

Daily (Now mostly weekly at best) Blogg – Part 10

Monday 13th January 2020

The TS150 cylinder head arrived on Friday and is in excellent condition. It only needed a small amount of cleaning before I was able to spray it with BBQ paint to match the barrel. Though the TS motors are normally unpainted aluminium; the 125 Sport was marketed with black painted head and barrel. This morning I swapped the heads over had a quick look inside the barrel while the head was off; all seems fine and the plug was not showing signs of weakness due to the 22mm carb. It started easily once the job was done. I did find the top nut on the plug was missing (its an old style plug cap) so fitted a new one. I wonder if this was the cause of the hesitation at tickover speeds. Running in continues and I took it to Westbury on Friday to the Model Engineering Club.

I plan to make use of the Venom for various events this year including the Twin Dragon in April and the Colombres Rally in October. We gave the latter a miss in 2019 but now have withdrawal symptoms. We have just entered the second week of the event as doing the touring week as well we found too much. However, we are going out on the Friday sailing rather than the Sunday sailing so we don't miss the first Monday. We will be away 12 nights altogether – two of them on the boat. The Venom was brought up to the workshop on Saturday and checked over. It seems to have survived the damp condition quite well and really only needed a wipe over. Starting is still not its strong point. Adopting the 'approved' procedure did get it to fire up but only for a couple of revolutions. Eventually I did get it running and once warmed up I played around with the tickover settings to see if that would help. Well I won't say it's a first click starter now but it has a good tickover and I have been able to start it fairly easily the last two mornings. What it really needs is a few decent runs but that won't happen until Thursday as the forecast is once again dire. I feel I ought to strip down the clutch as it has always had an odd quirk. I have never needed to adjust it in the 5 years I have owned the bike, it never slips or drags and neutral is easy to find: BUT it does feel odd as you take up drive. Difficult to describe the symptoms but Richard commented on it when he rode it last summer. If it's still present when I test ride it (and I can see no reason why it would have gone away of its own accord) I will get it up on the bike lift and strip it out just in case.

On Sunday I rode the Himalayan to Ham for the MZ section meeting. Terry D came along as well and we had a good ride if a little damp at times. I picked up the TS125 s/arm from Roger Badland and am planning to take it down to John M on Wednesday if he confirms that is convenient. Having looked at it this morning I notice it is an early type with metal bushes rather than rubber. I imagine it will fit ok but just in case I might swap it for the s/arm in my TS/ETZ project bike.

Monday 6th January 2020

First update since the turn of the year. The weather was grim on New Years Day so I rode the Himalayan the 15 miles to the VMCC Bristol event at Bitton rather than the 40 miles to Miserden. Met quite a lot of old friends but did not stay long as we had visitors due that afternoon. I have ridden the TS125 Sport on a few very short journeys and it is going well so

far. It was a bit reluctant to run reliably at low revs, there no throttle stop adjuster on these carbs so you either have to set a tickover with the cable or control it by hand. It was much improved after I enriched the pilot airscrew setting. Yesterday was its longest journey since the conversion – to Melksham for its MoT. It passed without any advisories but the weather turned foul so we both got a bit wet and mucky on the way home. In deference to the rebore, I am keeping it down to 40mph which on the 125 gearing is 4000rpm. It is also still running the 22mm carb even so it seems to me to have a lot more pulling power. I have also kept the 15t sprocket for now.. TS150s usually have a 16t gearbox sprocket. Top speed was not the aim of the exercise, it was the ability to maintain cruising speed on inclines and against the wind so I may well keep the lower gearing.

The latest issue of MZ rider arrived on Saturday and contained a wanted ad from me for a TS150 head. I have had two responses already. First was from Ollie Harris and the second from a gentleman in Scotland who was interested in a swap for a TS125 seat I had spare. I have decided on the swap as it saves some money but also because Ollie was being kind in letting me have a head which in fullness of times he has plans for.

Friday 27th December 2019

I seem to have lost an update to the blogg as I am sure I have recorded a couple of items since late November. Now have to search my memory to recall what they might have been. The most significant is probably that the ES250 Trophy finally made it the Salutation under its own steam (both ways) when I rode it to the meeting on 1st December. This was a week earlier than normal as the pub has its Christmas Fayre on the 2nd Sunday and our meeting room (the skittle alley) is full of stalls leaving us with nowhere to sit and natter. The bike performed well and the oil leak has virtually ceased so all is good.

The Himalayan has been ridden a couple of times but in truth the weather throughout December has not been motorcycle friendly so it has been ,mostly short journeys on days when I need to go out and Mrs F has the car.

Today I decided it was time to check over the bikes and make sure they were ready for winter. All the ones not likely to get used until spring had their tyres pumped to 40psi, none were really low on pressure which was good. All those with batteries have had them fully charged though again none were particularly low which is also good. The major problem is keeping them dry as the garage has a tin roof and concrete walls so promotes condensation like a waterfall. I left them uncovered overnight as it was mild so they could dry out a bit. Today they will get wrapped in blankets and have their waterproof covers replaced.

The Himalayan and the TS125 Sport are the only two I plan to ride for the time being and both are in the workshop prepped and ready. Next ride is likely to be New Years Day to Miserden for the Cotswold section NYD meet.

Thursday 21st November 2019

Not really much to report as I have been busy on other things. The ES250 Trophy has been ridden on 3 more occasions and has performed faultlessly. It always creates an impression of being slow and ponderous but this is largely due to the twist grip design. It is a straight

pull device with a lot of lost play in the motion and a very slow action. The result is you cannot open it fully without adjusting your grip on the twist and often I forget to do this. The big gap between 3rd and top also slows things down but these are minor annoyances and I really enjoy riding it. I used the Himalayan a couple of times for short trips and filled the tank last Friday -91mpg again. Really could do with a clean but I just don't have time.

Monday 11th November 2019

Once again I went to the MZ monthly meeting on 4 wheels but I did have a reasonable excuse as I was picking up some bits from Roger Badland which would have been too bulky for a bike. Pleasant meeting and the weather was fine so it would have been a nice day for a ride. Maybe next month.

Back home I have now fitted the aluminium subframe I bought from Roger to the TS/ETZ special and its fully back on its wheels. I was able to give it a test ride round the orchard though a bit carefully as the grass is long and wet. Everything seemed to work ok. No nasty noises or vibrations from the home brewed engine mountings. I have put it away for now as I have other (non-motorcycle) projects which demand my attention.

Thursday 7th November 2019

The Trophy has been ridden a couple of times to VMCC events and is going well with only a very small oil leak originating from the area where the crankcase is damaged. Not enough to worry about. I don't propose to do anything further for now anyway as this only the spare engine; the original is rebuilt and ready to install when the time seems right. However, I might re-use this engine in my 4spd TS250 in which case I will have to sort out the crankcase issue. JB Weld should do the job.

The run to the New Forest went very well. The weather forecast was a bit daunting but in the end we only had a short period of drizzle and even some sunshine at times. However, we did have a lot of rain in the preceding days so I adjusted the route to avoid the miss out the 4 fords we would otherwise have encountered.

The TS/ETZ special is back in the garage for attention. First job was to investigate why the engine would no longer kick over. As I suspected, it was a slack nut that holds the engine sprocket to the crankshaft – had this problem before and as it was me that rebuilt this engine there was no one else to blame. I thought I would have to remove the primary drive cover but when I removed the oil pump, I was able to access the nut and tighten it up. Saved a messy job as otherwise the oil would need to be drained and no doubt the gasket replaced. As there is nowhere sensible to fit an oil tank the engine is running on premix ant present anyway so I made decided to leave the pump off and fitted a blanking plate. While it was on the bench I found the source of a small oil leak, the neutral detent spring nut was a bit slack – doh! The other reason to have the bike in the workshop was to get it ready to swap over the rear aluminium sub-frame. I hope to collect one from Roger Badland on Sunday and can then return the other to Andrew Long.

Sunday 27th October 2019

The ES250 Trophy is now back in service. The oil leak seems to be fixed, has not dropped any in the last 24hrs anyway. Think it was a combination of things. The gearshift oil seal was definitely past its sell by date, and I could a dent in the lower crankcase which was probably someone being heavy handed with a screwdriver or suchlike to get he cover off. Replacing the oil seal is easy, once you find the right one. I have had a packet with 4 or 5 such O rings but when I came to fit one it looked a bit thin. The callipers confirmed they were only 1.6mm in section rather than 2mm. They might have worked but it would be a fag to have to do he job again if they did not. Rooting around in box of assorted O rings I found just one that was correct and this is now fitted and apparently working. The dent/gouge in the crankcase was dressed to make sure it was level and I used a special thick gasket with Wellseal on on the crankcase side, partly to stick it down and partly to help seal the dent. Seems to have worked anyway.

The bike now has a lifting handle to help get it on and off the centre stand. This is an old pillion footrest which conveniently hinges out of the way when not in use. I tried lowering the footrest to improve comfort but this proved impossible due to the silencer. So I have raised the seat by about 20mm. This was trickier and hence took longer than expected due to the way the hinges are fitted but its now done. Pleased with the result as the riding position is much improved and I don't get cramp changing into second gear when its cold. A longer test ride is planned; a satisfactory days work.

Friday 25th October 2019

Trying to remember what has happened over the lst 10 days on the biking front. I decided it was about time the ES250/2 had an outing so I pulled it up to the workshop and gave it a quick checkover. Need the tyres and gearbox oil topping up but apart from that was good to go. I rode it round the block just tp be sure and on 17th I rode it to Westbrook for a VMCC meet and on the Friday to Westbury for WWSME meeting. Enjoyed the rides and it went well but I felt a bit cramped as the footrest are quite high; I made a mental note to look into this.

On Sunday 21st we had the annual Autumn leaves run to the Forest of Dean. Led by Jim Gaisford it was an excellent day out though a bit longer than expected as the Old Severn Bridge was closed from the Wales end so we came home via Gloucester. Clocked about 160 miles on the Himalayan which took 7.8l to fill – 97mpg! Funny thing is the bike had just gone onto reserve at the point I filled it and it is supposed to be a 15l tnk. The reserve is a whopping 5l and assuming that to be the case with my bike that means it only holds 13l. Still pondering about this. A couple of days previously Mike davis mentioned that he and Terry thought the wheels were not in line. I checked it the following day and adjusted the back wheel slightly. Terry thought it much improved on the Sunday run. On Tuesday I took the Himmie to Salisbury for Hayball's to check it over. The charging system and battery were given a clean bill of health, The heated grips and other electrical items I fitted were causing a small current leak which probably explains my flat battery. Anyway now I have the battery condition led fitted I can easily see if it needs charging and if it is to be left for a longish period I will disconnect the battery to be sure. The engine noises were considered normal and indeed as the mileage increases and perhaps because I now have the cut down screen, I

feel that it is less clattery. They also checked the frame and wheel alignment and made a small adjustment. I rode it hands off a couple of time on the way home and it steered perfectly straight. Funny ting is they pointed out that the handlebars are slightly bent. They probably think I have fallen off but not yet so hey must have been bent from new and I never noticed until they pointed it out. Now f course I notice it all the time so I guess I will have to do something about it eventually. On the way home from Chippenham I ran it to just over 60mph for a short time as the running in is just about complete.

