Daily Blogg Part 14 started 1st January 2026 - Click **here** to get the Blogg Part 12A

Friday 16th January 2026

The TS125 is now on the bike lift for a series of upgrades. The first was to remove the 6v dynamo equipment and replace it with a Vape Powerdynamo system which I have had on the shelf for several years. Can't even remember which bike I bought it for, possibly the yellow TS150 I bought from Ian Young. Getting the old system was tougher than I remembered, the cables were hard to get out from under the engine and some things are inaccessible when the bike is on the centre stand. However eventually it was all removed. Fitting the new alternator and main wiring was easy enough. Fitting the new coil, regulator and battery more tricky. I had to make a bracket for the coil and drilled/tapped new holes for the regulator and fuse block. The battery presents a problem as it's a 12v system and the bigger battery too large for the tray. I need to research for a smaller battery but once testing is over I will probably run it without a battery; just a smoothing capacitor.

That raised the question of how to stop the engine without a battery to operate a cutout relay. I agonised for ages over this and finally decided to repurpose the headlamp flasher button for now. This requires minimal changes to the wiring and easy to reinstate if/when I find a better solution. The weird thing I have never got to the bottom of is the fact that when switched on the headlight, all four flasher bulbs lit up. So far as I am aware I had not changed any of the bikes original wiring which had been working perfectly when I last used it. There is no obvious connection between headlight and flashers but somehow it seemed to be linked to the rear end. Couldn't find anything wrong but I did remake all the connections and re-seated the bulbs. Somehow that got rid of the problem but no guarantee it won't recur. Anyway, I put some fuel in the tank (it had been drained when I derusted and resealed it), and the engine started 2nd kick. All the electrics worked fine without a battery, the alternator has enough power to run the headlight and flashers without issue.

The next task was to fit a rear carrier, the one I removed from the yellowTS150; not too difficult. The final task was to fit a 16t gearbox sprocket. This threw up a problem. What I thought was a 16t TS150 sprocket was too wide, probably 428 chain rather than 420 and was less dished. The chain also looked tired. Time to find out what a new chain and sprocket will cost and decide whether to replace or just put it all back for now.

Thursday 15th January 2026

Researching the Transmic product line has identified 3 possible solutions.

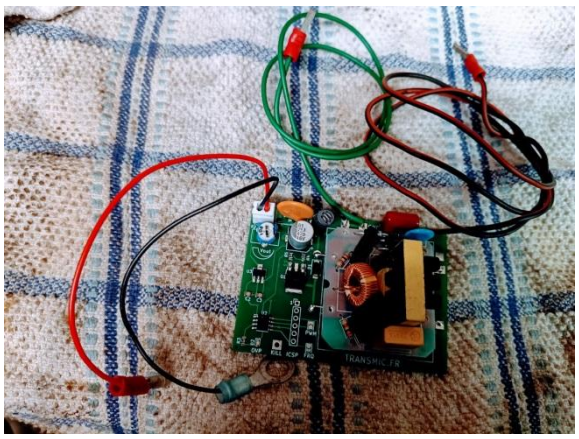
> The AC-CDI v14 which as the name suggests is an AC cdi that is specifically programmed for a range of Yamahas including the XT225. Minimal programming, just select the bike you want from a list accessed through wi-fi. This costs circa around £150 with postage but of course also requires the charge coil to be rewound (£98) or a DC2AC inverter (£60). My previous experience with the latter makes me nervous about this option. The coil rewind though more expensive would mean the bike was not dependant on a battery. This solution would retain the existing trigger coil and ignition coil.
>
> The DC-CDI v14 which as the name implies is a DC cdi. This is a programmable device and the programming looks a bit daunting, but Roger has received the setting for an XT225 from Transmic which will help. The cdi costs around £170 with postage but no other parts are needed as it will use the existing trigger coil and ignition coil. The drawback is that it will be dependant on a serviceable battery.

The TCI v14 which is a different animal and something I was unaware of but is the solution that Transmic recommend; though I am not entirely sure why. This still uses the trigger coil to time the spark and is DC powered but uses the TCI box to fire a normal coil. It's a sort of glorified coil ignition system but without points or a capacitor. These functions being provided by transistors, hence TCI. This system would likely cost circa £200 as it will need a new coil as well. A suitable type that is also small enough to fit won't be cheap. The programming of this is almost identical to the DC-CDI.

