt to just rub it down but I suspect that it will really need to be stripped to bare metal. As the tank will be the last item to be fitted this is another task which can be deferred until inspiration strikes or I win the pools (do people still do that?)

Sunday 20th November 2016

I have a spare set of TS250 4spd crankcases which I fitted out with bearings to try out the gear cluster. Exactly the same problem if the output shaft is tight against its bearing. It freed up with just a slight movement and was the same with both gear clusters. At least now I know how to resolve the problem when I come to rebuild the engine. This will have to wait until I get a suitable crankshaft as the one I removed was from an ETZ250 and has a damaged clutch taper even though the big end is sound. Buying a brand new crank, even though they are relatively cheap at 99 Euros this is a bit OTT for an experimental engine. Something will turn up and in the mean time it has all been boxed up so nothing goes walkabout.

On Sunday I made a start on John Matthews ETZ250. The major problem, apart from the challenged state of the cosmetics, is the broken steering stop which allows the handlebars to hit the tank. This is a certain MoT failure as well as damaging to the tank and potentially trapping my

fingers. I have totally stripped the bike and apart from grime nothing else of concern was found. Even the swinging arm pin came out quite easily. Like every other MZ I have stripped, there was no trace of grease to prevent corrosion. Fixing the steering stop was easy enough, I cut a piece of ¼" thick steel plate to size and held it in place temporarily with 2 bolts drilled through the steering head whilst I welded it in place. Now the real work begins to clean up and paint the frame and ancillary bits and pieces. Some smaller parts I will probably have powder coated. I wish this could include the swinging arm but the rubber bushes would be destroyed. Getting a frame blasted and powder coated is a pretty expensive item these days so I guess it will have to be done by hand. Plenty of work to keep me occupied for the next few months anyway.

Friday 18th November 2016

A number of things have progressed over the past two days. Robs bike is now finished and it passed its MoT today which was a relief as the electrics have proved somewhat troublesome. It had on last trick up its sleeve and the brake light bulb blew between leaving home and getting the bike to Melksham. Fortunately, my friendly MoT tester produced a spare bulb and all was well.

I took the TS250 for a test ride on Thursday morning. Not totally satisfactory. There was a howling gale the bike was being blown around in a very unsettling fashion. The steering felt odd because my newly fitted raised handlebars proved to be bent with the left hand side closer to the rider than the right. The actual seat height did not seem to be a problem so that was ok. A new pair of raised bars is definitely on the cards though. You can just about make out the twist in the picture below. Pity because they are genuine MZ TS250 bars and will be like hen's teeth to replace.



Today I took the Wassell carb over to Terry's house and he very kindly bored out the pilot jet from 0.017 to 0.019 as recommended in an article in Fishtail and in line with my successful mod to the pilot jet fitted to the Concentric currently fitted to the Venom. Yesterday Tony Kay gave me a couple of resistors to fit in the LED headlight circuit to stop the bulb overheating. The

Venom will have to make a further visit to the workshop though neither the carb nor the resistors are urgent jobs.

Over the last couple of days, I stripped the TS250 4 spd motor which Ray cattle modified to use a Supa5 crankshaft. The gearbox has never worked properly since I rebuilt it and I wanted to know why. After a long period of investigation and even resorting to reading the manuals, I think I have finally cracked the problem. Basically, it is a matter of getting the output drive shaft in the correct position. There are no shims specified and no mention in the books, but if you push the shaft fully in against the primary drive side bearing which seems logical (and works with 5 spd motors), the gears simply will not spin or select properly. Move it outwards a very small amount and suddenly everything frees up and it works perfectly. I tried two different gear clusters and both needed the same treatment. The problem is trying to measure how much to move the shaft, I tried shimming but all of the shims I could find which fitted the shaft were too thick. The amount of movement needed is miniscule and it seems to be a question of trial and error. Not very satisfactory, but at least I know it was not my being cackhanded and assembling the gearbox incorrectly. I now have to decide what to do with the engine. Rebuild it in the existing cases which have been machined for an attempted but failed alternator conversion or transfer all the bits to a better pair of cases. If the latter I will have to do a couple of minor mods to the oilways. For the moment I will do nothing because the crank that came out is actually from an ETZ250 and has a dodgy taper for the clutch. Pity because I would really like to try this modified engine.

Wednesday 16th November 2016

Things have moved fast on the Brittany holiday front. We have decided to go for the easy option and take the van. The ferry is now booked 18-25th June 2017 and we have a b&b sorted for the last three nights at Reminac which is in the south east of Brittany. We are still investigating a b&b location in the North West but I am sure we will find something.

The Venom electrics are now completed and it all works fine balancing the load even on full headlight at not much over tickover. The LED headlight will still need attention but the bike can be ridden on dip beam with no issues. I also need to swap the leads on the ammeter as it presently reads the wrong way round but this can wait until it is necessary to remove the complete headlight unit for some other purpose. The Venom is now back in the bike garage to free up space in the workshop.

Rob's bike was first on the bike lift for what should have been a couple of quick and easy jobs. The new battery arrived today so it was filled, left to stand for a while then put on charge. However when I finally fitted it to the bike the indicators would still only work when the engine was running. I also found that the engine would stall if the headlights were on and the indicators were operated. The voltmeter gave most odd readings and the ammeter does not seem to show a positive charge. I checked all the wiring through but everything seems to be correct – I fancy the regulator is faulty but it's a strange looking electronic type and I have no idea how to test it. I did eventually get the indicators to work by replacing the flasher unit and the replacement winker body Rob provided works fine so that problem at least is sorted. I am going to have to spend more time on this bike before I can take it for MoT. For now it is back in the van whilst I think about it.

