

What's in the Garage Now – January 2024

The Bikes shown below are the ones currently in my garage as at January 2024. Any bikes that have moved on are shown at the end under "Recently Departed" There may very well be some that came and went without ever making to this blog.

This is my TS250/1 which I bought at 3 months old in 1981 and used to commute to college in Cheltenham. It was sold in 1982 and bought back from the same owner in 2005. By then it was rather sad and blue instead of black but after much tlc and dosh it now looks like new. It was used on trips to France and Scotland and numerous other long runs for several years but on SORN more recently. It was next used for our club holiday in Cumbria in June '15 and Colombres (Spain) in October. Probably the last bike I would ever sell. Don't have a recent picture but it now has a Honda TLS front brake put on to cope with the Pecos mountains. Not used much in 2021, just waiting for April 2022 when it can be registered historic.



Well that date is well in the past and in October 2023 the faithful MZ went back to Spain for its third Colombres rally. After a puncture within ½ mile of the start on Day 1 it never missed a beat.

I had a yen to buy a really nice MAC Velo but when I started looking in earnest I found that good ones were fetching nearly as much as a Viper. As the ones available were also some way distant I decided to hang fire and see what else came up. To my delight the bike shown left was advertised in Fishtail by a VOC member in Frome only 10 miles away. It was a deal that just had to be done and it is without doubt the shiniest bike I have ever owned. Only ridden it round the block a couple of times so far. This bike is only going out on days guaranteed to be dry. Still not ridden the Viper much, don't like getting it dirty.



In July I bought the 1929 BSA 500cc Sloper shown below (though it is actually a 1930 model). It belonged to Bill Little and originally came into my workshop to be re-commissioned for sale. However I found that it had a lot of local history having been owned previously by another friend Peter Taylor from Chippenham who had used it a lot including an E2E in the 1990's. It still has its original Wiltshire registration and matching engine & frame numbers and it turns out that it was delivered to Sleightholmes in Trowbridge on 5th September 1929. Their garage was only a yards from my family home and I spent a lot of time peering through their shop window when I was a teenager. So it was a no brainer to buy it. It goes quite well and I have done three Vintage runs on it so far. It's more oily rag than show pony but I am gradually tidying it up and sorting out a few (minor) issues. Sadly the sweet little AJS K12 had to be sold to fund this bike.



In February 2022 Ian Young offered me his MZ TS150. This was always bike I had admired and which went very well for a 150. It had been beautifully restored Paul Griffiths about 10 years ago and was still in top condition. I have used it for a couple of local runs and on the Cotswold Weekend Road Trial all without incident. But really it is a long term investment when I can only manage a lightweight bike.



I had been seeking a rigid 350cc Velocette MAC for a while and found one advertised in Northwood Hills near Watford. Curiously the owner lived just down the road from the offices where I worked for Safeguard Insurance back in the late 1980's. Anyway a deal was done and the bike is now part of my fleet. I had a problem getting a reliable tickover initially which was finally traced this to a dodgy ATD unit but only after I had spent ages playing with the carburettor. Since then it has been fine and I have used it a number of times and thoroughly enjoyed it. The original plan was to use it for WRRTC events this year but somehow that did not happen and for the life of me I cannot now remember why. The previous owner had problems starting the bike which he blamed firstly on the carb (it came with a new Monobloc) and then the magneto so he fitted something called a Thorspark unit. This basically uses the magneto body to house a coil ignition setup. It worked well enough though his problems were really caused by the dodgy ATD unit already mentioned. I was not happy relying on a Miller dynamo dynamo so I have converted it back to magneto ignition and it now starts fine and runs well.



After 3 happy years with the Himalayan I decided it was time for a change and had test rides on several of the newer Royal Enfield models. I was very taken with the new variant of the Himalayan called the Scram and if it had been around in 2019 I would probably have opted for that model. However, 3 years on and did not appeal as much as the Meteor and the new Classic 350. It was hard to choose but in the end I went for the Meteor and it came into the garage in June 2022. Not a fast or exciting bike, happiest cruising around 50-55 where it return over 100mpg. But that sort of speed is more than adequate for me these days. The feet forward riding position makes for very relaxed riding though the gear change took a bit of getting used to. Overall I am very impressed with the build quality of the latest Enfields and the gearchange is a big improvement on the Himalayans. No off road capability obviously but in truth I did very little of that in recent years anyway.