One of the things I brought back from Exeter on Monday was the TS150 cylinder head. I fitted it to the TS125 yesterday then took the bike for a short spin to make sure all was well. It now needs the rebored barrel and piston running in but will have to wait for the right opportunity.

Ever since I recommissioned the ES250 it has leaked gearbox oil. Not a huge amount but you don't need much to make a mess on the garage floor. So today it was brought back up to the workshop. I am pretty sure that it is the gearchange shaft O ring but it's on the bike lift for observation to make sure. While its in the workshop I will investigate dropping the footrest sand raising the seat to make the riding position less cramped. I also want to fit a grab handle to help get it on and off the centre stand as there is presently no convenient point for lifting due to the hinged seat and the oil container I fitted.

Tuesday 15th October 2019

Bit quiet on the biking front as I have been mainly playing with my steam locomotive. I rode the Himalayan to Chippenham on Thursday evening for the VMCC club night I noticed that the battery condition led had dropped back to orange indicating the battery needed a charge. However, it started ok and by the time I got back the led was flashing green indicating all was now well. Yesterday I noticed that it had gone back to orange again so it is once again on charge and I am going to monitor its condition on a daily basis. I decided to take the ES250 Trophy to the MZ meeting on Sunday to try and lay the ghost of the previous wo breakdowns. On Friday I dragged it out from the back of the garage. It started easily and after checking the tyres I took it for a test ride. All was well so I filled the tank. Unfortunately Sunday was wet wet wet so I gratefully accepted a lift in Richard Warne's car. The Trophy will have to wait for another day for its longer tryout.

I talked to Jim Nicholson at Ham about our Himalayans and mentioned that mine was a bit clattery, more than I remembered from my test ride in 2018. It seems to be getting worse as I come to the end of the running in (950 miles now) and use the performance more. He told me that there was known to be a problem with the top end of some of the 2019 models and some had been recalled. On Monday I rang Hayball's and discussed both the battery and the noisy motor. They told me they had done warranty work on 2 recent Himalayans and it was possible mine was needing attention. It is booked in for Tuesday 22nd October to investigate engine and battery. Hope it is nothing serious as I still love this bike to bits. Even with regular cruising about 50, it is still returning above 90mpg.

Monday 7th October 2019

Rob P-N brought his poorly Supa5 over for attention today. Three issues to be investigated; a bent nearside riders footrest, a broken nearside wing mirror and a rear brake lever that would not return unless you lifted up with your foot. The latter made for an interesting ride if you forgot.

All three problems stemmed from a fall when riding off road. The footrest and the mirror were an easy fix. The cause of the brake lever problem was easy to diagnose but bit more difficult to fix. The frame tube in which the lever operates was bent. It also carries the passenger footrest which provides quite a degree of leverage if the bike crashes heavily on that side. Applying sufficient leverage to straighten it required all my strength and a 3ft steel tube. Eventually I got it straight enough to allow the brake lever to operate freely. And was able to reassemble everything. Just as well it was in for repair as the rear brake arm on the hub was missing its securing bolts and only half engaged. The only way to fix this is to remove the wheel and deal with the hub on the bench. Otherwise you simply drive the cam spindle inwards.

Anyway jobs now completed so I hope to ride it over to Bratton tomorrow otherwise it will be in residence for some time.

Saturday 5th October 2019

Thursday we had a VMCC mid week run which started from near South Cerney so I had a 35 mile ride to the start. We went into the Cotswolds led by Richard Groves and after a while I was had only the vaguest idea as to where we were and where we were heading. We had a coffee stop at Northleach in an old coaching inn and lunch at the riverside pub in Lechlade. Mike D and I rode home together leaving the others to heading for a tea stop somewhere. Total trip was about 120 miles. Bit overcast but it stayed dry until 4pm just as I was turning into my drive – how lucky was that. When I filled the Himalayan up next day it had clocked up 161 miles on less than 8l – worked out at 94mpg. So using more of the performance does not seem to greatly affect consumption.

The TS/ETZ project now has a back brake as can be seen in the picture. As anticipated, I had to make up a cable but it was possibly a good thing as I was able to include adjusters at both ends and it's a very heavy duty item. I have also fitted a fuel tank from a TS250. This required the mounting lugs for the original tank to be removed but I did this carefully and they can be welded back on again if necessary. As far as I can see the bike can now be ridden (but only on private property of course). For now it is back in the shed as I need the workshop and the bike lift free for other things.



Wednesday 2nd October 2019

Encouraging progress on the TS/ETZ. The bike now runs and so far my codged up exhaust system seems to work well. Just one small hole in the pipe which I missed when checking the welding. The engine mounts also seem to be working as there was no obvious vibration transmitted to the frame or handlebars. Searching through the spares I found a suitable chain and more to the point a correct size link, to my surprise I also found a gear lever. Both are now fitted and to my relief all 5 gears select. I don't have a TS125 tank but I did try one from a TS250. This would just about fit but only if I cut off the existing lugs to let it drop down more. Currently it would sit too high. I did find a tidy saddle and this was an easy fit. The main thing I failed to find was a rear brake cable. I am sure I have one somewhere but it remained hidden today. I can probably make one but it would be nice to know the correct length of the inner and outer.



Rob Parker-Norman came around on his Himalayan today, he has clocked up near 5000 miles with no problems other than self imposed hiccups. Rear tyre looks to be about due replacement. Sadly he is moving to the Cambridge area in the new year though he hopes to return in July to do the White Horse Trial. He is bringing his blue TS250 round on Monday for me to investigate the rear brake which jams on after he dropped it in a green lane.

Tuesday 1st October 2019

On Sunday I took the black TS125 down to Clutton to reunite it with John Matthews. The whole family turned out to watch and it was something of a relief when it eventually

started. In hindsight I should have tested it before I loaded it on the van; though I did remember to charge the battery. Seems like his grandson (called Curtis the same as one of my grandchildren) is keen to ride the bike so I talked him through the controls and he was able to start it ok. The space it occupied in the shed is now taken up by my Ransome Mower which is waiting for a dry spell to try it out properly.

Monday was Bob Fishers funeral at Wootton Bassett. I rode the Himalayan and was very lucky with the weather as the rain did not start until just after I got home. The crematorium was packed and many people had come long distances to pay their respects. He was a great character who did an enormous amount for Vintage Motorcycling and will be sadly missed.

The wet weather has given me an excuse to continue working in the garage and I decided to spend today progressing the TS/ETZ special. The exhaust system is now fitted. I was about to say properly but that could be an over optimistic description. However, it is certainly an improvement of the initial attempt. I used the TS125 exhaust pipe which was cut in half to allow it to be turned to a better angle. I also had to cut out a small wedge to bend it upwards; otherwise the silencer would have been pointing downwards. The result of my labours is shown below. Thank goodness for the Mig welder.



I used a TS250 rear support arm as these include rubber bushes to allow a degree of flexibility for rubber mounted engines. The only silencer I had available was the old one for the TS125 Sport which had been cut in half (presumably by Andrew) and is now joined by a

sleeve that is clamped by the support bracket. Not an ideal arrangement and it does result in the support arm being angle forward instead of vertical. Anyway it should function ok and the cosmetics can be sorted out later should the whole thing actually work.

I have also fitted sufficient electrics to provide ignition with a switch and warning light. The ETZs when fully operational are 12v bikes but I only have a spare 6v battery so it's a 6v total loss system for now but we do have sparks. The carb has also been fitted along with the twistgrip and its cables. With luck the engine may condescend to run tomorrow. I fitted a clutch cable but this is largely academic as it currently has no gear lever and I have to sort out a chain – need to check what size is needed. The other big issue is the rear brake cable abutment. Still overall a satisfying day's work.

Saturday 28th September 2019

On Thursday I went to Peter Goodwin's funeral in Swindon. He had been the Chairman of the Moonrakers section for many years with Julie, his wife as Secretary. It was a pleasant non religious ceremony and they showed pictures of his life whilst playing one of his favourite songs. I thought it was a brilliant idea especially as we did not have to sing.

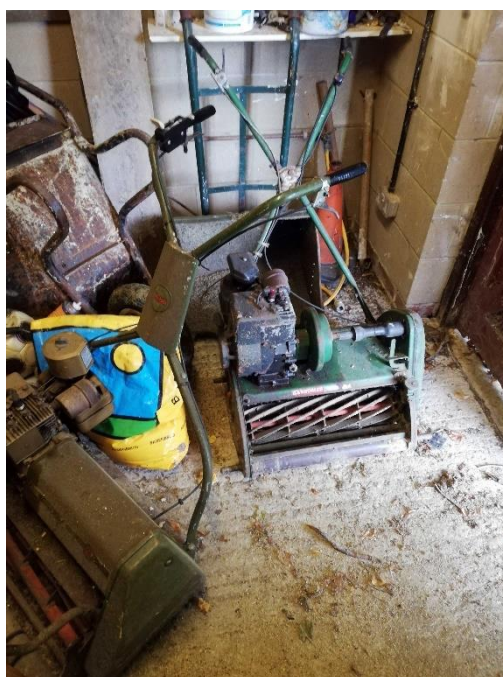
About a week ago the battery on the Himalayan went flat which was a bit worrying. I remembered I still had one of the battery condition indicator diodes in the cupboard so I have now fitted this. You leave it connected live and it reverts to a periodic flashing mode using very little power. All is well while it shows green, amber is the signal to put the battery on charge. If you let it get to red you have a problem.

The mower is now running and sounds ok mechanically but smokes it quite badly. This may settle down once it is being used regularly but the wet weather is not conducive to grass cutting. Though they look rather crude, I am impressed with how well the Briggs & Startton engine is made. It was built in 1983 and the evidence suggests that neither it nor the Ransome mower have been particularly well looked after. The mower itself also seems to be very sturdy. The picture shows it after a bit of s clean up. Click it to see a video. The knocking noise was a loose flywheel which I have since fixed, it's much quieter now.