My TS250 is now in the workshop for a couple of mods. The first two were easy, replacing the small battery with the large one I bought for the purpose at Shepton Mallett and swapping the front wheel for the one I respoked a few days ago. Last mod was to hinge the dualseat – copying something done by Tony Kay. I have completed this upgrade but I am not overly happy with the

result as the seat is raised by near 40mm – I was aiming for 30mm. I need more time to figure out how to reduce the height of the hinges. However, It may not be necessary as I have also fitted a new raised handlebar which should match the new seating position. A test ride tomorrow will confirm if this is the case.



Monday 14th November 2016

On Sunday I delivered the CB400A to its new owner in Cheltenham and then drove down to Ham for the MZ Bristol section monthly meeting. Nice day out but it was a pity I was not able to ride a bike as the very was perfect for biking. Late in the afternoon, Rob came round and dropped of the seat, tank and exhaust for his Supa5.

Today I reassembled Rob's supa5 and put in a gallon of fresh petroil plus the gearbox oil. It sounds fine and starts easily even with his dodgy battery. I offered to MoT the bike for him as well so gave it a checkover. I had been worried about the indicators not working but as I suspected, this was mainly due to the poor battery, with the engine running they worked fine on three of the units. The fourth had a dud bulb and was very corroded inside. I managed to get it working to some degree but it really needs replacing as they are impossible to clean up properly. Spoke to Rob and he has ordered a new battery which will be sent direct to me and he is going to check his other MZ to see if he can 'borrow' a better indicator for now. Nothing much more I can do for now so I have put his bike in the van to keep I out of the way for now.

The Podtronics regulator arrived at lunchtime so I have brought the Venom up to the workshop and started the process of converting it to -ve earth. The wiring is all soldered up and the bulbs fitted but I have not yet installed the reg/rec as it needs a bracket fabricating. Something to do tomorrow. Friend Tony has figured out why the LED headlight bulbs will not dip after a while. Seems they get too hot at 12v (which is a bit odd as they are rated to 36v). On his MZ he has regulated the inverter board to 11v output which seems to have cured the problem. It looks like a 12v system will need a suitable resistor in the HL fee line to achieve the same thing. No idea how to work out the correct rating but no doubt Tony will come up with the answer – he is after all an electronics engineer.

On a totally different tack, Brittany Ferry's have published their 2017 prices today and Mike D has been on the phone getting some options for our Brittany tour next June. Looking promising and we are due to meet on Tuesday to discuss the options.

Saturday 12th November 2016

Today was a dismantling day. First I stripped Rob's old Supa5 engine to check it over and get the crank so that it is ready when I have sourced a conrod kit. This is not proving so easy; ETZ250 conrod kits are cheap and plentiful, Supa5 kits seem in short supply and more expensive. Still there is no hurry. Most of the rest of the engine was fine, it is still on original GDR main bearings and crank seals so why it was previously taken apart is a mystery as nothing seems to have been replaced. The only slight point of concern was the primary drive cover. A previous owner had wound up the k/s spring part far too tight so that it returned with a wallop. They had also replaced the rubber buffer with a piece of softwood which has gradually collapsed breaking a chunk out of the housing. It is not serious enough to warrant a repair and I have a new rubber buffer in stock so I will reassemble with the k/s spring at a more sensible tension. I cleaned the worst of the muck of the cases, they will still need a soak and a scrub but that can wait until I am in the mood.

I also retrieved the TS250 engine modified by Ray Cattle to use a supa5 crank which I have documented in the past. I was never very happy with the gear change selection after I rebuilt it and it was extremely stiff when in neutral. I checked over everything I could think of and bit by bit it was dismantled, checking at each stage. I found nothing obvious wrong except that it just would not select 4 gears and was very stiff. It got easier when the cases started to come apart so clearly something is jamming. Examining all the bits when it was completely dismantled showed nothing obvious wrong. I checked the selectors in case I have put them in the wrong way round but in practise this is not possible; they will only fit one way. I can assemble it and it looks correct but it will not select gears properly nor can I get neutral. I have resorted to reading the manuals (Haynes and the MZ Repair manual) but frankly they are little help and the pictures they do include look exactly my gears look when assembled. A mystery but not a serious problem as I don't have a particular need for a 4-speed engine, it was just an interesting experiment. I will revisit this at some future time. It is of course possible that there is a fault with the gear-selector cluster because as far as I recall it was assembled from a variety of donor sources rather than complete working engine. I recently checked an ES250 engine which I rebuilt last year and that spins freely and selects all 4 gears so it seems I do know how to build one. I'll crack it in the end.

On a different tack the LED combined rear/stop light I ordered from China a week or so ago arrived today. I wondered how they managed to get two lights in such a small package and the solution is both simple and ingenious. They only have a single set of LEDs but fed by two inputs. One input obviously has greater resistance built in as it's not as bright as the other. Obviously there is only a single light but with a twin filament bulb you cannot see the rear light if the stop light is operated so it amounts to the same thing; said it was ingenious. I have a busy day on Monday but hopefully by Tuesday the new reg/rec will have arrived I can start converting the Venom to -ve earth

Friday 11th November 2016

I have agreed to deliver the CB400A to its new owner on Sunday. He lives in Cheltenham so I can call at the MZ meeting at the Salutation on my way back. Would have rather ridden a bike but some things have to be done; I need the space.