In the spring of 2023 I decided it time to get a dedicated trail bike and bought the 1990 Yamaha Serow shown below. It was a bit scruffy but cleaned up quite well and has been used on a number of section green lane runs. In fact it came close to going to Colombres.



Elsewhere on the website you will find a project diary for a 1938 250cc MOV Velocette that I bought from David Childs in Yeovil I think in 2016. The bike was eventually completed about a year later and was sold (after much badgering) to my friend Bill Little; a decision I always regretted. Fast forward to Autumn 2023 and Bill very sadly died but before he went he kindly agreed that I could buy back the MOV so it is now gracing my garage once more. I did use it on the Giants Run in Dorset in May 2023 and for the odd potter round the lanes. I have plans to use it more in 2024.



Another bike I had always regretted selling was the 1959 Venom with the MSS motor. I had never really appreciated what a gem this bike was until after it went. Though the Viper that replaced it is superb both cosmetically and mechanically, it lacks the plonking power of the MSS motor. For some time I had been quietly looking round for a replacement. While I was in Colombres it reminded me that I had done the rally twice on the Venom/MSS in the company of Bill and Mike Davis. Mike riding his lovely Venom and Bill on a tidy MSS that also had an electric start/ Long story short, that bike is now in my garage. I have only ridden it briefly as the weather has been dire for weeks. It is now in the workshop having a full service and being fitted with a rack and indicators. It is entered for the for the Somerset Section Twin Dragon Run in April and if that goes well I hope to take it to Colombres in October 2024 for its 3rd visit. As the picture shows, it is still wearing the 2017 Colombres stickers.



Recently Departed Bikes



During the summer of 2022 I convinced myself that I needed a small bike with electric start to replace the CB250RS. I looked at various models, mainly Japanese before finally selecting the Suzuki GN250 shown below. I saw it on eBay and managed to win the auction only to find that the previous owner was a friend who lives in Wroughton. I used it in Cornwall for a couple of days in September but we had to come home early as Mrs F was unwell. It went well enough and was very economical – 95+mpg but somehow it does not jell with me and I am still undecided about its long term future in the stable. Though a worthy bike I think the CB250RS was better – apart from not having an electric starter.



This is a 1983 TS125 Sport a limited edition model marketed by Wilf Green. Not sure how many were made and they do not often come on the market but curiously there is another one only 5 miles away in Bratton and one in Somerset. This one came from Andrew Long in Exeter in June 2018. It was a little tired and not totally original in colour scheme when it arrived. This picture was taken after it had been

tidied somewhat with the headlamp and fork shrouds painted red (were black). Runs fine but not yet MoT'd or put on the road. Like the ES250 mentioned later, this was intended to be a Winter 2018 project so only easy things are being done at present. More work was done in the winter including rebuilding the wheels and it was MoT'd at the end of January '19. I intend to use it for some of the VMCC road trials, especially where its small engine size gives bonus marks. Could do with a better silencer but its not a priority. In 2020 it gained a new silencer and an extra 25cc so its now a 150. It has been running standard 6v dynamo electrics without any problem, but I splashed out on a Powerdynamo system for it in April 2020 to remove the dependence on a battery. Not used at all in 2021 but kept as a long term prospect because of its light weight combined with a reasonable performance. Sold to Rod Western in February 2022 as I had a chance to buy a really nice TS125 restored by Paul Griffiths.

I had a test ride on a Himalayan in March 2018 but in the end decided to go for the KLX250. However, I was never really happy with the Kawasaki, a worthy bike but somehow it never gelled with me. Also I was finding the R65 a bit heavy and thirsty. The solution was to sell both and use the money to buy the Enfield Himalayan which will do the job of the KLX and the R65. Bought in July '19 and only done about 600 miles so far but I love it. Now done 1800 miles up to end February 2020, not used for 6 weeks due to Covid-19 lockdown. Still love it 2 years later and 4k miles on the clock. The bike was sold in July 2022 after 3 years and replaced by the new 350cc Enfield Meteor just because I fancied a change.