Wednesday 25th September 2019

And now for something completely different. Some while ago I was asked if I was interested in a couple of motor mowers the local bowls club was thinking of disposing of. Not sure why (probably the beer speaking) but I said I might be then promptly forgot about it. Yesterday I got a message from the town clerk to say the mowers were available if I still wanted them. Seems the mowers actually belonged to a now defunct cricket club whose field has been taken over by the bowls club and they prefer to buy a new mower. Anyway I decided it was worth a view and was shown two 20" cylinder mowers (which are pretty hefty items) One was a Webb and the other a Ransome but no way could I cope with both. They were very scruffy and neither had run for at least 5 years. The Ransome was nearest the door and still had its grass box so I came home with that. It might make an interesting project over the winter. If I can get it to work it will certainly improve my lawn as cylinder mowers, particularly heavy duty ones like this do give a nice cut. If I fail then I can either scrap it or find a new home for it.



Tuesday 24th September 2019

Sunday was a seriously wet day so I decided it was a good time to give the garage a sort out and clean. In part this was to try and trace some of my tools that seemed to have gone walkabout and to create suitable working conditions for the steam locomotive. Must admit it's much nicer to work in a tidy environment.

Today I stripped the top end of the TS125 Sport and fitted the 150. Everything went well until I got to the cylinder head. I knew I would have to skim this to remove about 2.5ccs to ease the compression ratio (unmodified it would be about 12:1) and to give clearance for the larger piston. However, I found that the design of the 125 head gives a very narrow band to seal to the top of the barrel and relieving this to clear the piston would leave insufficient metal to make a proper seal in my opinion. I think it will be safer to try and get the correct head so this project is on hold for now. No picture because there is actually no visual difference between the 125 and 150, just a bigger hole in the barrel.

I have also re-fitted the newly repainted tank to the ETZ250 but not yet put in any petrol as I want to let it harden for a lot longer. Looks very smart and I will take a picture shortly.

While I was at the garage I took some pictures of the Viper to send to the Insurance Brokers to get agreed value when the policy renews in October. Not run it for ages so I was pleased when it started first kick. If the weather is fine I will ride it to Bob Fishers funeral on 30th. Even more pleased when the Venom also started first kick with just a tickle and no choke. Must remember that.

Friday 20th September 2019

A tidying up day mostly. I have painted the ETZ250 spare tank in the correct shade of red (more an orange actually) over the last couple of days and left it to harden in the sunlight. Today I gave it a gentle rub down and polished it with t-cut before giving it a couple of coats of clear lacquer. Not a brilliant job but realistically as good as I am going to get with rattle cans. Now has to be left for 3-4 weeks before putting it back on the bike. Modern paints are not really petrol proof until they have had time to harden. Anyway, one job off the list.



I have also assembled the complete ETZ125 engine into modified frame and added the swinging arm, forks and wheels so it is now mobile. Mostly it was quite successful and there are no insurmountable problems but it has thrown up a few issues I will need to resolve. The proper ETZ125 exhaust pipe has a much sharper down turn then the TS125 pipe I had been using for testing. For now I have created clearance using the angle grinder to remove some of the frame at the bottom. Really it needs cutting back a little more and probably a strengthening piece welding in but that will be a task for another day. The line of the pipe is also a little high resulting in the silencer sitting too low at the back end. It might make sense to modify a TS pipe to resolve both issues. Something else that has become apparent is that I need to fabricate a new rear brake cable abutment. This is on the TS125 timing side engine cover but is not present on an ETZ125 as it uses the 250 style crossover shaft. Should not be an insuperable problem but also one left for another day. Overall I am quite pleased with the way it has turned out especially as the engine sits a little further forward putting a bit more weight at the front end. MZs are notoriously front end light so this should be a good thing. This project is now on hold whilst I review matters.



Thursday 19th September 2019

My trip to Yeovil today was very fruitful. I came back with the bits to get the TS/ETZ project on its wheels and this lovely 3.5" gauge steam locomotive a gift from an interesting and clever gentleman called John Plowman. More about this in a new blogg starting shortly.



Tuesday 17th September 2019

I checked my list of outstanding jobs yesterday and it reminded me that the tank on the ETZ250 still needs to be painted. I made a really nice job of the original tank only to find that it leaked from a rusty seam. I did seal the tank internally and externally and for a few months it worked but then the garage started to smell of petrol again! I used the spare tank for the rest of the summer but it is black and looking a bit sad so now the bike is on SORN its time to give it a makeover. I started the job this morning by draining the fuel and removing the tank from the bike. It is now in the workshop and has been cleaned and given a first rub down to get rid of any scratches etc. There are no dents and no rust; in fact the tank is in overall very good condition so hopefully it will come up well. The weather is forecast to be warm and dry for the rest of this week so it is an ideal time to tackle the job.

Sunday 15th September 2019

The Cornwall week was a great success. The weather though a bit damp and windy at times did not really affect our activities. We drove down on the Friday; doing the 170 trip in just under 4 hours which considering we were towing a caravan and therefore limited to 50mph for much of the journey was very satisfactory. The event starts with a welcome meeting on the Saturday evening – this year they had about 70 entrants. Sundays run was to North Cornwall and though overcast was dry. Overnight however we had gale force winds and rain so the prospects for the West Cornwall Run on the Monday were looking bleak. Amazingly, the rain stopped around 10am so I set out hoping that I might get a few miles in before turning back. In fact we managed to get all the way round with only the odd shower and I was able to pick up the pasties from my favourite shop at St Just. On Tuesday we had bright

sunshine for the whole day for the East Cornwall route visiting Looe finishing up at Padstow for an ice cream.

Wednesday was a bit damp but as there was no run we went to Lanhydrock House to look at the gardens. Later we went shopping and visited Crantock beach to gave the dogs a walk. A BBQ was arranged for the evening so altogether a pleasant day. Thursday dawned fine and dry for the South Cornwall run which took us down to the Lizard and Friday was a shorter day finishing up at Charlestown the port which features in the TV series Poldark. Altogether I clocked just over 500 miles and the Supa5 ran like a dream all week. The picture shows the Supa5 somewhere near Lands End on the Monday. These old mine



building are everywhere in this part of Cornwall. Strange how most despite being very soundly built are in such a poor state of repair. I was told it was most likely they were partially dismantled to get out the valuable gear inside and to provide dressed stone for other building.



Some of the bikes in the rally parked at the harbour in Padstow. As you can see it was a nice sunny day.

While I was away I got a message from Andrew Long to say he could lend me the bits I need to get the TS125/ETZ project on its wheels. Hopefully I will be able to pick them up on Thursday when I am meeting up with John Hill near Yeovil. This visit will also hopefully herald a new but not motorcycle related project.

Wednesday 4th September 2019

On Sunday I rode the Venom to Nympsfield Gliding Club for a Velocette Owners club meeting. The rear tyre had stayed hard for a couple of days so I really thought I had cracked the problem. The bike went really well both to and from the meet and I almost regretted not taking it to Cornwall. However, Tuesday morning I found the rear tyre was totally flat once again! Getting the rear wheel out of a S/arm Velo is not easy despite it being a qd fitting. You need to get the back end high enough to clear the mudguard. The rigid bikes have a detachable rear section to the mudguard which makes it much easier. Anyway a new tube has been fitted and the wheel is back in the bike. I did leave it overnight to make sure the pressure was maintained. Looking at the old inner tube there was a small hole which could have been made by a thorn or a small nail. I checked the inside of the tyre thoroughly but there was nothing remaining which could have caused the problem. In other respects the tube was in excellent condition so I have patched it as a spare. Let's hope this is the end

of the Venom rear tyre saga which has been going on for several years having started in Spain in 2016.

Good progress on the TS125 frame modification. I was not wholly satisfied with the fit of the bottom front gusset so I replaced this and made a set for the rear of the frame on the same lines. Initially it was all held together with bolts and rivets was strong enough to allow the engine to be fitted. I wanted to check that the hole allowed clearance for the exhaust pipe – which it did. Next check was to fit the front forks to make sure the ex pipe cleared the mudguard and wheel; again it was fine. I had made my mind up to do the welding myself and was intending to buy a gasless Mig welder (the arc welder was much too fierce for the sheet steel used). However, my friend terry D has kindly loaned me his welder and I have now done the job. Not very well as you can see in the pictures but it is strong enough and will allow me to move to the next stage which is getting the bike on its wheels and the proper engine installed. This will require the acquisition of a few more parts – a TS125c bottom yoke (the TS250 one I have is too short), and the aluminium rear subframe which provides the top mount for the shock absorbers. Should not be too difficult to obtain these items John Hill has kindly offered an old ETZ125 exhaust pipe and screwed flange which I will pick up after I get back from Cornwall.



Saturday 31st August 2019

Not the best of weeks, on Wednesday I heard that a great friend Bob Fisher had died that morning so some time was spent passing on the news to his many friends around the country, plus organising a card and some flowers for his wife Julia, On Thursday I rode the Supa5 up to Shipton Moyne to one of our mid week wanderings and collected a good number of signatures on the card. The bike went well so the decision is made to take it to Cornwall.

Mick Marchant brought back the TS125 frame with the top engine mounts welded in so today I made a start on modifying the front down tube to allow access for the exhaust pipe. Basically I have cut part of the frame down the centre line then splayed it out. The basic shape is in place and I have made the front gussets which will both strengthen the frame and help to keep water out of the inside. The rear gussets are next but they are very tedious to make. Presently it is held together by nuts/bolts and rivets. Eventually it will all be

welded. The photos hopefully make it clearer. The hole for the pipe has to be quite large both to allow access to the flange nut and to cope with the downward angle of the port.



Tuesday 27th August 2019

On Wednesday morning Terry brought me the bushes he had made for the ETZ engine mounts – they fitted perfectly. In the evening I gave the frame to Mick who is going to weld up the top engine mount for me. Then the difficult work begins, modifying the frame to fit the exhaust pipe.

I rode the Venom to our VMCC section club night on Thursday evening. The popping and banging on the overrun has virtually disappeared, there was the occasional slight burble but nothing to worry about. It was dark when we finished so I was able to refresh my memory on the lights which are superb thanks to the 12v LED. Back home I wheeled the Viper out to the road and tried its new LED headlight. It was ok but nothing like as good as the Venom headlight. The latter has a very good spread of light in the dipped position and an excellent longer range beam on full. The Viper has a narrower beam on dip and the full beam is more a brightening of the light than a different beam. Though it is clearly an improvement on the old incandescent bulb and will give the dynamo/battery a much easier time, frankly I was a bit disappointed. I may rethink my decision on converting to -ve earth so that I can use the same type of bulb as the venom.