I decided I might as well get on with the back wheel of the TS250 and that was rebuilt this afternoon, not quite so quick as the front wheel but still all done with 2 ½ hours including removing and replacing the wheel. The next thing that lets the bike down are the handlebars and the wrong front brake lever cannot do much about the former, but one will turn up one day but somewhere I have the correct hi-rise TS250 handlebars which I would like to try. The front forks have remained oil tight so far though of course I have not actually ridden it since they were rebuilt. I am not sure whether to splash out on a set of chrome side panels or not. The 12.5l tank fitted (most came with 17l tanks) is correct for the 'cooking' models and is actually the TS150 style with minor changes to the fittings. I doubt it would have had chrome panels and I am not sure they would look right. Someone has given me details of a site in Germany that sells them at a reasonable price so I may succumb.

I have also ordered a new Podtronics reg/rec for the Venom so that I can convert it to -ve earth operation and fit LED bulbs. One of my VMCC friends who has a Supa5 has made a very neat job of hinging the dual seat. Makes accessing the battery and wiring so much easier. He found some suitable bits on the internet to do the job and as they are quite cheap I have ordered a set as well. Will try it first on the TS250 and if it works I will get a set for the Supa5. Not sure if it could be done on the ETZ as it fastens slightly differently at the front.

On the subject of ETZ's, I rang Steve at PistonBroke in Bristol today firstly to make sure he was still in business (he is) and secondly to ask about overboring the ETZ barrel to 75mm so I can use the Mahl piston to make it a 300. Can be done but it's rather more costly, £60 inc VAT against £30 for a normal rebore as it requires 16 'rebore' to take out that amount of metal, and not while I wait. If I go ahead with this I may as well take the crank from Rob's old engine to be done as well so I am currently trying to source a conrod kit.

Still no enquiries about the ES250/2. Reluctant to reduce the price as I think its worth every penny. I will pull the Gumtree ad and submit one to MZ Rider. If it still does not go then I will simply hang on to it.

Thursday 10th November 2016

Rob's bike is now completed and I had it running briefly this morning. Not for long as it didn't have any oil in the gearbox at the time (out of stock) and I only had a an emergency fuel supply as the tank is still in Rob's garage. Sounded ok and the charging light went out but it obviously need full reassembly and road test. Waiting to hear from Rob about delivering it back.

Whilst tidying up things I found a spare 16" front wheel in good general condition but with tacky spokes. It has now been rebuilt with s/s spokes and I even found a new tyre and inner tube to complete the job. This must be the quickest wheel rebuild I have ever done. Took less than 1½ hours including a pause for a cuppa at the half way stage and a search of the shed for a tyre. The difference was that the rim and hub had previously been cleaned and needed very little extra work. Plus the fact that all of the spokes came undone very easily. Normally they have to wrestled off or even cut with the angle grinder. Wish they were all like that. I bet I get my cum-ppance when I tackle the back wheel.

As it was dry and not too cold I took the K75 into town for some shopping and filled it up as well. It did 146 miles on 10.1l of fuel which is just over 65mpg – happy with that. Was planning to ride it to Chippenham tonight for our VMCC meeting but it was pretty darn cold when I walked the dog just now so perhaps the car will get my vote instead.

Wednesday 9th November 2016

I picked up Robs Supa5 from Bratton today. Rob was concerned that he had caused the failure by not putting in enough oil on his trip from Aberystwyth to Swindon. It stopped with an apparent seizure on the outskirts of Swindon. It has now been stripped and the diagnosis is a seized bigend however, I don't think it was necessarily lack of oil on that particular journey which caused the failure as the piston, rings and barrel were all fine and there was plenty of oil around the circumference of the flywheels. My guess is the bigend just wore out and eventually the bits of swarf jammed the rollers causing the seizure. There were certainly plenty of metal particles around.

We had a chat about options and he has elected to use a rebuilt Supa5 bottom end I had in stock. I will keep his old engine and refurbish it at some point. The electrics, and top end will be



transferred from his old engine. Taking this route means it should be back on the road within a few days whereas who knows how long and how much it will cost to refurbish his old engine.

Forget to record yesterday that I had managed to repair one of my Velo handlebar mirrors. The bit that fits inside the bars and lock it down is a flimsy piece of pressed steel. My repair uses a piece of alloy tuned to a very close fit and slotted at one end to take a tapered plug. Quite pleased with the result – I tested it on a spare handlebar and it worked fine.

Tuesday 8th November 2016

On Sunday I rode the K75 on our Forest of Dean Autumn Leaves Run. Up to lunch time the weather was cold but sunny and we had a cracking ride of near 100 miles. By 3:30 it was drizzling and by the time I got home (145 miles total) it was raining steadily. However the bike ran like a dream and it was a great finish to the riding season.

No real garage or workshop activity over the past couple of days, partly because the temperature has plummeted and it just too cold to work outside or even in the garage for any length of time. Much of my time has been spent on the computer working on a neighbourhood Plan and on the planning for the VMCC White Horse Trial in 2017. In that context we had a successful day having visited a couple of potential venues and found one that seems to tick all the boxes. The event is not till next July but some elements have to be completed long in advance, the venue being one.

Hopefully tomorrow the first of my 'for sale' bikes, the CB400A, will move to a new home tomorrow. This will free up some space for work to start on the list of workshop tasks I have put together for the winter. Strange it's the CB400A which seems to have attracted a lot of interest I had loads of enquiries but only one for the ES250. The MAC Velo will be advertised in December but I somehow doubt it will go as my asking price is quite high and I am not prepared to shift much as I don't want to lose money on it.

Not heard anything from Rob Parker-Norman yet about collecting his bike. That's good because I won't really have space until Thursday.