A 1956 Francis Barnett Falcon 76 nicely restored by my friend Simon Bowditch several years ago but only used for a few hundred miles. He now prefers his more modern bike so I was very happy to bring it into my garage. It will provide a nice alternative machine for some of our shorter VMCC runs and of course is very light. Something I shall no doubt be glad of one day – but not too soon I hope.



Back in 2019 I concluded that BMWs were getting too heavy for me to manage comfortably I had too many bikes anyway. So I sold the R65LS and the KLX250 and bought the Himalayan. Then I was tempted by Mike Davis's lovely R75/6 which sadly had to go because the riding position gave my shoulder too much grief. I thought that would be the end of BMW's in my garage, but a very sad event has brought the R60/6 shown into my life. It was formerly owned by my riding buddy Terry Dixon and he insisted that I try it out because he had modified it to hi-level bars and a more armchair riding position. He was right and I found this to be one of the nicest BMWs I had ever ridden. Shortly after Terry was diagnosed with Pancreatic cancer and died in October '21. I could not resist buying it. Despite the name it is actually an R80 motor in R60 running gear. A little shabby and the mileage is high but it has been superbly maintained all its life. Love the saddle, very comfy. I rode it a lot for best part of a year but finally concluded that it was too heavy and too thirsty so it has sadly moved on.



In mid 2021 I developed an urge to own a flat tanker so I could take part in other types of event. I was told of the AJS Model K12 below and purchased it in July. The bike was originally restored by Brian Barber for his wife Betty but she never rode it and it was sold to a chap in Bournemouth. Still in superb condition but when I came to ride it I found couple of faults that made me wonder how much he had actually ridden it. The carburetion was dire, and only resolved when I had the carb sorted by Bill Harley. As well as boring the body and making a new slide he replaced the jet block which was from a different type of carb. Now runs like a swiss watch, albeit very slowly as its only a 250cc sidevalve. The other issue was jumping out of 3rd (top) gear due to an issue with the hand gear change gate. I have got round this for now but during the winter I need to modify the gate. I have used the bike twice in anger successfully and look forward to more rides next season. The K12 was sold in August 2022 because I had a chance to buy a 1929 BSA 500cc Sloper with a lot of local provenance.



This is the 1980 Honda CB250RSA I bought from Reg Cox in August 2020 as a successor to the 1986 ETZ250. A bike I had always admired and looking forward trying it out. First impressions are how light it is for a 250. Pity it's a k/s only model. I gave it a bit of a makeover during the winter and its all set for use in the spring when will become historic. Used quite a lot in 2021 when lockdown permitted it has grown on me and will probably stay as its ideal for certain types of run and to take in the van when touring with the caravan.



Finally sold the bike to Matt Young from Shaw in November 2022. Bought a Suzuki GN250 to replace it; mainly because it has an electric starter. Not sure it was a smart move.

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This is a 1974 TS250 which was assembled from parts I had in stock and using a frame which came with a hoard of MZ parts uncovered at Whitminster in December 2016. It is now fully road legal and I have of the MZ Hoard I done a couple of reasonable journeys on it to sort out any residual problems. I was unsure initially what to do with it but I enjoy riding it so much that it will remain and will probably share the

VMCC road trial events with ES250 Trophy in 2017 as they

both fall into the same age bracket. What did surprise me was how comfortable it was despite the low bars. Addendum: The ES250 got sold before the 2017 riding season started so the TS250 was the bike of choice for the western region events and indeed for much of my other Summer riding, being light it was easy to take in the van when towing the caravan. Still the bike of choice for the 2018 western regional events and because of problems with the Venom, it was pressed into service as my Colombres mount in Oct '18 though with the larger tank and the Honda front wheel from the Supa5 in deference to the Pecos mountains. I have now fitted a 4spd engine and the original front end to make the bike as standard as possible. Bike has now moved on to a new owner.

This is a 1956 Triumph T100 I bought in February 2018 from Rod Western in Bristol. He bought it from the estate of another friend Mike Hotchkiss who sadly died about 5 years ago. However, Rod never used the bike and mentioned it when we were talking at an MZ club meeting early in the year after I had been to see another Triumph twin. It starts easily and looks gorgeous but was not charging (dynamo now rebuilt by Paul Lydeway) and misfired on wider throttle openings. The latter was operator error as I found I was setting the choke the wrong way round. However, I still had problems with the tickover which turned out



to be a sticky slide and a badly routed cable. A front end shudder was traced to slack head bearings; now sorted. I used it for the Cornwall Week in 2018 where it performed well and proved very economical (over 90mpg). However, it then languished for a long time and was finally sold in June 2019 to provide funds for the Viper.