On Sunday I drove down to Yeovil to visit the Westland Model Railway Club who had a steam running day. John Hill invited me as he was running his 3.5" gauge 2-6-0 engine. It also gave me a chance to return various parts and reading material I had borrowed from him in pursuance of various projects. The Westland track is 1200' long and caters for 2.5", 3.5" and 5" gauges. Below is a picture of John with his engine and friend Ernie standing alongside. With luck, if you click on the picture you will see a video of the locomotive in action.



I have been wrestling with a slow puncture in the rear tyre of the Venom for some time. It is one of those intermittent punctures. Sometimes it goes down overnight and at other times it takes a week or more to go down. A few months ago I removed the tyre and tube and found no problem with so I replaced everything as was since I did not have a new tube to hand at the time. For a while all seemed well but since I have started riding it again the problem has returned. I had a bottle of Finelec so I put this in the tyre hoping it would cure the problem. It certainly slowed down the rate of deflation, but did not completely cure the problem. I do now have a new inner tube of the correct size but it is a pain getting the back wheel out of a Velo so I tried one more thing. Though there was nothing obviously wrong with it, I replaced the valve and this seems to have done the trick. No loss of pressure all day today so hopefully the problem is solved. I have thrown the old valve away.

We are due to attend the VMCC Cornwall week shortly and the plan was to take the Venom. However, this could well change not because of doubts about the Venom which now seems to be in excellent order. The issue is weight as we will be taking Mrs F's electric buggy as walking any distance is now quite difficult for her. The buggy is quite heavy and obviously requires a fair amount of space in the back of the Van. The Supa5 is lighter than the Venom so I considering taking this instead. Today It was brought up to the workshop, serviced and given a clean. Not sure when it last got used in earnest, could well have been Colombres in 2015 so high time it got some exercise.

Tuesday 20th August 2019

ON Saturday I removed the exhaust pipe from the Venom and found that the bathroom sealer I had used to fill the gap at the head had mostly turned to powder. Not surprising

really. I have now fitted a shim made out of an old bean can to seal up the gap and hopefully the popping and banging will be cured. I Took the Himalayan on the VMC run into the Cotswolds on Sunday. Still love it and it's the fuel consumption is staying in the 90's even though I am riding it quicker.

On Monday I got the Viper out and took it for a test ride. I let the engine rev more freely and it went very much better. Clearly I cannot shove it into top gear at 30mph and just leave it there as I do with the Venom. The dynamo is charging fine now but it is clear with only 40 watts it struggles to balance the load. The obvious solution is to replace all the bulbs with led's. I have loads of these in 12v negative earth form; sadly the Viper is 6v positive earth. I did contemplate converting the bike to -ve earth having checked with Paul Lydford that mechanical regulators like the Lucas MCR2 are not polarity sensitive. Though in fact it is perfectly feasible to make the swap I chickened out when I saw the Viper's wiring which is original and colour coded for +ve earth. The conversion would mean having the wrong colours going to the battery – red to negative, black to positive. Sooner or later This would cause me a problem so in the end I took the expensive but easy route and ordered new bulbs. Now a bit worried about the Venom as I converted that to -ve earth a few years ago and I am wondering why I did not hit the same snag with the harness colours. The headlight led came from Paul Goff and the stop/tail from Classic Car LEDs. I already had a 6v sidelight led and just swapped the wires over inside the headlight. The new ones arrived this morning and both are now fitted. In total the current drain is just over 1 amp on dip and 1.5 amps on main beam. Now I need to ride it at night to see how effective it is.

Earlier today I ride the Himalayan to Piston Broke in Bristol and dropped off the spare TS125 barrel and the new 150cc piston. Steve will bore it to fit and eventually I can convert the TS125 Sport to a 150cc.

Friday 16th August 2019

Another very wet day so no twinges of conscience spending most of the day in the workshop. First job was to rethink the way I had fitted the RH brush guard. It was secure but sat lower than the LH one due to the brake master cylinder and it was beginning to annoy me. The solution was fairly simple (all the best ideas are) I fitted a small plate at the inner end which allowed the whole guard to swing higher. Now both brush guards are level. Now this is sorted I will cut off the surplus piece of bar as that is also annoying me.



For some strange reason my project to fit the ETZ125 engine in the TS125 frame has caught several people's imagination. They are all encouraging me to carry on with it and offering to help. We all agree that it will be necessary to cut the frame to allow the exhaust pipe to be fitted and two people have suggested what sounds like an elegant solution to replace part of the down tube with a largish diameter piece of pipe through which the exhaust can be inserted. This will be tricky to line up properly and the first essential step is to complete the top engine mount so that the position of the ETZ engine is fixed. So that was today's task.

A top mount in a loop frame is tricky as you have to be able to get the engine in and out but I finally figured out a way to do it. No point in trying to describe the solution, just look at the pictures. The mounts on the frame are only bolted in at present to maintain their location. They need welding and I will have to get someone else to do that as the TS125 frame is pressed steel and my arc welding skills are not up to the task. I forgot to take a picture of the front end today, but it is clear that cut in the frame will be at an angle as the port points downwards. However, that is a problem for another day.



Thursday 15th August 2019

On Sunday I rode the Himalayan to Ham for the MZRC monthly meeting. Finally got it wet as the heavens opened as I got to Chipping Sodbury and only stopped a couple of miles short of destination. Good turnout and a number of people I had not seen for a while. Had a chat with Jim Nicholson who bought a Himalayan a few weeks before I got mine. He is still well pleased with it and has just done an off road course using it. He passed on a few tips including details of the bar risers he had fitted to his bike. Rained hard for a while on the way home as well. Bike has now done 45 miles and it is good to be able to run it up to 50 without a guilty conscience.

On Monday I fitted the Oxford heated grips which the family bought me for my birthday. For the most part it was quite straightforward until I got to the throttle grip. Getting the original rubber of the twistgrip was struggle as the tube is covered in ridges to stop the grip turning. There are also spikes at both ends over which the grip loops. Eventually it came off but the spikes prevent the Oxford grip sliding onto the tube. I searched the internet but found no real advice on the problem and the only solution appeared to be to cut off the spikes. Before doing this I rang Hayball's and asked their advice. Cut off the spikes they said, that's what we do and no it won't invalidate the warranty. Even with the spikes cut off and rubbed down the grip was a tight fit but some heat and lubrication finally got it in place. Nice job now it's done and they work well. While I was tidying up the wiring I fitted my new USB charger socket which now works fine. I think the original problem was down to me using the wrong pin on my multiway connector.

On Tuesday I brought my Supa5 up to the workshop for a checkover as this will be the fallback bike for Cornwall if the Venom does not shape up. I honestly cannot remember when I last rode the bike but it started very easily and sounded sweet. I gave it a cursory checkover, pumped up the tyres and took it for a test ride. The bike went fine but the speedo needle was wobbling all over the place and it was impossible to judge my speed. I searched the spares boxes and found just one presentable speedo, in fact it was practically new with only 350 miles recorded. This is now on the bike and seems to work ok though at the back of my mind I have a feeling I tried it some time ago on another bike and it would not work properly. Guess I will find out in due course. The only other problem was the indicators on the offside. They just about worked but all the other lights dimmed as well. In the end it turned out to be a dud bulb so an easy fix. I will give the bike another longer test ride but I can see no reason why it would not be fine for Cornwall if needed.

Today we had a VMCC mid-week wandering to Urchfont about 15 miles away. I took the Venom. Starting from cold was achieved with 3-4 kicks and it did not miss a beat all the way to the pub. Tickover was fine and having stopped it, I was able to restart the bike first kick. The only slight issue was it is popping a bit in the silencer on the overrun. However, I think this is due to the slack fit of the ex pipe at the head; the bathroom sealant I used to cure the problem a while back has most likely burnt away. Time to do the job properly perhaps. The bike was a bit more difficult to start after lunch but once running I had a great ride home. I checked the plug later and it was a perfect colour. Need a few more rides before I am confident about the Venom but the signs are hopeful.

Saturday 10th August 2019

Spent a couple of hours on the Venom on Friday morning. Did not find anything obviously wrong. The magneto points had closed up a little to maybe 8thou so I reset them to 12thou. Blew through the jets again and inspected the new NGK plug I fitted on Monday. It was a little sooty but that is to be expected given that I am constantly trying to start it in the garage well tickled on choke. At the VMCC meeting on Thursday evening there was a lot of talk about plugs and magnetos and one thing came up which I had forgotten – mags like a smaller plug gap around 18thou, default for new plugs is hearer 25-30thou. Also a lot of doubt about NGK plugs in Brit bikes. So I resurrected the original Champion N5 and set the gap to 18thou. I would not say it was an instant cure, but the bike is now a more reliable starter hot or cold. I took it for a 5 mile test ride and it ran perfectly and I was able to tune the carb for a steady tickover once it was warm. Hoping that what it really needs is more use and it is scheduled for our VMCC wandering next Thursday.

The postman delivered the ETZ125 crankcases today so I spent the afternoon trying them out in the TS125 frame. As expected I had to cut away the original engine mounts and I had to adjust the offset on the ETZ engine plates. With this doe the crankcases fitted very nicely as you can see in the picture.



Things were going to well and I very quickly hit a major snag when I fitted the barrel and head. The good news is that there is clearance to make up the top engine mount. The bad news is that the ETZ barrel has an exhaust port that comes out centrally – right in front of the frame down tube. The picture says it all. I did briefly experiment with a TS125 barrel but this would need a spacer plate and the stud centres are different. A similar challenge was over come when I built the hybrid TS/ETZ250 motor a few years ago but this is likely to be much more difficult as space is very limited. I have now put all the bits back in store whilst I think about the problem. Of course I could always cut a hole in the frame!!!



The postman also delivered the brush guards I ordered from M&P. They were only £13.95 and I was favourably impressed with the quality of them. Fitting the LH one was relatively easy once I got the hang of the fittings. The RH one was rather more difficult because the brake master cylinder and the throttle cable were in the way. I had to reshape the guard somewhat and drill a new hole for the handlebar end but eventually it was fitted. I need to trim off the excess parts but I am leaving that for now as they have to come off soon for the heated grips, which are my birthday present from the family, to be fitted. Should get them tomorrow!