Saturday 5th November 2016

On Friday I rode over to Bratton to see Rob Parker-Norman who has recently moved there from Aberystwyth via Swindon. Rob was editor of the magazine for a short period when dell was taken ill. His main hobby is Skoda cars but he is also an MZ enthusiast and wanted me to have a look at a couple of his bikes. One is a recently acquired TS150 Wlf Green special which is complete and looks to be very tidy but has been standing for some time and is now very rusty inside the tank. We discussed various ways to get this cleaned up and he is going to give it a try.

The other bike is a Supa5 which he rode almost from Aberystwyth to Swindon. The almost being that it seized just on the outskirts. By his own admission he did not put enough oil in the mix after a fill up during the journey. The engine is still solid so needs investigation. As rob has no workshop facilities and his job takes him away for long stretches I have offered to take it in hand. I have asked him to remove tank, seat and exhaust system before I collect it next week.

Today I tried and failed to fit an LED headlight bulb to the Venom. I had found an H4 light unit which fits the bulb and the Venom rim and adjusting the wiring was easy enough. On the bench all seemed well but on the bike nothing worked. As usual it was more than one problem. The first was a poor earth connection but fixing that only sorted the sidelight. Finally the penny dropped – the Venom runs a +ve earth system and the LED bulbs are configured -ve earth. No easy way round that so I have fitted an ordinary H4 bulb for now. The main reason for the change is the fact that the Alton generator does not balance the headlight load – indeed the battery was down to 9V after Thursdays outing when I used the lights virtually all day. The LED headlight bulb is 20w against the 55/60W of the ordinary bulb.

Rejigging the standard Alton reg/rec is not feasible as its wired with the casing proving the +ve earth connection. Currently investigating my options but the only thing I have found so far seems to be a Podtronics reg/rec costing £75. Want to make sure that this will work before spending that sort of money. D*mn it was supposed to be a quick easy fix.

While the Venom was in the workshop I drained the primary chaincase and 140cc came out. That's twice what I put in there just before our run on Thursday so its clear that its being topped up, almost certainly from the engine via the breather in the main shaft. Something else I ned to investigate – never a dull moment with a Velo.

Thursday 3rd November 2016

Today was our last mid-week run of the 2016 season. It was a cracking route of about 110 miles from Lacock to Burbage to Aldbourne and then home. I reckon for about 30 of those miles Iwe were on roads I had never travelled before and I am still trying to work out exactly where we went. I rode the Venom and it ran perfectly all day. No more popping, banging or backfires and it will now run steadily at low speeds without hunting or hiccupping. The carburetion seems to be sorted at last and I am now confident of my diagnosis of the problem with the Wassell carb (undersize pilot jet) so I will now try and locate one at a reasonable price. Surrey Cycles want £15 plus postage which seems a lot to me as a spare for a carb which only costs £93 in the first place. That is the same price as a genuine Concentric Premier pilot jet from Burlen. No hurry, one will turn up in due course or I might even try drilling out the installed one to 19thou.

Now the Venom is sorted it has rather made my mind up that the MAC could go. In fact I have sent adverts to Fishtail and the VMCC. These ill not appear until December at the earliest so time to get it looking pretty. One tentative response from a local MZ member to the advert for the Trophy but I don't think anything will come of it for now – he was more interested in my other bikes.

We have one more Sunday run this weekend into the Forest of Dean for which I plan to use the K75. After that it's just the odd lunchtime wandering until March. Where has 2016 gone. Not that I am complaining it has been a very good year overall especially on the biking front.

My son rang this evening with a query about an oil leak on grandson's ETZ125. It also seems that young Curtis is happy to have my Baghira on loan for a while as an alternative to rushing out and buying one as soon as he is 19. My theory is that it's better for him to spend his pennies getting a car licence right now as this will widen his job prospects. So one of the other tasks on my todo list is to research how to restrict the Baghira to make it legal for him to ride. Guess that's what granddads are for.

Wednesday 2nd November 2016

On Monday I had a call from a guy who wanted to buy the purple ES175/1 I bought as spares. Sadly it all came to nothing today as he has now decided not to have it following a hospital visit earlier today which has clearly identified something serious. I had spent the afternoon sorting it out ready for collection too – oh well. Anyway I have made my mind up that the ES250 Trophy was one of the bikes to go and it spent some time in the workshop being checked over and refitting the battery. All seems well so I took some up to date photos and have put an ad on Gumtree and on the club website. Now we wait to see if there is any interest.

The Skorpion V5c has now been sent to DVLA to transfer ownership to me. I taxed the bike in my name this morning so it's now fully road legal.

Monday 31st October 2016

The ETZ250 has returned to the garage and the Venom took its place in the workshop. The aim was to fit the large pilot jet. Unfortunately to get at the carb on the Venom you have to remove the seat and tank first; not difficult, just tedious. However, I did take the opportunity to glue the front tank rubbers into their recess having spent far too much time hunting for them when they fall out. A test ride after the carb upgrade has established that the diagnosis was correct. The larger (30) pilot jet has virtually eliminated the lurching and hunting on steady throttle settings. Happily without introducing any new side effects. I say virtually because just occasionally there is a trace but overall the bike is immeasurably better than it was in Spain. Given that it is an old and worn carb, I don't think I will get it any better so I shall settle for this performance for the time being. In time, now that I know the solution I will probably buy a larger pilot jet for the Wassell carb but only when I have found one at a reasonable price. While I was out testing the bike I filled the tank and plan to use it for a VMCC mid-week run on Thursday after which it will probably be mothballed for the winter.