Roger has some of these items in stock and has ordered the others parts from Transmic but he is about to go on holiday and won't be back for a couple of weeks. The current plan is for me to take the bike to his garage in Marlborough some time early February and we'll try them out to see which gives the best result. ordered . I have made up the wiring loom to fit all 3 of these devices and spliced it into the bikes existing loom. The bike is now in the van waiting to go. So time to work on another project.

Tuesday 13th January 2026

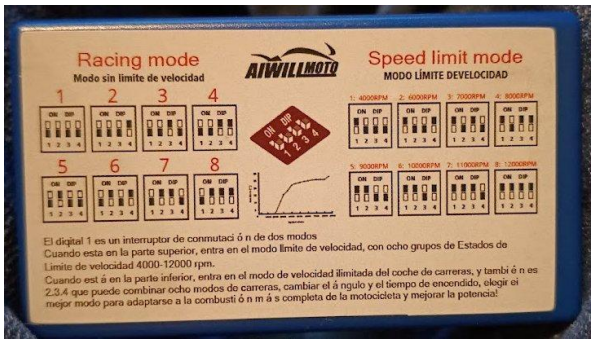
Well things have not gone to plan at all. Roger is able to rewind the charge coil but not until February as he is busy and about to go on holiday. However, he did point me to a possible alternate solution which is to use a device that produces AC voltage from a 12v DC input. Such a device is marketed by a French company with a website at transmic.fr. This replaces the AC input form the charge coil on the stator but otherwise uses all the Serow's standard cdi etc. In fact he had one in stock so this afternoon I went to Marlborough and picked it up. Wiring it in was easy enough and I know that it works because I made the mistake of touching the HV output with my bare hands whilst the ignition was switched on; won't make that mistake again. The end result however was disappointing in that there was no spark produced when I span the engine. Tried swapping the leads in case that was an issue and swapped the trigger coil leads – nothing. So I put the bikes electrics back to standard and as I suspected I still had no spark even though the cdi had previously worked but with too weak a spark to start the engine. B****r I must have fried the cdi somehow though I don't understand how.



So now we are back to the drawing board and I am studying the other products on the Transmic website. They have at least 3 possible solutions each with it own benefits and disadvantages. Roger is friendly with the owner and has offered to discuss the XT225 with him to see what he suggests.

Monday 12th January 2026

The new cdi was waiting for me on Sunday afternoon after I got back from the MZRC meeting at the Salutation. Installing it was fairly easy as the pinouts for 6 pin DC cdi's are well documented. I was able to find a matching set of male connectors to make it tidy and robust. Patching into the trigger connector was a bit more complicated but I eventually found some pin connectors that doa good job. The 12v battery power was taken from the live feed to the horn for now so that it was ignition switch controlled.



The result was initially encouraging, the bike started after a couple of spins. However, the timing is obviously way out, almost certainly retarded and it will tickover very lumpily but not rev up. I was not too bother at first as I had deliberately bought a cdi that was adjustable, you can see the dip switch in the picture and the settings provided are on the back as shown above.

Sadly there is no other documention I have been able to locate so far and given there are only 7 options for 'racing mode' it was easy enough to try each in turn but none made any acceptable difference, indeed any difference I could detect. The issue is probably that I bought the wrong cdi. This one was marketed for a Honda CG125 which I naively thought would be near enough. I suppose it could be faulty but more likely it's not matched to the pickup trigger on the Serow. However, the fact that the bike now starts easily does confirm that the original problem was a weak spark cuaed by the failing AC charge coil. So the obvious solution is to get the charge coil replaced and I will be discussing this with Roger Lovelock in Marlborough as he can rewind coils.

Saturday 10th January 2026.