The Mastiff was replaced by the BMW R65LS shown and arrived on Christmas Eve 2018– delivered by the vendor Rod Western (from whom I bought the T100). It had been laid up for 2 years in Rod’s garage and prior to this had been re-commissioned by its previous owner after a long lay-up. Basically a tidy and very sound bike once a few niggles had been sorted. It is now MoT’d and used regularly. It was used for the Twin Dragon in March ’19 and a trip to the Vintage Revival at Montlerhy in May ’19. It was sold to a friend in July ’19 to part fund the Enfield Himalayan.



This bike came into the garage in April 2018 as I had a yen to do some more ambitious trail riding. It’s a 2015 Kawasaki KLX250 with a very low mileage. However, it had a very hard life with its former owner and



looks far better in the photo than in the flesh. One of the things I discovered later was that the bike was originally in the alternative black colour scheme. I am in the process of returning it to its correct livery. Easy to ride and very good on fuel (circa 100mpg) plus an electric starter. I took it to Cumbria for the club holiday in June 2019 and it performed very well. Then I fell off it a couple of times on green lanes the last time breaking couple of ribs and decided that it was time to give up trail riding. Sold in July 2019 to part fund the Enfield Himalayan

1988 Honda Revere 600cc V Twin. Bought in May 2013 and used on the club holiday to the Derbyshire Dales in June when it did over 1000 trouble free miles averaging near 70mpg. Shaft drive means minimal maintenance, just get on and go; one reason the BMW never got sorted and eventually went. The Honda went to my son in Shrewsbury but was sold to a fellow MZ club member in August 2016 when he acquired my spare Baghira. I still love these bikes but the riding position cannot be tailored and is just not to my liking over any great distance.



I saw this combo advertised on the MZRC webs site and just had to have it. The sidecar is a Squire custom made for the MZ chassis and has hardly been used since it was fitted in 1984. It's a 1975 TS250 but the engine was swapped in 1978 for a Supa5. Recently it was fitted with a disk brake front end and the larger tank with chrome panels. It has now gone back to its previous owner in mid-Wales after he got withdrawal symptoms.

This is a 1994 MZ ETZ125 which I bought in 2015 and restored to the condition shown. It was given to my grandson in Shrewsbury and I am pleased to say he has now passed his CBT and is on the road.



This is an unusual bike which was on my wishlist for many years but sadly never quite came up to expectations. It's a 1957 IFA BK350 with flat twin (boxer) 2-stroke engine. It was cosmetically quite good when I bought it for silly money but mechanically it was toast and needed a lot of work including total engine rebuild. I got it to MoT and UK registration stage but never really got on with it and it went to a fellow enthusiast in Lancaster at a huge loss. Strangely he offered a Honda CB400N in p/ex which I turned down; in



retrospect it might have been a good idea as I subsequently bought the CB400A Hondamatic anyway.



This 1956 BMW R26 was used throughout the 2015 riding season and riding it gained me the Post War class award in the VMCC Western Region Road Trial Championship. It was very reliable but in my view totally gutless unless thrashed unmercifully. In fairness it seemed to thrive on this and was always reliable and oil tight. I sold it to chap in Bath in late '15 and since then it has

appeared twice more on Ebay at inflated prices with descriptions that were very economical with the truth. It was very far from standard and certainly not worth the higher prices being asked – but that's dealers for you.



Bought in February 2014 from near Reading this little 250 AJS model 37-12 was my regular ride in the Post Vintage class of the VMCC Western region events in 2014. Photo for once does not do the bike justice and its lovely to ride. Have now converted it to magneto as I kept leaving the ign turned on and flattening the battery. Sold to a chap in Melksham in April 2016 as it had not turned a wheel for 2 years.



Another rare bike in the UK; a 1971 ETS150 Trophy Sport. This was restored by Ray Cattle circa 2009 and hardly ever used thereafter. I kept badgering him and finally he sold it to me in October 2014. Sadly it turned out to have a badly bent frame which did nothing for the handling. It has now been rebuilt with a frame from a TS150 which is slightly different but you would need to be a real rivet counter to spot the changes. Having built the trail TS150 I found I used that more than the ETS so it was sold in June 2016 to a fellow MZ

club member who is also an avid collector of bikes.