With the workshop clear, I have turned my attention to some of the engines I have lying around. First on the bench was an ES250/2 4spd motor which memory said had gear selection problems. However, memory must be playing me false as all the gears selected and span easily, indeed I could find nothing seriously wrong with it apart from the dynamo. This was an early type with an advance/retard unit built in but looking very 2nd hand. I have replaced this with a later fixed timing 6v dynamo system and set the timing. No reason why this engine would not run as far as I can tell.

This evening I have been pondering over my current stable, which at 12 bikes is I think too large, trying to decide which ones I could bear to part with. Ideally I would like to get down to 6 bikes but my first analysis only got it down to 9 so some way to go.

Sunday 30th October 2016

The rebuilt fork leg was completely oil tight this morning so it was put back into the bike. I removed and stripped down the other leg which had also been leaking though I had thought it was much less severe. I am ashamed to say that the seals on this leg were totally shot so I obviously failed to check it properly when I rebuilt the bike. Needless to say it now has new parts and the threaded part of the holder is sealed with bearing fit adhesive as are the top nuts. I noticed when dismantling that this leg clonked a bit on rebound. Its spring was a little shorter than the other so I put in a ½" spacer. Fitting the mudguard and front wheel was straightforward and I am pleased to say that the forks now have a nice smooth clonk free action and the front brake works well. Just to be on the safe side I have wrapped part of both lower legs with masking tape which will absorb any oil leak initially and be very visible. Closing the stable door as usual, I also parked up the bike on full right lock so that if it does leak, any drips will miss the brake plate. I hope it is a fix as my fall-back plan (albeit last resort) of fitting a set of the later forks to the bike is temporarily at least a non-runner. When I sorted out the bits I found that my spare yokes were in fact for 32mm rather than 35mm legs; I must have given away the wrong set when I had my last clear out. No big deal, I have no doubt that a set will turn up in due course.

Being on a roll, I decided to transfer an almost new used tyre from a surplus Supa5 wheel to the disk brake wheel belonging to the ETZ250. This went well i.e. I managed not to puncture the inner tube either in the dismantling or replacement phase. The wheel is now back in the bike and the caliper re-fitted and working fine. The big question now is what to do with the bike or more precisely in what order and in what degree to restore it. The major obstacle to getting an MoT is the missing steering stop lug; the bars hit the tank which is almost certainly a failure if the tester happens to notice it. However, to repair this lug the bike will probably have to be stripped to pretty much bare frame. Once it gets to this stage I will inevitably feel that a total restoration should be done. Is this my winter project or is there something else more pressing – time to think.

Saturday 29th October 2016

Well I now have a rebuilt Supa5 engine to add to the collection of spare motors. It was not quite as straightforward as the EZT250 motor – that was a recently stripped (well 6 months ago) complete entity and just needed overhauling. The Supa5 was a collection of odds & ends and though it was nearly all there a few bits had either to be found or fabricated. This always takes time but it's now done apart from electrics. I probably have enough electrickery bits but it is normally best to swap over the electrics from the engine being removed. Firstly you know they work and secondly they will be compatible with the rest of the bike's electrical system which could be 6v (dynamo) or 12v (Powerdynamo)

In between times I removed the brake plate from the TS250 and washed it thoroughly in petrol to get rid of the oil contamination, then scrubbed it with detergent. I dried it in the oven which was in use to heat the engine crankcases. The linings showed no sign of weeping oil even when quite hot so I am hopeful that I have salvaged them.

The bike itself is now in the workshop with one of the fork legs removed for examination. I found it had 150cc of oil remaining from the 220cc I originally filled it with. Strangely I could find no obvious reason why it leaked so badly. The seal seems to be a good fit and the stanchion and bushes are in good condition. However, there was a lot of oil on the threaded section where the seal holder screws down. The manual states that a special sealant should be used on this joint so

after replacing the oil seal I reassembled with bearing fit adhesive on the threads. I have left the leg lying on its side so that oil can run up to this point to see any leaks emerge.

Thursday 27th October 2016

I finished building the bottom end of the ETZ250 motor this morning and it has been put away for the time being. Still needs its electrics and a top end but I feel a lot happier now that it's mostly reassembled – no chance of bits being lost or borrowed for other projects. For that reason I looked out the box of Supa5 engine bits which I have been collecting for the last few months and took them up to the workshop. It looks to be pretty much complete. The gearbox components are all brand new and the crank has been rebuilt with a new bigend/conrod assembly. The spares shelf has provided a complete set of bearings, seals and gaskets so all it needs is clean and it can be reassembled. Even the cleanup should be fairly painless as it looks as though the crankcases have been done already.

Moving the bikes around to get at the spares in the garage I found that the front brake on the TS250 was none existent, oil has leaked from the forks into the drum! I have removed the brake plate for now to clean up the linings – not sure if they can be recovered or not which is annoying as they were my last pair of NOS shoes. My son Richard arrived this afternoon and will be staying for a couple of days so we can see our granddaughter – she will arrive later having been dropped off at a dog show with grannie. Richard brought with him the ETZ250 front brake disk which is now reunited with its wheel. – long story. Fitting the wheel back on the bike will have to wait until it has a tyre. Agonising whether to remove a good one from another wheel or splash out and buy a new one. Tempted to do the latter as I don't like disturbing good wheels even if they are only spare stock.

Oh and whilst sorting out the Supa5 engine parts I found a brand new ETZ250 barrel and a very good s/h standard bore piston so that's another option for finishing off the engine.