I spent this morning connecting up the cable to the handlebars. This will provide power for the USB connector and the heated grips. At the battery end I have used optimum connectors so that when required I can plug in the charger. At the handlebar end I used an MZ multi way connector which will allow up to 3 devices to be plugged in. Wiring is a bit like spaghetti at the moment but I should be able to tidy it up once the heated grips are wired in. I did have a slight hiccup. My new USB connector refused to work so I used the old one for which the mounting has gone walkabout. It is held by a cable tie for now but at least it all works. Oddly enough. When I tested the new USB connector on the bench later with a spare battery it worked fine and continued to work when I briefly tested it back on the bike!

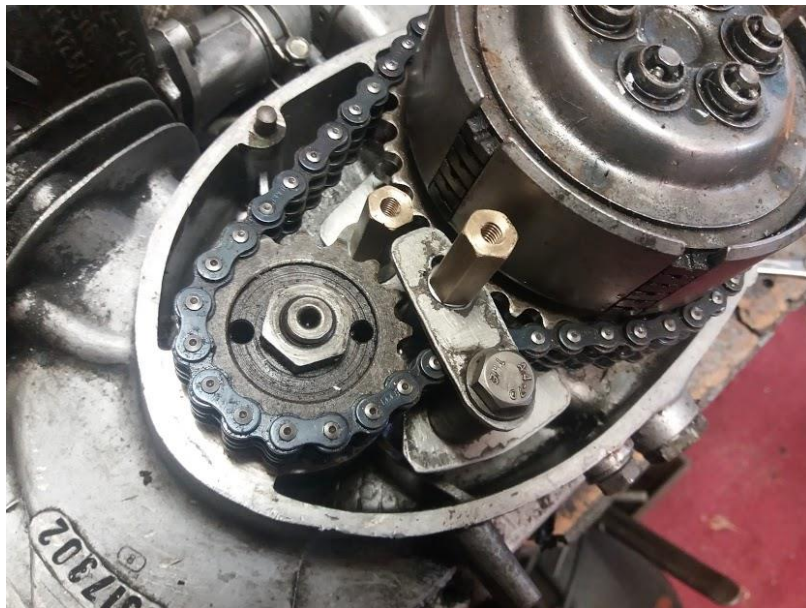


Thursday 8th August 2019

The TS125 Sport is now finished at least so far as its current refurbishment project is concerned. I took it for a test ride and everything seems to be working fine. This is how it looks at now. In slower time I intend to take my spare 125cc barrel to Bristol and have it bored to 150cc using the piston I have just bought from Germany.



The primary chain tensioner is now completed thanks to some help from John Hill and Terry D. Looks quite neat and should be sturdy enough. I noticed that the chain on the TS125 Sport was quite rattly so I will try it out on that engine when I have it on the bench to fit the 150 barrel.



While I was waiting for the bits for the TS125, I brought the 4spd TS250 back into the workshop and fitted the Powerdynamo system originally intended for the TS125. No major problems encountered and the bike performed well on a test ride this afternoon. The battery I had planned to fit has died so I am now running it without a battery. That meant I had to find another way to kill the engine as the relay system could not be used. Fortunately this ignition switch seems to have an operational 'position 5' on the ignition switch so that is

what I have used. I did try using the headlamp flasher switch but that would not work for some reason. Bike now back in the garage and ready for use.

On Tuesday I rode the Himalayan to Salisbury where it had it's 300 mile service. I am now able to run the engine up to 50mph which is a lot better. I filled it up on the way back and the consumption worked out at 97mpg. Given that I am now able to ride it quicker I don't suppose I shall see figures like this again. While I was waiting, I had a test ride on the new Enfield Interceptor twin. Very impressed by it's overall performance but this one is run-in so did not have to be molly coddled. A bit smoother and more flexible than the Himalayan but heavier and seemingly a bit hotter on fuel consumption though I am only basing this on a 30 mile run and observing how far the petrol gauge dropped. Overall I think the Himalayan was the right choice for me and I was very happy riding it home.

On Wednesday I drove down to Shaftesbury to pick up the Viper dynamo. Turned out the armature was naff and Paul fitted a couple of new bearings while it was apart. He also mentioned that the main body had been painted which he said was sometimes a problem as this provides the earth path through the engine. Sure enough, when I fitted the dynamo today it still would not charge. I ran a wire from the screw holding the end cap to the dynamo securing clamp bolt and bingo we had a charge. At some I will need to come up with a better solution; the ideal is to have Paul rebuild the dynamo into a re-plated body and I wish now that I had asked for this to be done. I have now run out of excuses so I took the Viper for its first run today; did about 5 miles round my longer test route. Everything works as you would hope, the clutch has a much quicker take up than the Venom and the gearbox seems to need a longer lever movement though it changes smoothly enough. It does not pull so easily from low revs as the Venom especially in top gear. Clearly needs to be revved more but as the engine is still running-in I did not push it too hard. It has remained remarkably oil tight so far. Will take it for a longer run when time permits.

Next major task is to sort out the Venom which is giving me grief. We got it out on Monday so that my son Richard could have a ride on it and because it needs a few runs before taking it to Cornwall in September. It started ok initially but then became a typical Velo needing several kicks to get it running. Once it was running I took it for a brief test ride and it went well. Richard practised the starting technique and seemed to have mastered it so off he went. After 40 minutes I began to get worried and rang him on his mobile. He was about 5 miles away having stalled the motor and unable to get it going. I was ready to take the van to pick it up but he was determined to get back under his own steam and sure enough about 15 minutes later he appeared with a big grin on his face. I thought this would put him off British bikes but not so – he loved it and admitted he had run it up to 65-70 at times. He was nearly caught out by the t/s front brake which worked a lot better than he expected. Since then the Venom has remained a problematic starter. Easy enough for the first start of the day but when it is partly warmed up it is difficult. Tried a new plug, the old one was a perfect colour and not wet but a new one did not make much difference. I am pretty sure it is carb related so I drained the old fuel from the tank (this may well be from Spain 2 years ago) and cleaned the jets as well as I could in situ; there was a lot of muck in the float bowl

plug. None of this seemed to help much so now the other projects are out of the way tomorrow is dedicated to getting the Venom sorted.

Wednesday 31st July 2019

On Monday I rode the ETZ250 to Westbury and bought the paint needed for its tank along with primer and lacquer. Later that day the TS125 Sport was brought to the workshop and by late evening it was totally stripped. This identified a number of small parts which would be improved by powder coating so I popped over to TPCS at Sells Green and dropped them off. Should be back early next week all being well. Fortunately they are largely bits that can be added later without interfering with the main rebuild.

By midday today, the bike was mostly back together just waiting for some of the new bits I ordered from Germany (due on Thursday) and the powder coating items. It is back on its wheels so can be moved around if required. One pleasing thing is that the centre stand now seems to fit better and lifts the back wheel higher. I also tidied up some of the electrical connections which were a bit ropey. Cosmetically it has also been improved with better rear springs, some new footrests, new handlebars and of course it will have a new silencer. The only disappointment was the fitting of a Powerdynamo system. This is one originally fitted to a 250 motor and I was hoping that it could be adapted to fit a TS125 engine. The answer was no; the back plate for the stator does not seat properly and the external pickup will not clear the outer timing cover. Looking at the Vape website there is specific system for the TS125/150 engines which uses an internal pickup. Oh well, you live and learn and in time I will probably fit the unit to the TS250 4 speeder.

In the post I received some pieces of hexagon bar from John Hill which will enable me to finish the chain tensioner project. Terry D has kindly agreed to drill and tap them for me.

Sunday 28th July 2019

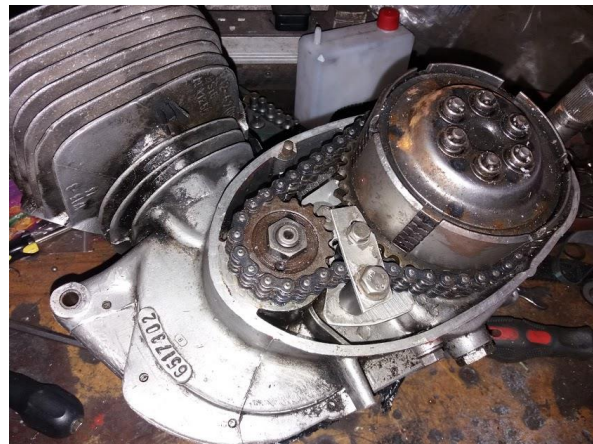
I have now taken the recommissioning of John's TS125 as far as I can without spending money. I don't yet have a phone number for Chris & John so I emailed Tracey, John's daughter with a status report asking how they want me to proceed. That was on Tuesday and I have not heard back as yet. For the moment the bike has been moved to one of the sheds to free up space in the workshop.

Rode the Himalayan to Chippenham Rugby Club on Thursday evening where it was much admired. Next ride will likely be on 1st August to Cricklade for a VMCC meet. I will only go for coffee as Mrs F is in Swanage with the grandchildren and the caravan so I cannot be out of the house for too long especially in this warm weather. However, this does mean that I can schedule some serious workshop time to get a few jobs out of the way.

First task was to order some parts from Germany for the TS125 Sport rebuild. This includes a new silencer and a 56mm (150cc) piston. The parts Andrew Titcombe donated included a TS125 barrel which I plan to have bored out as a 150. This will need two trips to Piston Broke in Bristol which is a pain but I don't trust couriers with things that are heavy yet easily damaged.

Next job was to investigate dynamo on the Viper. I removed it so I could test it on the bench. First test was passed ok as I could make it perform as an electric motor. Unfortunately it still would not charge whatever tests I carried out. I have now arranged to drop the dynamo off with Paul Lydford in Shaftesbury next Saturday as I will be passing through on my way to Swanage.

Another little project I have been thinking about for some time is a primary chain tensioner for the MZ TS125/150 motors. Another of the bits from Andrew T was a TS125 motor complete with primary drive, clutch and a very saggy primary chain. The results of my efforts can be seen in the pictures below. I cannot claim to have invented this system as the basis of such a design was mentioned in MZ rider a couple of years ago and there is an article on the internet showing a similar design fitted to a BSA antam.



There is still work to do as the tensioner is presently clamp by bolts using the tapped holes used to secure the outer cover. I need to make up some long sleeve nuts which can hold the tensioner via studs and provide a fixing for the cover screws. John Hill s kindly searching his workshop for some suitable hexagon bar. So project on hold for now.