This is a 1961 Matchless G5 which I bought in January '16 along with a 1965 AJS 250CSR from a chap in the far north of Scotland. I had always fancied one of the AMC lightweights despite their poor reputation and the chance to get both was too good to pass over. In the end I chose to keep the G5, partly because it was a 350 but mainly because it had local connections being registered in Warminster and last MoT'd in Chippenham in 1995 (since which it had done only 11 miles). It is now MoT'd and I have done a few short runs but I am still wrestling with oil leaks and tickover problems so yet to establish if it will be a usable bike or just a garage ornament.



The 250CSR was sold to my friend Mike without me ever getting to ride it.

Having finally sorted the bike and got it running properly, I concluded that it just did not match up to the MAC Velo so I put it on Ebay and it sold within 24hrs. Obviously I did not ask enough money for it.



Another of my mistakes which never even made it to the top section of the “What’s in the garage” page. I had this yen for something more modern to replace the CB400A in case the funny noises it was making did prove terminal. The BMW F650 range seemed ideal so I bought this CS model, the attraction being the belt drive. Got it home and hated it! The seat was so low it was unrideable for me. Within a day it was back on Gumtree and was gone a couple of days later; luckily for what I paid for it.

This is an MZ based special which I put together from whatever bits I could find in the shed to provide a rolling chassis for testing engines which I had rebuilt. It includes bits from an ETZ250, and a TS150. The TS250 frame and V5c came from Alison Cattle in Yate . The forks have now been replaced with MZ teles. In the end I broke the bike up and sold various bits for spares. As you will read elsewhere, I have a cunning plan for another bike to use as my garden test bed.



This is yet another bike that never made it to the status of being in the garage. It’s a 1991 Moto Guzzi V75SP and as you can see quite a handsome bike. It belonged to a friend of mine who found it too tall for him to ride comfortably after he made the mistake of buying it without riding it. I was looking for a bigger bike for longer distance touring and it seemed to tick many boxes – V-twin, shaft drive, good riding position and VMCC eligible. I had it for 3 week’s

during which time I sorted out some of its problems and did about 200 miles but somehow it just never gelled with me. In the end it went back to John who has since read an article about lowering this model to make it rideable for himself.

A 1970 MZ ES250 Trophy which I bought in 2011 and used to try out various ideas, some of which worked whilst others did not. Originally Blue/Cream and somewhat scruffy it proved quite reliable during 2012 and was given a complete make-over during the winter 2012-13. It is now red/black. I have now fitted a TS250 sunburst cylinder head and the front wheel has been replaced with its original MZ drum brake. It has seen virtually no use since its rebuild and was reluctantly sold in January 2017.



This 1979 Honda CB400A was bought on 7th July 2014 as a possible successor to the Revere which is proving uncomfortable to ride due to the lean 'sporty' riding position which is virtually impossible to adjust. This bike has a very armchair riding position and also feels much lighter. The 2-speed Hondamatic transmission takes a little getting used to but is very comfortable to ride. Its obviously VMCC eligible and will be cheaper to tax than the Revere which is a bonus. This has now become my bike of choice for routine riding

now that the Revere has gone. Took it to Northumbria in a club holiday and it went well but like so many of my bikes, I eventually decided it was not getting used and sold it to a chap in Cheltenham. In hindsight I should have kept it as they are now very collectable.



Another very recent new addition (June 2015) is this 1953 350cc MAC Velocette. A bit cosmetically challenged but when I took it for a test ride I instantly fell in love as everything seems to fall in place and perform properly. Unusually it has an Alton electric starter kit fitted which is in need of some repair work but will be

useful once fixed. It also comes with a 12v alternator and Boyer Bransden electronic ignition which makes it a very easy starter anyway.

This bike takes the place of the Sunbeam S8 which I sold a couple of weeks ago – sadly that bike just never gelled with me. The MAC served me very well in 2016, winning the Post War class in the VMCC road trial championship and a week in Cornwall in September. However, I had already bought an MSS Velo which I also liked very well and after using it in Spain in October, I decided the MAC should go to a new home.