Wednesday 26th October 2016

Today was initially spent taking pictures of various bikes so that I can get agreed value on my insurance. This also enabled me to get to the back of the garage to retrieve the ETZ250 engine which I dismantled last year. Now that I have the parts, it's time to rebuild it. Once the pictures were done I started the laborious task of cleaning it up. I love rebuilding MZ engines, but they are a devil to clean up especially underneath and this one looked like it had never been cleaned. Anyway by teatime it was all done and with a fair wind the bottom end at least will be back together by tomorrow night. The top end needs more thought. The piston was stuck pretty solid in the barrel (corrosion rather than a seizure I would say) and I suspect that a rebore and new piston would be sensible. I do have a NOS oversize ETZ250 piston so that would be one option. I also have a new 75mm Mahl piston of the type used in the very first ETZ300 engines. The 250 barrels can be rebored to 75mm (just) but you lose the lip at the top which helps to locate the head and the shims. Wilf Green used pins to locate them so I would need to invent something similar. You also lose the taper at the bottom of the barrel which makes it very difficult to get the piston to enter cleanly. I wrestled for ages with Don O'Donnells engine rebuild on this point. However, it should be possible to file or grind a taper sufficient to make this task easier. The more difficult task (for me anyway) is modifying the head. You need to remove a 3mm lip round the squish band to allow clearance for the piston. The head is too big to spin in my lathe which is the easiest way to do the job and I don't have the skills to do it with the mill. I fancy a chat with my friend Terry D is called for.

Tuesday 25th October 2016

Before taking the Venom for a test ride this morning I sorted out a couple of electrical issues. First was to make a proper repair to the wiring inside the headlight. Whilst in Spain the rear light started flickering caused by a poorly soldered bullet connector. The quick fix was to strip the wires and twist them together then tape the joint. This worked well enough but back home there is no excuse not to do the job properly so everything has been re-soldered. The other job was to re-route the wires to the rear light unit. For some reason they entered via the side of the number

plate assembly. Not something you noticed when the carrier was in place but now it's gone it sticks out like a sore thumb. Hole now drilled through mudguard under the number plate so it's all hidden from sight.

The test ride on the Venom was about 95% successful. The bike now starts easily and there is no popping banging or backfiring at all so that is a real improvement. It pulls well with no signs of misfiring when accelerating through the gears. The 5% is down to the old problem of hiccupping when trying to run on a nearly closed throttle making town riding a tad uncomfortable. However, I am now pretty sure what is causing this having read an article in the latest issue of Fishtail. Now that the richness caused by the worn needle jet is overcome, the undersize pilot jet (25 instead of a 30) is causing a weak mixture at the transmission between pilot and slide cutaway. I now believe this to be the reason why the Wassell carb gave the same symptoms. I will order new parts to fix both carbs shortly. The Venom is quite usable despite the hiccups and I have put it away in the back garage to allow space in the workshop for other tasks. This is how it now looks.



I have also given the Skorpion some TLC today. I made some transfer for the rear panels which I stuck on today as they looked a bit bare once the carrier frames were removed. I also finally found the tool box, its lurking under the airbox and accessed from the LH side. The cover is missing but I have made a temporary one out of a piece of heavy duty plastic and the tool roll is now installed. At first I couldn't get them all in but when I checked the contents I found a pair of pliers and an adjustable spanner had been added. With these removed the roll fits nicely.



Monday 24th October 2016

My Autumn Leaves Run to the New Forest on Sunday went really well. We had 19 of our own members turn out plus 5 from the Stonehenge section who met us at the Fighting Cocks pub in Godshill. The weather was sunny and dry and the trees had started to turn making it very colourful but being dry we did not have a problem with wet leaves on the road. The K75 went well and all in all it was a great day out.

Today after sorting out some banking issues in town, I gave myself an afternoon's garage therapy to finish putting the Venom engine back together. Turned out to be reasonably straightforward and I have rebuilt the 30mm concentric carb but using the 106 needle jet from the Wassell carb. It took a bit of experimenting before I found a reliable method of starting the bike. It needed full choke and flooding with the tickler. Interestingly the bike refuses to run when cold unless full choke is left on and has to be really warmed up before you can knock it off. In contrast, you previously had to knock the choke off as soon as it started or it belched black smoke and 8-stroked. I had left the needle in the weakest position so that only one setting had been changed so after tea I put it back to the middle notch and tried again. Even though the engine was cold again by that time and still needed a tickle and full choke to start, it was immediately more responsive so clearly a move in the right direction. Hopefully tomorrow we will have a successful test ride.

Saturday 22nd October 2016

Suddenly it's Saturday and I am struggling to think where the last 5 days have gone. I really must make the effort to write this blog if not daily at least more frequently than I am presently achieving. So what can I recall? Well the bits from Germany arrived on Thursday morning, had to wait in for the courier so was late getting to the Wishing Well for our Thursday wandering but at least it meant I could deliver some bits to Mike D. I also collected some electrical wizardry from Tony Kay in the shape of an LED headlight bulb which will work on 6v-36v but only consumes 20w about a 1/3rd of the normal power of a headlight. Tony has fitted one to his dynamo equipped Supa5 but found it pretty pathetic at 6v. However, being an electronics expert, he bought a 6-12v inverter board (about £3) and rewired the bike so that the headlamp bulb sees 12v whilst everything else remains 6v. The results were pretty impressive so I asked him to get me a set of the bits as well. Something else to play with over the winter. Also on Thursday the

bits I ordered from Grove for the Velo; a decoke gasket set and a choke cable. When I got home from the wandering there was a message to say the powder coating was ready. As I had to go into town I rode the K75 to fill it up ready for Sunday and the consumption worked out at 63mpg. Quite good for a large heavy bike.