Next on my workshop wish list was an engine change for the TS250. After it came back from Spain I converted it back to original spec including the earlier forks and a 4 spd engine. This was a one-off which had been modified to use a 5spd crankshaft and I was anxious to test it. Well the engine worked fine but the gearbox had a dreadful whine making it pretty much unrideable. I have now refitted the 5 spd engine which has done sterling service in the bike over the last couple of years though it is now running a dynamo and 6v electrics having fitted its Powerdynamo to the ES250 Trophy. Took it for a short test run and all seems ok but a longer run had to wait until I could pump up the tyres. This in turn meant fixing the compressor which stopped working a few days ago. Eventually I traced the fault to a broken wire inside the 3 pin plug so all is now well thank goodness. If the compressor had been broken it would have been a serious matter and a replacement essential.

Whilst sorting a shelf out in the workshop I found the spray can used to paint the ETZ250. Its original tank is leaking again and the spare black one is now fitted and will be a permanent replacement. Now I have the paint code I plan to buy some more paint and get on with the job. This will mean taking the bike off the road for several months to give the paint time to harden properly. The bike is entered for the Somerset signpost trial on 4th August which will

be my last event in the WRRTC championship this year – we are away for the final two rounds. Anyway I would like to finish the events on the bike I have used all season so it will likely be late August before I start painting.

Next job for the workshop is to totally strip the TS125 Sport and transfer everything to the new frame I painted a couple of weeks ago.

Monday 22nd July 2019

On Saturday I rode the Himalayan to Charfield to collect some bits from Roger Badland for John's TS125. I filled it up at my local garage when I got back. It took 5.95litres and had covered 130.2 miles – works out at 99mpg. In fact it was probably over 100 as I filled it slightly higher than the previous time. Getting an exact fill on the H is not easy. There is a plate just under the filler cap which is there to stop you over filling the tank and getting neat petrol into the tank breather filter. Anyway still very happy with my new toy. It has now done 160 so miles I booked it in for its first service for 6th August. They did offer an earlier date but I have a few trips planned which should see just over 300 miles on the odometer at Salisbury by that date.

On Monday Andrew Titcombe came over from Swindon with a pile of MZ bits from his shed. They belonged to his late father and as Andrew no longer has an MZ he was happy to pass them on. Richard Warne came up as well so we had a good natter. I showed them my other bikes including John's TS125 and they also tried kickstarting it without success. However they volunteered to try bump starting it round the orchard and after a couple of laps it made encouraging noises. We swapped roles and pushed it with the throttle wide open in case it was now flooded and hey presto it burst into life and ran tolerably well for 3-4 laps. Thinking back it smoked very little which is unusual in such cases. Anyway, we stopped the engine and were able to get it going quite easily on the kickstarter and I have been able to start it that way since. Compression is now quite good so it renewed my enthusiasm to finish the bike.

In the post I received a pair of ETZ125 engine plates, a gift from Greg Moore and the Midlands section. I will now be able to return John Hills along with his ETZ125 frame and Andrew Long's TS125 frame.

Friday 19th July 2019

I picked the Viper up on Monday afternoon and it looked just as good. It is now resident in my workshop and I have started it a few times perfecting my technique. Not ridden it yet as it took until Wednesday to sort the insurance out and anyway, I am still enjoying the Himalayan. I rode the H to the dive club on Wednesday evening as I wanted to try out the lights. Dipped beam is excellent but the mainbeam is like a searchlight. You can see things 100-150yds down the road fine but the 20-30yds immediately in front of the bike are almost in shadow. I need to do some research on this as come winter I will want better lights. I also

fitted my bean bag which was a win-win; more comfortable and a better riding position. Could do with raising the bars about $\frac{3}{4}$ " as well but not urgent.

I had planned to pick up Johns Matthews TS125 on Tuesday but the van decided to go on strike. Green Flag came to the rescue but by that time it was too late so the collection was re-scheduled for Wednesday. The TS125 is now on the bike lift and I am slowly working through it which is proving interesting and, in one respect at least, challenging. I am keeping a separate blogg on this project so will not put much detail about it here.

Clearly someone does read by blogg as I had an offer of a pair of ETZ125 crankcases on



Tuesday from Mark E in Wrexham. This was handy as my son lives in Shrewsbury so he now has the cases and will bring them down next Thursday. The picture shows how the ETZ125 rear engine mounts fit the TS125 frame. It will be necessary to cut away at least part of the existing rear mounts and probably the front engine mount but I don't want to trash the frame until I am sure I can make the ETZ125 engine fit.

Not sure if I have mentioned this before, but I have never been happy with the condition of the frame on the TS125 Sport. It is quite rusty and badly needs some tlc. Also it does not sit reliably on the centre stand – it does not lift the rear wheel clear. Last time I had this problem was on the ETS150 and it turned out to be a bent frame. No obvious signs of this on the TS125 Sport frame but there is something odd about the fit of the centre stand. I found on eBay about 2 weeks ago a TS125 frame loop with swinging arm in very good condition for the grand sum of £30. I have rubbed this down and painted it with Hammerite smooth and it is now in the shed to let the paint harden fully. Next winter I will do a frame transplant on the TS125 Sport. The old frame will then be available as a host for the ETZ125 engine. The frame loop I am using at present is on loan from Andrew L and I want to hand it back undamaged eventually.

Sunday 14th July 2019

Busy 9 days. We had the VMCC West Wilts White Horse Trial on Sunday 7th July. It was the best yet in terms of numbers and I think in terms of customer satisfaction. We finished up with 43 entries though 4 riders did not start for reasons unknown. The weather was dry and perhaps a shade too warm but at least the green lanes were not too muddy. In fact, dust was possibly the biggest issue. I had the results 99% finished by Sunday evening but had to wait for confirmation of machine changes so it was Monday afternoon before they went out. Anyway it is now over for another year.

The RT125 which had been working fine on the previous Friday refused to start on Monday morning when I wanted to use it to visit the bank. Had to take the faithful ETZ250 instead. I did get it going again but not sure how and decided that I could not waste any more time on the bike. It is now back in Exeter with John Hill. Great pity but I simply don't have the time, patience or knowledge to solve its doubtless trivial problem. The Scott is also back with its owner having been given a couple more outings. It has served its purpose in giving me some experience of the marque but the more I rode it the more I realised that it was not something I would want to use on a regular basis. Great fun for a short blast but noisy, and uncomfortable for any longer distance rides (much like the ISDT G5 MZ). I would love to have one but they cost too much to have lying around for the rare occasions when it would be the bike of choice. I had one last ride on Wednesday to return it unscathed to Melksham.

On Thursday the latest issue of Fishtail arrived. It contained an advert for Viper which sounded really good and at a fair price. Best of all it was in Frome only 12 miles away so I was on the vendors doorstep by 2pm and the bike was mine within ½ hour. Rod Rogers has owned the bike for 20 years and seemed to have lavished a huge amount of money and TLC on it. I am sure like any old bike it will produce its share of problems but right now it is immaculate and has a documented history of mechanical and cosmetic work. I am hoping to pick it up on Monday afternoon.



It all happened on Thursday as Hayball's rang to say that my Himalayan was ready for collection – under 6 days since it was ordered! I was able to get the insurance sorted out

that afternoon; in fact it cost me nothing as the credit from removing the KLX250 exactly matched the additional premium for the Himalayan. I went down to Salisbury on the bus on Friday morning and was back home with the bike by 2pm. I have now done just over 100 miles; 30 or so from Salisbury and 70 to Ham today for the MZRC monthly meeting. Enjoyed every minute riding it even though I have to keep it below 40mph for the first 300 miles.

One of the things I brought back from Exeter was an ETZ125 frame from which I have extracted the engine plates. These are now fitted to the TS125 frame so phase one of this project was successful though I will eventually need to make up some proper bushes. I have measured frame and engine and it appears that it will fit but my engine is complete and too heavy for me to offer it up easily. I am on the hunt for a set of bare ETZ125 crankcases to make the test installation easier.

Friday 5th July 2019

Nearly a month has gone by without me writing anything in the blogg. Just couldn't seem to get round to it for some reason. Quite a lot has happened some of which I will probably forget to mention and the events are most likely not in chronological order.

I have ridden the KL250 quite a lot and it may be coincidence but since fitting the LED headlight bulb it has behaved impeccably. Sadly its rider was less well behaved and I took a tumble in a green lane whilst checking the WHT locations. Bike was fine, just a lot of mud and a bent gear lever. The rider suffered bruised ribs which are still giving me grief near 3



week later. Not directly connected with this event, but the KLX250 has now been sold along with the BMW R65LS. Both bikes had served their purpose but did not appeal to me as long term keepers. The money raised will fund a new Enfield Himalayan which I ordered today. This is a dual purpose bike fine for gentle off road use which is all I am really capable of but also suitable for longer journeys and club runs. The main benefits are that it is much lower than the KLX and much lighter than the

R65. Should be available in about 2-3 weeks. The R65 went to a friend who lives just down the road.

I also sold the Triumph T100 last weekend. It was a lovely bike to look at and it ran well but truthfully it did nothing for me. I much preferred to ride the MZs or the Venom both of which are lighter and more fun. The motivation to sell came principally from a desire to buy another Velo. There were two really nice MACs in the most recent copy of Fishtail but I was

not able to go and view either at the time due partly to illness followed by the Cumbria holiday. By the time I had got my act together and got the T100 sold the one in Andover, which I preferred, had gone. The other one was in Bedford so due diligence was initially conducted by email and phone and I did get close to going to view. Then I got cold feet as I realised that the price was really top dollar for an MAC and only a little less than I could likely get a decent Viper. So I have waiting to see if a Viper comes up in the right condition and right price. But see the comments later about a Scott.

At the moment I have on approval a very nice MuZ RT125 which John Hill has offered me. He brought it up about two weeks ago for me to try and keep if I liked it. Sadly for some reason the bike has been playing up since it left Devon usually due to lack of sparks. With Johns help I have investigated everything remotely connected to the ignition system and at times seemed to have identified the problem, only to come back later to find that the sparks have gone AWOL again. For several days it flatly refused to start whatever I did so I left it sulking in the garage. Then suddenly about 4-5 days ago all the problems went away; it started readily and survived some short trips round the block. With a friend riding shotgun last Wednesday it ran for an hour or so covering about 25 miles without missing a beat and I did another 5 miles today. The only problem is that I did absolutely nothing that I am aware of to explain its sudden good behaviour. Not surprisingly I still don't trust it and am reluctant to buy it until I have found the cause and fixed it. John is perfectly happy with this, he has offered to take it back but it's a lovely little bike so I am determined to keep working at it. Suspicion fell on the coil as it is a bit low on the high tension resistance but normally they fail when hot. The failures so far have always when its been left standing for a while and cold. One problem is that the electrics on this bike are totally different to my other MZs so I have no spare parts I can swap out. My gut feeling is that it's a broken wire somewhere in the loom which makes intermittent contact but finding it is proving difficult.