This is a 1962 MZ ES175/1, a bike I had wanted to try out for some. It was imported from Romania by a chap who lives in Somerset. It was substantially original and was restored to the state shown winter 2015. I bought a 250 engine which is being rebuilt and there are a few cosmetic bits to source before I will be happy with it. It is now UK registered but I have yet to actually ride it on the road. The second picture is of another ES175/1 which I bought to



donate a few missing bits from mine and then sold. Don't you love the colour! Somehow the bike never did jell with me and it

was sold to a chap in Exeter in August 2017 for rather less than it had cost – but hey you cannot win them all,



Latest addition to the shed is this 1990 BMW K75RT bought in August 2016. Saw the advert on eBay when reviewing what options existed after the Guzzi V75SP (see below) did not shape up. I have had a couple of the K75s in the past and always liked them but at the time they were too new to be VMCC eligible so they eventually got moved on. This bike was only 25 miles away in Tetbury so I popped over to view it and was quite impressed with its condition and service record. I was allowed to take it for a test ride and was instantly smitten. A deal was done and I rode it home a couple of days later.

Thoroughly enjoyed the bike and used it on the 2017 Dragon Run without incident. What I did not enjoy was its weight & size not on the road but in the garage and on the drive. I simply could not manage it safely and it was only a matter of time before I dropped it.



Eventually it was sold in August 2017 but not without incident. It turns out that the bike had been a Cat D insurance write off which significantly reduced its value when I eventually sold it. I have expressed my displeasure to the previous owner but he assures me he was unaware of the situation and I am inclined to believe him. All I can do is chalk this one up to experience!

After the BMW F650CS disaster, I decided what I really needed was another MZ, this time something bigger, more modern and with an electric starter. I had already tried most of the Rotax engine variants so perhaps it was time to try something with the Yamaha 660 engine. I would have liked a Skorpion but having already sized this model up I knew the riding position was never going to be satisfactory. It was



designed and built as a sports bike and all the comfort bits are in the wrong place for me. The Baghira however was designed as a semi off-road machine with a much more armchair riding position so that was what I went looking for. To cut a long story short I now have two, An enduro model with 21/18 f&r wheel sizes and the Street Moto version with 17" wheels f&r and huge low profile tyres to match. What I found out quickly is

that they both have very high saddle heights making getting on and particularly off very undignified. They also have small fuel tanks, an uncomfortable seat, and no centre stand. All in all just about the most impractical bike I have ever owned and I have two of them! The Enduro model is the one I intend to keep and I have been sorting this out first. The rear suspension has been modified to lower it to the point where I can get both feet flat on the floor and dismount with relative ease. My son fell in love with the SM bike and it now lives with him in Shrewsbury which solved the problem of what to do with it.



Well common sense finally prevailed and the remaining Baghira was sold at the end of November 2017. Didn't go far as it was bought by a bike dealer in Frome. Not really sorry to see it go but it filled a particular spot in my selection of toys and I would like to replace it with something similar but a bit more practical. No idea yet what that will be though and with winter well set in there is no enthusiasm for even looking at bikes let alone buying one.



This is a something I built from a very sad TS150 which had been sitting in a garden for many years. I have a yen to do some green laning and was going to buy a Yamaha Serow but could not find one in the right condition/location/price so decided to build my own. Picked it up on 1st January 2015 and it was on the road by 1st March but has been subject to constant fine tuning ever since. The photo shows it on 5th April 2015 it may well look different next time I update this page. The tank is from an ETS159 Trophy Sport and I think makes the bike. It now (March 2018) lives in

Wrexham having been replaced by a modern Japanese trial bike.

This is the latest addition to the fleet which is now down to 7 bikes, my lowest total for many years. It's a MotoGuzzi V50PA. The PA standing for public administration which in this case was the Polizia Municipale. It came from John Hill on approx in July 2017 and took me a while to get sorted but I am now very happy with it and all being well it will take on the role of the K75RT for longer runs. However, its light and agile enough for shopping trolley duties as well. To it to the Cornish Week in Septmeber 2017 but somehow I never gelled with the



bike which is now back in Exeter with John Hills neighbour from whom I bought the 1966 Enfield Bullet.