On Friday I picked up the powder coating items and put them back on the Venom. I have decided to stop



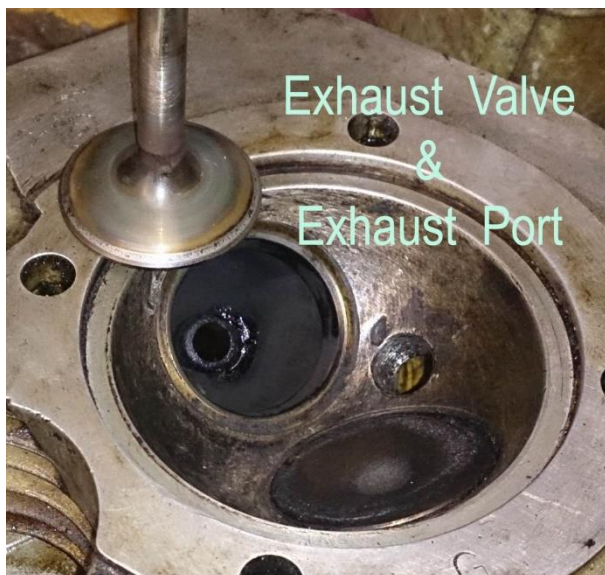
referring to it as the MSS because it left the factory in 1960 as a Venom and everything about it is still Venom apart from the 1955 MSS engine. Visually it looks nothing like an MSS even the engine is externally identical to a Venom. – so there. Anyway it looks

much smarter with the repainted mudguard stays and I will take a picture once its fully mobile again. I also replaced the back wheel but it remains on the bike lift until the head has been decoked etc.



Saturday was the big day when I started the strip down of the Velo engine. I did something almost unique for me and read the manual first even asking a couple of questions on the Velo forum to make sure I would do it right. In fact it was very straightforward, the only minor problems were related to finding the tools I needed in my tip of a garage. The exhaust valve was a bit coked up but certainly not bad enough to cause any of the poor running conditions so that is one thing eliminated from the investigation. In fact the head looks as though it has enjoyed

some recent attention and the ex valve seat has clearly been replaced – bonus. Getting the hairpin valve spring back together was a nightmare initially until I finally sorted out a procedure – after which it was easy. Head is cleaned up and back on the bike. I have been advised to leave it for 24 hours to settle then torque it down again. The other reason for removing the head was to establish where the oil leaks were coming from, seems most likely that it was down the holding down studs and hopefully the new O rings I have fitted will sort this irritation. Final assembly will have to wait until Monday as I am doing a VMCC run tomorrow.



Tuesday 18th October 2016

The mudguard stays are now away for powder coating; back in a week all being well. I have ordered a decoke gasket set and a couple of other items for the MSS. Mike D has promised to help me with the stripdown as he recently rebuilt the top end of his Venom.



I had an inspiration regarding the carburettor problems. According to Surrey Cycles the internals of the Wassell carbs are fully interchangeable with Amal concentric parts. So I stripped mine down and compared the needle jets which do indeed appear identical as do the needles. You can see the jets in the picture alongside; Amal jet on the left and obviously quite worn. Wagging the needle in the jet confirmed just how worn it was. So I can rebuild the Amal concentric using the Wassell needle and needle jet to confirm or otherwise my diagnosis. Next decision is whether to try the bike

first with the rebuilt carb or go ahead and do the decoke anyway. I guess it would be sensible to wait which means at least a week until the mudguard stays come back. In any event, I will have to wait for the gaskets to arrive.

Only other workshop activity today was to clean the K75 ready for a ride on Thursday. Rest of the day I spent researching water resources and flood risks preparatory to writing a section of the parishes Neighbourhood Plan. Tomorrow I have to deliver a load of leaflets connected with the same matter; when will I learn to say no!

Monday 17th October 2016

Quite a busy day though much of it not related to motorcycling. The inner tube I replaced yesterday has held full pressure for over 24 hours so I think that problem is resolved. I finally found the tiny hole in the original tube by blowing it up really hard then sticking it (a small bit at a time) into the rainwater butt. There is a 1" line in the tube which looks like a cut. Mostly it's just a scratch but in one part at least it has gone right through. Anyway it's mended now and the tube will be kept as a standby. I have lots of these and somehow I never get around to using them, in the end preferring to use a new tube as I have done in this case.

The odds & ends for powder coating have been removed and I will take them over to Steve tomorrow morning. I also rang the Insurance brokers this morning and put the Skorpion on cover from tomorrow which is my policy renewal date so it's now road legal. I have done some reading about Concentric carbs and given the matter a lot of thought but not reached any conclusions yet. I am also contemplating the removal of the head to give it a decoke in case that is the root of the problem. It does seem odd that several carbs have given trouble with this bike and makes me wonder if there is some other cause.

In an idle moment I drained the primary chain case and to my surprise 150cc of oil came out which is double what should be in there. Not surprising that the bike always marked its territory when parked up. Not sure if it's because I overfilled it. In Spain I topped it up every couple of days or so with 10-20cc. Equally it could be coming from the engine which breathes through the main shaft. I am thinking of using some red two stroke oil or even ATF when I replenish and then monitor the colour of the drips.

The lower fins on the head and the fins on the barrel are still quite oily but despite careful inspection, I cannot see where it originates from. On the timing side it looks like it's leaking from the pushrod tube.

Sorting this would be another reason to remove the head. What I need to do is identify and order the necessary gaskets before starting the job. There are also a few other bits I need to make the order worthwhile.

I have also ordered another tranche of spares from Germany preparatory to rebuilding the ETZ250 engine from John Matthews bike and a spare TS250 engine. Some of the spares are for other people as usual.