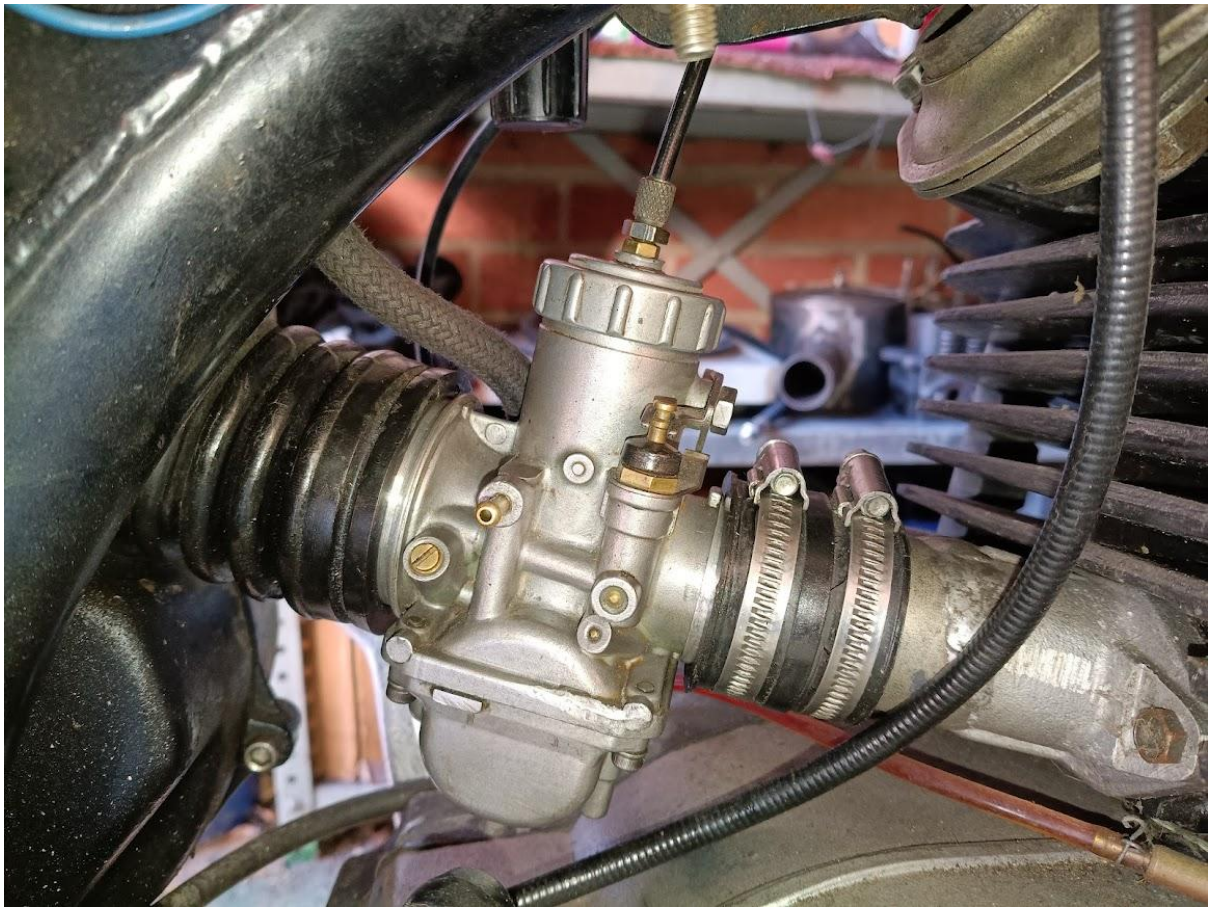
No progress with the Serow, still waiting for the new cdi. The Mitas tyre for the Viper arrived yesterday, remarkable service from Demon Tweaks. Less than 24 hours from order to delivery wish other suppliers were as quick. Tyre now fitted and the wheel is back in the bike. I also re-fitted the petrol tank which is now dry and hardened along with the taps. The only slight snag is that for the life of me I cannot find the filler cap. It should be in the workshop where I did all the derusting but I have yet to find its hiding place. Not a problem for the moment as the tank is empty anyway and I can always borrow one from another of my Velos. Looking at the pictures the Viper needs a good clean and polish. One thing I forgot to mention was that for some time I had noticed a problem with

the Viper carb. Often when you operated the twistgrip the slide was either very stiff or even stuck and needing WD40 to free it off. While the tank was off I stripped it down and some parts were covered in a sticky green coloured film. I suspect that this was the old sealer dissolved into the fuel. Anyway that problem should now be a thing of the past.