The most recent addition to the stable is this ETZ251 which came from a chap in Windsor. He had it from new in 1992 and its only done 17k miles. Possibly the most original bike I have ever owned though a bit neglected in recent years as he is no longer able to ride and it sat outside under a tarpaulin. I have tidied it up a bit and it runs beautifully once the tank and taps were cleaned. It now has an MoT but not sure yet what it will be used for. The answer was it never got used so it has now been sold.

The 2001 MZ mastiff is a bike I looked at in 2017 but did not pursue at the time as I felt the price did not match the condition. Out of the blue I got a call from Dave Stavris to say that he now had a new bike and wanted to move the Mastiff on so a deal was done. It needed quite lot of tidying cosmetically but mechanically it was fine having been dealer serviced all its life. I used it on the VMCC club holiday in West Wales in June and it went well but the seat is poorly shaped and makes your bottom ache after an hour or so, more frequently as the day does on. I had the seat reupholstered in October '18 but frankly it did not help overmuch and in the end I cut my losses and sold it to a guy in Swansea. Pity as I really did want to keep faith with the MZ brand but having tried most of the later 4-stroke models, none of them have the appeal of the 2-strokes. The only ones I have not tried are the RT125 and the 1000s. No interest at all in

the 1000s but John Hill has just bought an RT125 which he is very pleased with and I may well get a chance to ride it.



This Enfield Bullet is a 1966 model built in India and imported in 2006 by Andrew Long after it had been restored for him by a local dealer. I acquired it in a complicated swap for the ex Italian police Guzzi V50 I had bought from John Hill. John and Andrew are neighbours in Exeter! I thought, and still do, that it

looks very handsome in its green livery and

mechanically it is in fine condition.

Cosmetically it can only be described as challenged but I have only tidied it a little as it does have a nice patina. I have done about 500 miles on the bike mostly short trips (it makes an ideal shopping trolley) plus a couple of VMCC section runs. The only issue (albeit pretty scary) was a rear tyre blowout traced to a faulty tube. On balance I decided it was too heavy and slow for my taste and it was sold to a guy in North Wales in Sept '18. He loves it and



has spent loads of dosh on it.

This is a 1986 ETZ250 which came from my friend John Matthews in Bristol. He has had it for 8 years and finally decided he was never going to get started on it. It's pretty challenged cosmetically and missing a few bits. The engine is seized (big-end failure I discovered later). My plan is to tidy and repair as necessary and fit a Supa5 engine as this is a special I have always hankered after. Not a priority project especially with the riding season about to start. Next winter most likely



Well things moved rather quicker than I had expected and some remedial work has been started on the bike and it does now have a Supa5 motor with Powerdynamo electrics. Front and back wheels have been re-spoked and the forks stanchions seals etc replaced. Paintwork is still original but overall, it's quite tidy and presentable

enough to ride. I have new front and rear mudguards hidden away in the loft destined for this bike so it should eventually look pretty good. During the latter part of 2016 more work was done on the ETZ including rebuilding and fitting its original engine. I painted the tank then found that it had rust pinholes at the bottom which took a while to sort out so it has still not turned a wheel and remains cocooned under dust sheets in the garage. Its turn will come and I have no plans to dispose of it. I did MoT it in May 2018 and my son used it on the Cotswold Signpost trial without incident. It spent some time on Sorn but was taxed again from 1st January and has been used quite a lot since then. Initially I was not keen on the bike but it is growing on me and may well be my VMCC road trial mount for 2019. Passed its MoT at end of Feb'19. It now has another tank as the rust holes proved impossible to seal fully. For a while I used it with the new tank in its black trim but it has now been repainted red. Used extensively in VMCC events in 2019 including Hereford on the Edge where we won a Gold Medal in appalling weather. Like most of my bikes it was not ridden much in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic but I did use it on our White Horse Challenge in July and the Hereford Section Compass ride in early August. Though a nice bike I still prefer the Supa5 engines to the ETZ250 engines so it was sold late August to make way for another bike I had always fancied, a Honda CB250RS.

In January 2020 I bought this 1970 Supa5 based bike for reasons not entirely clear. It was a rolling chassis of a Trials bike conversion which I thought, mistakenly, would be an easy conversion to a Trail bike since I had a suitable engine under the bench. Though why I need one of those when I have the Himalayan is a mystery. I don't know how successful it was in Trials trim, but I quickly found out that it was entirely unsuitable for road and trail riding. The gory details are in my Daily Blogg – part 10. After spending far too much time and effort (though not much money fortunately) I think I have just about got it to a usable. State. It is now 40yrs old and eligible to be registered as Historic and could be put on the road (it is insured) but Covid-19 lockdown rules mean I cannot get to a Post Office to change its classification.