Sunday 16th October 2016

On Saturday I rearranged the bikes to get the MSS into the workshop and onto the bike stand ready to carry out repairs. I was going to put the Skorpion into the back garage but I found I could work on the velo with both the Skorpion and the K75 still in the workshop, albeit somewhat cramped. I have removed the rear wheel and replaced the inner tube with a new one. This is pumped up and I am checking it over a couple of days to make sure it stays up. I had of course checked the inside of the tyre but found nothing. The old inner tube was fitted with a new valve just in case and blown up like a balloon. No leak was detected but there clearly is one as it had gone down somewhat the next morning so I will have to try harder. It's a Michelin so I would like to resurrect it if possible.

I have also removed and stripped down the concentric carb but found nothing obviously wrong with it. I am still pondering what to do about it and may try re-fitting the New Wassell concentric I bought a while back to see if I can get that running properly. The bike is likely to be off the road for a while as I plan to remove some of the cycle parts which need powder coating and the cylinder head so I can check the state of the exhaust valve. One odd thing was the state of the plug. When I checked it in Spain it was really black and sooty such that I dropped the needle from middle to weakest position. As the picture shows it is no longer running sooty rich, indeed it now looks a bit weak to me and has some combustion deposits on the tip. I am pondering if my symptoms could be caused by weakness at the pilot jet stage rather than richness. The only setting which differs from stock is the pilot jet which is a 25 rather than a 30.



I showed the plug to John May who reckoned its very hard to read plugs with modern petrol but on balance he felt it was still a tad rich which to be honest is something of a relief. In terms of colour, the fuzzy picture in the middle is probably closest to reality the others are a bit washed out by the flash. What you can see on the RH picture is the deposits on the that side plug tip, on the other side none are visible.

On Sunday I rode the K75 to Woodfalls and did the Stonehenge Section nifty run. It was partly an excuse to get a decent ride on the bike and partly curiosity to get some ideas on alternate routes in that area for next year's autumns leaves run. I did about 120 miles and the bike ran faultlessly unlike the rider who rode like a prat. It's a heavy bike and the weight is high up which makes it a bit of a handful at slow speeds. Especially as the fairing means that when putting your feet down your legs are pushed further back than seems natural; however, it's something I will get used to.

Friday 14th October 2016

Just before I left for Spain I saw an advert on Ebay for an MZ Skorpion Traveller which I thought I recognised so I emailed the vendor. Turned out that it was indeed Derek P from Australia who I had met briefly at the Salutation in July when he came to the UK. He and his son bought the bike to primarily to go to the Isle of Man and with the intention of taking it home to Oz. This turned out not to be practical and it was left in his sister's garage pro-tem. Her husband, a keen biker also now wanted the space back so it had to be sold. Anyway during my time in Spain we managed to conclude a deal so that I bought the bike at a reasonable price with the proviso that Derek could ride it when he comes back to UK next year. The bike is now in my garage having been collected on 12th October.



The bike is taxed to end November '16 and MoT'd to June 2017. It also has new tyres and battery so can be ridden without major hassle. There were a few small jobs needed which I tackled on Thursday and then took it for a short ride around my test route. All seemed well so I rode it to the VMCC meeting that evening. What a cracking bike to ride. It handles like a dream, even better than the Velo and the engine pulls like an express train. The only limiting factor was the headlight which is pathetic.

Tuesday 11th October 2016

Not having been able to write up the Blog for near 2 weeks whilst in Spain on the Colombres Rally, I decided it was a good time to start a new edition as part 7 was getting rather large. In truth there had



been little to report for some while as riding was the order of the day for the summer months rather than projects and rebuilds. With Colombres out of the way, apart from a couple of Autumn Leaves Runs serious riding is pretty much done for this year and the workshop will be beckoning both to work on projects and to repair the ravages of the Summers rides.

The picture (taken by Tony Page) shows the 3 wise monkeys lined up at the start of our first run on the Tuesday after our arrival in Spain. LtoR Bill Little on his '55 MSS Mike Davis on his '58 Venom and me on the '60 Venom with MSS engine. The rally itself was as good as ever. The mix of routes this year included more coastal run than 2015 but the routes and roads were just as good. Most of the week the weather was fine much like an English summer. We had drizzle on the Wednesday when we went West along the coast and it turned into thick mist as we climbed up into the mountains. However, when we dropped down a little on the other side of the pass it cleared and the roads were dry. We did about 700 miles during the week.

Gaggle of Velos in Colombres Square – there were 13 on the rally

We had remarkably little trouble. Bill was running in his MSS after a rebore done to cure what he thought was piston slap. The noise was still present and we now think its worn cam followers by regardless, the bike ran fine all week. Mike's Venom had a funny 5 minutes with the charging and stopped once for no apparent reason but re-started almost immediately. Possibly dirt in the main jet but it never recurred. My bike was running rich low throttle openings all week made much worse when we were high in the mountains (2000m on one run). It would not run smoothly at steady settings and popped and banged on the overrun with flames visible at times. More annoying than anything and otherwise it performed well. Investigating this is one of the workshop jobs lined up for the winter.





Lunch at the Goat Spring – 2000m (6500ft) high in the Picos

The whole event was very well organised just like last year, we stayed at the same hotel (Mirador de la Franca) and even had the same room. Lots of old friends and some new ones as well. Next year they are considering making it a 2 week event. First week will be a touring holiday then back to Colombres for the second week. Not sure if I am up to two weeks but it will be interesting to see the regs when they come out. Tony Page reckons book early as it will almost certainly be fully subscribed quite early.



Lunchstop at a small village somewhere in the Picos Mountains