On a different tack, I have often considered adding a Scott to my stable of bikes though never done much about it. Several of my friends in the local VMCC section have them and we often talk about them. Generally they advise to stay well away from them as, though appealing in many ways, they are high maintenance and decent ones are hard to come by at reasonable prices. Out of the blue Terry Dixon made a really kind offer to lend me his 1930's 3 speeder. It dates from 1934 and was probably a Flyer but having been raced at one time quite a lot of it is no longer standard including the 1947 600cc engine now fitted. He reckoned that trying one would convince me I did not really want one. He brought it over a couple of days ago and I took it for a first ride this morning doing maybe 5 miles around the local main roads. Loved every minute of it. The noise is incredible as is the handling and general performance. In deference to it being someone else's bike I did not go much over 50 but it was clear there was a lot more to be had. It is surprisingly flexible and very smooth. There are a couple of down sides. The noise will undoubtedly alienate our neighbours and the kickstart is too close to the footrest (on this bike anyway) such that I bruised the lower part of my leg trying to start it. As you might expect from a bike with girder forks and rigid rear end, bumps and potholes are best avoided and a bit painful if you don't. I have it on loan for a couple of weeks while Terry is on holiday so a few more rides are planned but only if I can master a painless starting technique. Only time will tell if the convince me I must have one or put me off them forever.



Tuesday 11th June 2019

Nigel Percy came up today with his Supa5 engine for a rebuild. I had ordered the bits before I went to Shap so they were waiting for me on my return. Unlike some people who want engine work done, he had partially stripped the motor, drained the oil and given it good clean. Wish others were as thoughtful. Often it takes longer to clean up the cases etc than it does to strip and rebuild n MZ motor. Normally he waits while I do the job but Margaret his wife had a hospital appointment so he is coming back later to pick it up. In fact the job was finished by lunchtime. Also had a call from the chap about the T100; he is coming to view it on Saturday. This afternoon I turned my attention to the KLX250 which had been a bit troublesome in Cumbria. It has always been a bit temperamental at tickover when hot and often won't start easily. On the Monday it was worse than normal and at one point it just died and would not restart for about 10 minutes. Once running it was fine and the battery appeared to be ok as it would always spin the motor.

It behaved ok on the Wednesday but on the Thursday I left the ignition turned on before the start and the battery went totally flat; the bike has the headlight permanently switched on so not really surprising. Jim Gaisford loaned me a 12v battery from one of his bikes which fitted the enclosure. Though it looked a bit small, it did start the bike so we were able to carry on with the ride. We stopped for coffee at Tan Hill and lunch in Hawes and all went well. However, when we stopped because of the hailstones, it would not restart and the battery quickly went flat. It bump started easily enough so we carried on but it happened again whilst we were on the gated road to Dent. Yet when we stopped at Tebay to refuel

and have a cup of tea, the bike restarted on the button quite easily. It behaved similarly on the Friday needing bump starting several times though fortunately it did start on the button coming off the Ferry. When we got back to the hotel it still would not restart on the button. I replaced my original battery – now fully charged and the bike started instantly so we checked the charging rate. It is charging but only at about 13v though of course the headlight is permanently on and that is using 6amps.

Still puzzled by its behaviour. The ignition is CDI so is independent of the battery. However, it does have fuel injection and perhaps this is intolerant of low voltage; when spinning the motor it drops to near 11volts. Today I replaced the headlight bulb with an LED unit to see if that helps keep the battery voltage higher. I am using the bike on Thursday to check out the White Horse Trial green lanes so it will be interesting to see if it behaves any better. One thing I did not mention was that the bike has returned between 94 and 96mpg over the 450 miles in Cumbria and it was working pretty hard a lot of the time trying to burn off a Venom.

Monday 10th June 2019

The bug I had been suffering from eventually cleared up a couple of days before the start of the holiday in Cumbria thank goodness. Still felt somewhat jaded but was now looking forward to the trip. I chose the KLX250 as being the best bike for the event, it's light, has an electric starter and is very good on fuel; Mike took his Venom.

The trip up to Shap Wells was boring but pretty quick, we were there by 2pm despite stopping twice. Over the next few hours all the others arrived and the hotel looked after us splendidly. Despite the rather unseasonal cold wet weather, we managed to 5 days riding clocking up 450 miles. On the Tuesday we took a ride on the Settle-Carlisle railway which runs through some staggeringly rugged and attractive countryside. Good choice as it was pouring by just after lunchtime. On the final Saturday which we went to the Lakeside Motor Museum at Windermere. Another good decision as it poured until about 4pm but did stop in time for us to load the van in the dry.

In terms of rides, on the Monday we were led round the 1912 One Day endure Trial route by a local TRF member. About 110 miles on the actual route which included a number of steep climbs and some of the well known passes. Not difficult with modern bikes and roads that are now tarmaced. It still took us from 10am to near 4pm though we did stop fairly often. In 1912 the riders were all back by 4pm and there were few retirements– they were tough guys with even tougher machinery. On Wednesday we road north of Carlisle to visit Mike Barry's bike museum and then continued along Hadrian's Wall before returning via Alston and Hartside. Sadly the café at the top burned down last Autumn and seems unlikely to re-open. Bill had clutch trouble with his Triumph TR6. Not fixable at the side of the road so Mike & I drove back in his van later to pick him up. Fortunately he had taken spare bike so was able to ride his MSS for the rest of the week.

On Thursday we headed East to do the 'Best of Yorkshire' route which included Tan Hill, Hawes, Ribbleshead, and Dent. It was supposed to be the driest day of the week and indeed it was apart from very sharp hailstorm as we approached Ribbleshead. Only lasted a few minutes fortunately but we had to stop as it was dangerous to keep riding. Friday we had

planned to do the Wrynose and Hardknot passes but the forecast suggested that it would be raining hard by early afternoon so we invented a shorter route around Coniston which was very pleasant. We had coffee at a nice pub near Crook on the way back sat outside in warm sunshine and got back about 1pm. By 2pm it was pouring down and this continued through most of Saturday which was why we drove to the Lakeside Museum.

All in all it was great week which was a relief as we have a new team organising these holidays which includes yours truly. Everyone enjoyed it and want more so we now have to find a venue for 2020.



Some of the bikes and riders at Blea Tarn on the 1912 Endurance Trial route. The approach to this point was steep with hairpins!

Friday 31st May 2019

Busy day. I changed the oil and replaced the filter on the KLX250 prior to loading it on the van ready for Cumbria; mileage 2089. That morning I had Sorn'd the R65LS only to get an email later in the day from Paul Richardson saying that he would like to take it for a test ride. He rode it that evening and decided he wanted it. Needs to sell something to pay for it so it will be hanging around for another week or two. I also had an enquiry about the T100, chap wanted to view it on the Sunday. We agreed to make contact after I get back from Cumbria.

Tuesday 28th May 2019

No interest at all so far in the T100 but the Surefoot stand arrived today and has been fitted to the R65LS. Should have been a simple job; undo the rear nearside engine mount nut, slide on the stand and tighten the nut. Except that the nut was seized solid and in the end I had to support the engine, remove the bolt and replace it the other way round. Anyway job now done and a vast improvement on the original.



Monday 27th May 2019

I have spent the last 2 weeks mostly in bed or doing very little trying to get over a really nasty bug which laid Daph and myself low. We must have picked it up just before I went to France as I did not feel well over the whole weekend. I slept the entire 6 hours of the return ferry crossing not moving from my seat. When I got home hoping for a bit of tlc I found Daph had gone down with the same bug. Even now the worst is over we both still have a nasty cough and absolutely no energy. The only good point is that I have lost over ½ stone in weight and still have little appetite so maybe I can keep it off.

Needless to say, virtually nothing has been done on the bike front and we had to cancel our caravan trip to Bagwell farm for the Weymouth Week. Beginning to feel that this event is fated. Having plenty of time to ponder on things, I reviewed the bike situation and first under the microscope was the R65LS. On the road it was great (though the fuel consumption is still a concern) but getting it on and off the centre stand was a real chore and I often had to ask for help. In truth it has done everything that I bought it for and more and does not figure in any events I have planned for the rest of the riding season so it will be

SORN'd at the end of May most likely with a view to disposal later in the year. There is someone local who was quite interested in the bike. One piece of good news; Brittany Ferries have agreed to pay for a Surefoot side stand which is due from Motorworks on Tuesday. That will make it easier to move the bike around the garage. Currently it has not moved since I shoved it in the garage late on Monday 13th May.

Next on the list was the Triumph T100 which I have not ridden since Cornwall in September 2019. I got it out and dusted it off, it seems to have survived the winter well before taking some pictures. It actually started 1st kick which was a pleasant surprise. Put an ad on Gumtree yesterday to see if it attracts any interest. Bank holiday weekends are often a good time to sell bikes especially with warm sunny weather. Won't break my heart if it does not sell because it really is a cracking bike.

What prompted thoughts of selling the t100 was the latest issue of Fishtail which contained a couple of adverts for what appear to be concours standard MC Velos. I am not yet well enough to go and view either and in reality I need to sell the a similar value bike to justify the cost and to provide space The one in Andover attracted me most largely because it was a lovely Brunswick Green and clearly used regularly. The other is in Bedford and looks really good too having one prizes at various shows. I suspect both will have gone before I am in a position to view but it has raised my interest and I will keep looking. In reality I am a Velo rather than a Triumph person.

Bikes are also emerging from other directions as well. John Hill has decided that the MZ RT125 (the modern 4-stroke version) he bought back in January is not really his cup of tea. I have agreed in principle to buy it partly because I always wanted to try one and partly because it could make a useful lightweight to downsize to as the years roll on. Not up to driving to Exeter yet and though John offered to bring it up I don't ant to risk him catching the bug nor do I have space until the R65 or the T100 have gone.

Yet another surprise phone call, this time from Tracey, the daughter of John Matthews an old MZ Club friend who lives near Bristol. You always expect such calls to be bad news but this time it was not so. Seems Tracey and her husband have converted part of their property into a granny flat which John and Chris are due to move into in a couple of months. They wanted some advice on disposal of Johns collection of bikes and other stuff he has accumulated in a very large garage next to the house in Whitminster. I have agreed to go down to assess things as soon as I feel well enough. There is a slight hidden agenda as I also want time to clear some space in the garage/workshop as I am pretty sure I will finish up with at least one of the bikes for a time. Before I met John he had acquired a TS125 (think he got it from a skip) and he has been restoring it ever since but over the last few years his dementia has meant the project has gone backwards as much as forwards. I would dearly like to finish the bike and get it on the road for John to see – he is no longer allowed to ride. What is even sadder is that John always promised the bike to his son once finished but Bruce died suddenly from a heart attack last year. Salutory as Bruce was younger than my eldest son Richard.