This picture below represents Stage 1 of the project. In many ways not hugely different but it is certainly a lot more road legal.



Though it looked the business, I was unhappy with the hi-level exhaust system as it is very small bore which may have been ok for a Trials bike where low down torque is more important. However, I felt it would strangle the general performance on the road so I reverted it to standard exhaust system which then left the tank sitting too high and too far back. This is how it currently looks.



Bike now sold to Rob Parker-Norman.

I missed not having an ES250 Trophy and snapped up the 1973 model shown here from a local friend, John Rayment in Bath. He bought it around 17 years ago with the intention of restoring it. He had accumulated a few spares towards that end but never got started so the bike and spares moved into my garage in April 2018. It was supposed to be next winter's project but I could not resist trying to get it running and one thing led to another!!! My intention is to keep it original as



far as possible cosmetically so it will always be an oily rag bike but the mechanics have been sorted and it is being put to regular use to ensure it is reliable. The original engine is currently being rebuilt and the one fitted is a spare I had on the shelf. Somewhat noisy and tired but it goes well enough for now. I have kept

it 6v and was disappointed to find how dim the headlight was when I rode it at night recently. I had a lot of problems with the electrics – having to be rescued twice on trips to Ham for the MZ meetings in successive months which eventually was traced to duff coils. It now has a Powerdynamo system running without battery which should finally lay that ghost. It has been briefly tested in that form but other projects have meant it is now effectively laid up. In April 2020 I finally re-fitted its original engine. It was little used for the rest of 2020 and has now been sold to a chap in Eire.

One Velocette is never enough so I am now the proud owner of a 500 Venom model dating from 1959 (albeit with an MSS motor). Like the AMC lightweights, this came down from Scotland in 2015. It also needed some fettling, mostly carburetion before it ran to my satisfaction. I took it to the Colombres rally in Spain in October 2016 and 2017 and France in June 2017. Still in regular if infrequent use. It was going to be the bike of choice for 2020 but the Covid-19 pandemic has scuppered virtually all riding for an indefinite period. Eventually I sold it in May 2021 in favour of keeping the Viper.



This lovely 1975 BMW R75/6 belonged to my late and very much missed riding buddy Mike Davis. The original plan was for his son Simon to have the bike but he lives in a flat in North London and had nowhere safe to keep it so it came into my hands in September 2020. I have done less than 50 miles on its so far and am unlikely to do much more until the spring due to a combination of poor weather and Covid-19 restrictions. Something to look forward to. Sadly it is no longer with me. I used it for our 2021 club holiday in mid-Wales in June 2021 and found its riding position aggravated my right shoulder to the extent that I need physio treatment. I agonised over what to do but eventually concluded that modifying the riding position was unproven and likely to spoil the bike so it was sold to a fellow club member Kevin Philips so is still in the fold.





This is a 1974 TS250 which was assembled from parts I had in stock and using a frame which came with a hoard of MZ parts uncovered at Whitminster in December 2016. It is now fully road legal and I have of the MZ Hoard I done a couple of reasonable journeys on it to sort out any residual problems. I was unsure initially what to do with it but I enjoy riding it so much that it will remain and will probably share the VMCC road trial events with ES250 Trophy in 2017 as they both fall into the same age bracket. What did

surprise me was how comfortable it was despite the lowbars. Addendum: The ES250 got sold before the 2017 riding season started so the TS250 was the bike of choice for the western region events and indeed for much of my other Summer riding. Being light it was easy to take in the van when towing the caravan. Still the bike of choice for the 2018 western regional events and because of problems with the Venom, it was pressed into service as my Colombes mount in Oct '18 though with the larger tank and the Honda front wheel from the Supa5 in deference to the Pecos mountains. I subsequently fitted a 4spd engine and the original front end to make the bike as standard as possible. Not used from 2019 in part due to Covid-19 and finally sold in October 2021 in an effort to control the explosion of bikes in the garage. Part of its attraction was being classed historic but the Supa5 is now 40 yrs old.