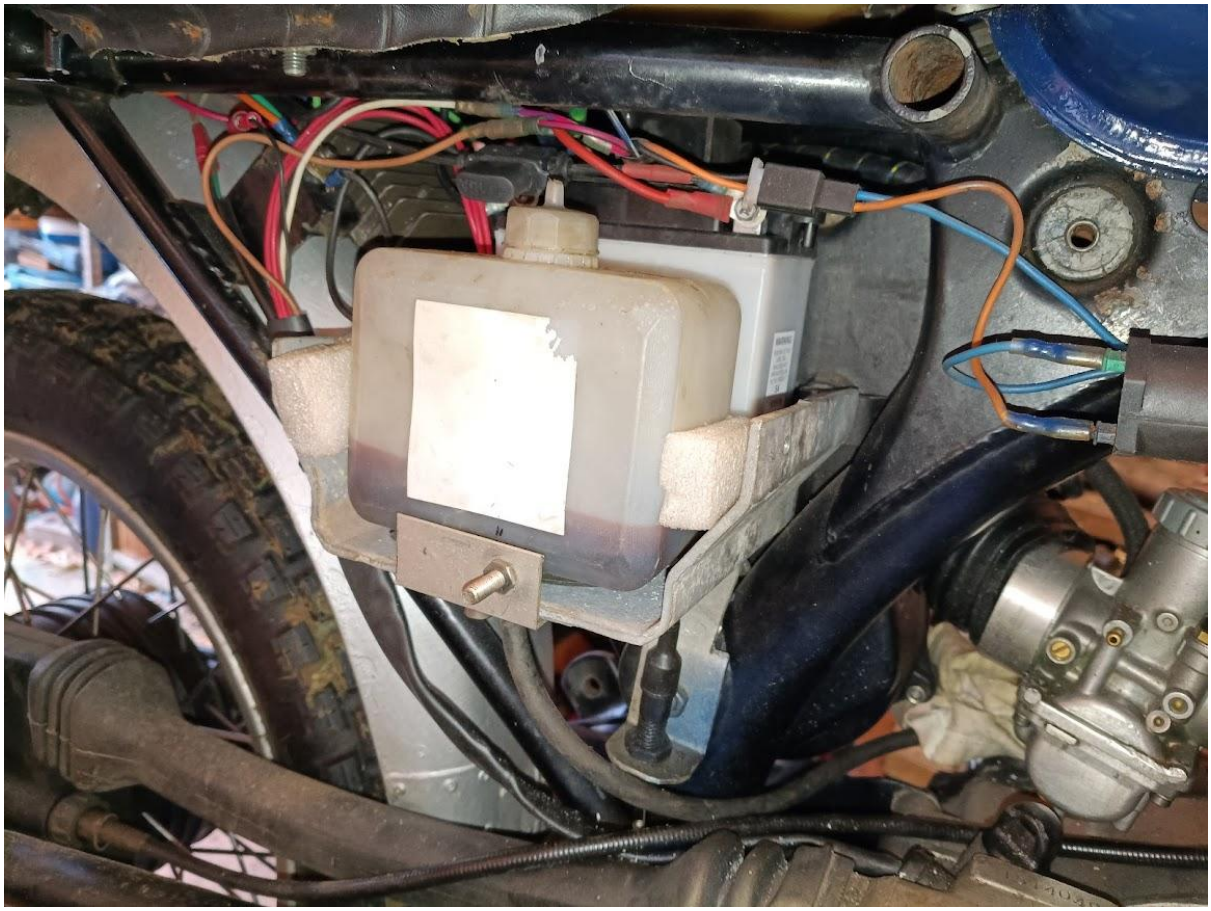
Thursday 8th January 2026

One thing I noticed when I was working on the Viper was that the front tyre, a 3.25 by 19" Avon Speedmaster was at or even marginally below limits. Though I have not used the Viper itself foa long time, I did swap its front wheel into the MSS in October 2024 when taking that bike to Colombres. The MSS's original front brake was quite poor and certainly not up to the demands of the Picos mountains. We did about 800 miles that week so I guess that trip finally wore out the Viper's tyre. I obviously did not notice or more likely care when I swapped the wheels back but now having seen it I had to do something about it so I ordered a new tyre. In years gone by I would have automatically gone for an Avon replacement. Partly because they are very good tyres but also because they were made in Melksham just 5 miles away. However the company was sold to Cooper Tyres (an American company a few years back) who in turn sold it to Dunlop I think last year. Tyre manufacture was then switched to somewhere in Europe and Avons are now very expensive. I opted for a Mitas H06 tyre which I used on the Honda CB400 successfully. It should be here in a couple of days. In the meantime I have removed the wheel and the old tyre ready for its replacement.