That just about brings things up to date.

Monday 13th May 2019

Well the visit to the Vintage Revival at Monthlery is now in the past and the R65 has another 529 miles on its odometer. Mike and I rode down to Portsmouth early Thursday evening and had dinner with Bill & Matt little before boarding the ferry. It's not a long journey but we had booked a cabin so we could get some sleep. When I went to the car deck I found that the crew had managed to break the side stand whilst securing the bike. No other damage and the matter is now in the hands of Brittany Ferries customer services department to try and get some compensation. By the time I had lodged a complaint and got the damage verified by one of the ship's officers an hour had gone by and I was the last one off.

Fortunately the others (we were a party of 7 by then), waited for me as Matt was supposed to be leading the group. In fact another member of the group had a proper satnav (Matt just uses a mobile phone) which allowed a route to be specified avoiding toll roads, motorways etc so in the end we followed Dan. It was about 145 miles to our Airbnb accommodation in Rochefort about 30 miles south of Paris. Being an anorak and concerned we might get separated I had used google maps to prepare a route and I found that it was very close to the route used by the satnav. In fact over the last 30-40 miles they were identical. This gave me some confidence (misplaced) about offering to navigate the journey back to Caen

The event is fantastic with a huge collection of pre WWII machinery on 2, 3 and 4 wheels on display and much of it enjoying the track sessions. Though we got to Rochefort in the dry it did start to rain later and then became biblical until near lunchtime on the Saturday. Finally it cleared up enough to ride the 17 miles to the circuit – mostly through open countryside to my surprise. We came home about 6pm and had a bbq which was very pleasant then drank a lot of beer and talked well into the night. On Sunday 3 of our number Dan & Wendy on an SP400 Yamaha and Ron of a 1940 750 WLA Harley left early as they needed to be back at work for the Monday. Matt (riding his 1938 350 Triumph T80), Bill (riding a 1968 Triumph TR6) Mike (riding a 1965 Triumph TR6) and myself (1982 BMW R65LS) rode to the circuit again and spent the whole day wandering around until we got tired then we made our way into the stand and watched the track sessions for the rest of the afternoon.

The event itself is very relaxed. Monthlery is a steeply banked circuit and all the exhibitors and visitors drive through tunnels to get to the inner part of the circuit so you are amongst the action from the moment you park up. The entry fee is 15Euros per day or 20 Euros for a weekend pass so its not particularly expensive and there are no other charges levied, not even the stand. We wandered around like kids in a sweetie factory overdosing on the range of bikes and cars many never seen in the UK. Some very desirable machinery was on show and you could get up really close and talk to the owners who were in the main keen to talk about their toys. Though the majority of entrants were from continental Europe there were a lot of Brits present and quite a lot of the vehicles were driven to the event. We passed, or were passed by quite a number on the way down and returning to the ferry.

On the Sunday evening we enjoyed an excellent meal if one of the two restaurants in the village before returning to pack up our gear for an early start. This got scuppered by me as I left the side lights switched on and the R65 would not commence in the morning. Bump starting did not work (more on this later) but matt had brought a battery charger. Attaching

this meant removing my panniers to get at the battery but after ½ hour or so it did fire up. Mike kept the engine running at a fast idle whilst we re-packed my bike and locked up the accommodation – we finally left an hour late at just past 8:30am. As you can imagine I was a bit stressed after all this and managed to screw up my navigation on the first part of the route home. The others kindly said it was due to poor signposting in one of the villages but eventually – with the help of Matt's mobile phone maps we figured out how to get back on route. After nearly an hour we had done about 20 miles only 5 of which were actually part of our intended route! Things did improve significantly after that and my route card worked perfectly with all the junctions coming up as expected. When we initially left I had zeroed the trip but of course all the off-piste work made a nonsense of that. At some point I decided to zero it again and to my surprise when we finally picked up a correct waypoint it was only .2 mile adrift. How lucky was that.

Not having had breakfast we stopped at a café outside Dreux for coffee and croissants and again at the Pegasus Bridge near Caen for a late lunch. We filled the bikes not long before the ferry so we would not need to find fuel in the UK- we did not dock until 9:15pm and it was near 10pm by the time we had cleared passport control. Matt and Bill headed north up the A34, Mike and I rode west on the M27 and A36 to Salisbury then the A360 across the plain. We were both home before midnight. Boy was I tired we had ridden about 250 miles in total on the Monday and I was nursing a chest infection which is giving me grief as I type this report. Overall however, it was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend; our first experience of riding to an event as distinct from taking the bikes in a van. The jury is still out as to whether we try something similar again. Its very rewarding but very tiring and a pain to have to cart all your riding gear around during the day passage.

I write up some more about how the bikes performed later.



Matt, Bill and Mike on the Pegasus Bridge near Caen.



DKW 250cc 3 cylinder racer from mid 30's. Third cylinder is a compressor.



Koehler-Escoffier 750 V twin – very pretty machine and a make we had never seen before

Monday 6th May 2019

We had a good ride on the Moonraker Trial on Sunday. The TS125 Sport performed very well 99% of the time. The 1% related to a refusal to kickstart at the penultimate control but sprang into life with a short push. Its at times like this you are grateful for a lightweight bike. Odd really as it had been starting first kick at all the earlier controls. We did all the green lanes, plus an extra one which saved a few miles on the route and were back by 1pm. In fact if we had not stopped for 3/4hour for coffee we would have been excluded for being too early. I managed to answer a good proportion of the questions and we started with 2 bonus point being a 125 so I am hopeful. Only saw one other 2-stroke, a D14 Bantam. Not sure how many bikes were in my class (post classic) as the organisers did not publish a list of entrants so unsure how I will stand with respect to the Western Region tables.

I finally decided to take the R65 to France so I gave it a clean and a checkover to day (Mileage 41224) Nothing too onerous, just new gear oil as the old stuff looked a bit emulsified and two new plugs. All tanked up and ready to go.

I also had a look at the TS125 to see if there was any obvious reason for its reluctance to start. Points look like new and the gap was spot on. Plug colour was a nice rich brown, perfect for a hard ridden 2-stroke. The plug itself was a little loose but I doubt it was slack enough to cause the starting problem. However, it was a B8HS and I normally run my TS series MZs on B7HS so I treated it to a new one. I also played around with the throttle cable

adjuster to try and get a tickover. This generation of carbs don't have a throttle slide adjuster, the tickover speed is set by removing all the slack from the throttle cable. Thought I had cracked it when I finally got a nice steady tickover but the bike was smoking badly. Then I realised I still had the choke on! With the choke off the smokiness quickly cleared but I could not get anything like as smooth a tickover even with the airscrew almost fully closed to increase richness. Best I could get was a slowish tickover that gradually died. The ETZ125/150s had a later version of the same carb which did provide a slide adjustment. Might try to locate one of these. Roger Badland swears by Mikuni carbs for his TS150s.

Friday 3rd May 2019

Well the Twin Dragon weekend is behind us. I rode the R65 and it performed very well over the 520 miles apart from the petrol consumption which averaged about 49mpg with a low of 45 and a high of 51. The ride up to Dolgellau was horrendous, gale force winds alternating from the LH side and in your face. Character building stuff. We had to make our own route via Gloucester through to Kington as the M48 bridge was closed and staying well to the East avoided the rain for the first 100 miles or so. From then on it was dry and we had some excellent riding. On the Monday we met up with former section member Tony Kay at Devils Bridge and he rode with us to Tregaron. The Royal Ship at Dolgellau disappointed yet again and I am delighted to say that next year the event is moving to the Marina Hotel in Aberystwyth. Today I checked over the R65 and found the plug on the RH side was significantly richer in colour the LH plug. Got it warned up with a trip to the petrol station and then set the idle with the colourtune. Also adjusted the LH side which was also too rich according to the colortune. Rebalanced the carbs and it is now noticeably smoother on the road – running down to 20mph in top gear and pulling away without jerkiness. Sadly I somehow doubt that this will improve the consumption much as I am convinced the root cause is worn needle jets but my attempt to replace the RH one was thwarted. I simply could not get the jet holder to unscrew and was afraid to use too much force.

Yesterday I took the Venom for its first long ride for a considerable time – probably not been used since Colombres in October 2017. Guess we did about 70 miles and the bike itself went really well. Easy to start, ticks over reliably and pulls well and is very smooth. Better in some ways than the BMW. However, I never felt really at home on it as my left foot constantly tried to change gear on the brake lever and my right foot kept changing up the gearbox rather than down. The plan was to take the Venom to France next weekend but I am no longer sure it's the ideal choice and I might feel more confident on the R65 notwithstanding its poor fuel consumption. Still agonising about this.

The Venom did backfire on the overrun at times. This was disappointing as I thought the new carb had solved this problem. Not as bad as it used to be but still annoying and embarrassing. Talking it over with friends it was suggested that I look at the exhaust system which I did last night. The silencer to pipe joint was well sealed, in fact I could not remove the silencer. However, the pipe was a very slack fit on the exhaust stub so I reassembled with loads of silicon sealant at the head joint. Took it for a ride this afternoon and voila – no backfires, not even any popping. When I talked to Terry Dixon about what I had done he pointed out that both his Venom and Mikes Venom had shims at the pipe/stub joint. Mine

has never had one clearly should have. It now looks as though it was never a carb problem – just a poorly fitting pipe. While the engine was hot I adjusted the tickover and found I could weaken the pilot airscrew a good ½ turn with beneficial results. Reducing the fuel flow at this point should also reduce any residual tendency to popping and banging. If I do decide to take it to France at least that is one less thing to worry about.

In the interim I have been preparing the TS125 Sport for the Moonraker Trial on Sunday. It's not a long trial less than 50 miles but I could not face riding it the 40 miles to the start and the 35 miles home again so I am taking it to Finish at the Rat Trap in Stratton in the van and then riding a few miles to the first control from there. Preparing the actual bike was straightforward. Check the tyres and oil, make sure the battery is fully charged and fill up the tank. Most of the preparation lies in what to take with me in the way of spares and suchlike in case they are requested by the control marshals for bonus marks. There are only three green lanes so to win answering the questions is vital. Mike D is riding round with me but he is making his own way to the start at Lotmead Farm. Weather looks to be ok thank goodness.