About 18 months ago I embarked on an MZ based trail bike project. It started when I bought what appeared to be a substantially completed project based on an ETZ251 frame with a tuned ETZ250 motor. Long story short, the project was never viable for a variety of reasons so I obtained what I thought was a usable Supa5 frame with an existing DVLA registration. That turned into another saga as the VIN number on the frame did not match the DVLA registration details so months were spent sorting this out and eventually getting it registered under an age related plate. In the interim I gradually built up the bike going through a number of iterations of tanks, seats, wheels and engines before it morphed into what is shown above, now legally on the road and going quite well. There are still problems, or rather things I am not totally happy about so no doubt it will change again over time. One of thos things was the carburettor which is a 30mm Mikuni I bought from Reg Eyre. This generally works very well, starts easily and gives a reliable slow tickover. However, someone had fitted a collar on the air cleaner side of the carb which was too large to fit the standard MZ intake hose. The result being that some unfiltered air could enter the carb. Not ideal and certainly something I needed to fix before using it seriously under dusty conditions. So today I removed the carb and fitted it into the lathe. I was expecting to find I needed the 4-jaw chuck (as you do with the BVF carbs) but in fact the intake and output stubs on the Mikuni are concentric so it spun true. I then dismantled the carb to remove anything loose inside like the floats and needles; didn't want to damage anything while it was spinning around. It was then easy enough to turn down the collar to 51mm which made it a snug fit on the air filter hose. Job done.



Another small outstanding job was to connect up the oil pump cable to the throttle. I had been running this bike on 50:1 petroil mix but being an ETZ250 engine it was fitted with a pump. I figured out how to make and fit an oil tank as shown below a couple of weeks back and it was connected up to the pump. Howver the bike had a full tank of petroil so I have been running it without the throttle cable connected to avoid an excessively rich oil ratio. The tank was near empty so I filled it with neat petrol and connected the pump cable to the twistgrip so it now ruins pumped oil only. I subsequently did a 30 mile run with no issues. Sorted. I had also made a new cover for the oil tanl which you can see on one of the pictures above. The hole is to allow sight of the oil level without needing to remove the cover.



Wednesday 7th January 2026

The Viper tank is now pristine inside and even better there was no sign of any leaks whilst it was full of the Deox-C solution. I washed it out thoroughly with some special water based degreaser I had lying around then fresh water and finally dried it with the hot air gun to stop the rust re-forming. Final task is the hardest one, re-sealing the tank but this time with POR15 which is ethanol proof. Its difficult to get it to spread evenly and my arms were aching by the time the job was done. The tank is now a spare bedroom to keep it at a reasonable temperature. The workshop is still around 5°C.

The rest of the day was spend putting the Serow engine back together. No major problems were encountered though getting the oil control ring in place was harder than I expected. Cam timing is spot on as are the tappet clearances and everything torqued down. I was then able to spin the motor to check the voltage output of the cdi charge coil. This was around 18v. I don't have a specific value for this item but a Google search suggests it should be at least 50v at cranking speeds so further confirmation that the coil is suspect. Further research established that the alternator on this model is long obsolete and the later type which can be sourced won't fit without changing flywheel and the cdi plus some of the wiring and possibly the regulator which is now 3-phase. There do seem to be a couple of places offering to rewind the charge coil but the cost will be over £100 plus two lots of postage. The question of whether its worth it arises, especially given that I don't know for sure if it will actually fix the problem.

However, another option seems feasible and that's the rout eI am exploring. As the trigger coil seems ok, it is possible to replace the original cdi (AC type) with a DC type which uses 12v battery power instead of the charge coil. I have ordered one to try this out so the Serow project is now on hold till it arrives in a week or so.

Tuesday 6th January 2026

Whilst the engine was apart and all the wiring was exposed I took the opportunity to check the ignition wiring. The Serow using as AC cdi system with a trigger coil fitted outside the flywheel and a charge coil inside. You can see these in the picture below:

I checked all the wires for continuity and any signs of damage but none was evident. The only manual that exists for the early Serows is actually for the post 1991 models with different electrics so I have no definitive information on the wiring or against which to test the various components. However, the trigger coil measures 568 ohms against and this part does seem to be the same as later models. The book gives a range of 656-984ohms at 20°C. As my garage was around 4°C at the time I reckon its probably close enough. The charge coil is another matter, It was giving 221ohms and it seems likely that it should be closer to 600ohms. So this may be a clue to the bad starting and would also explain why it has got progressively worse in the last 12 months. Something I need to investigate.

Monday 5th January 2026

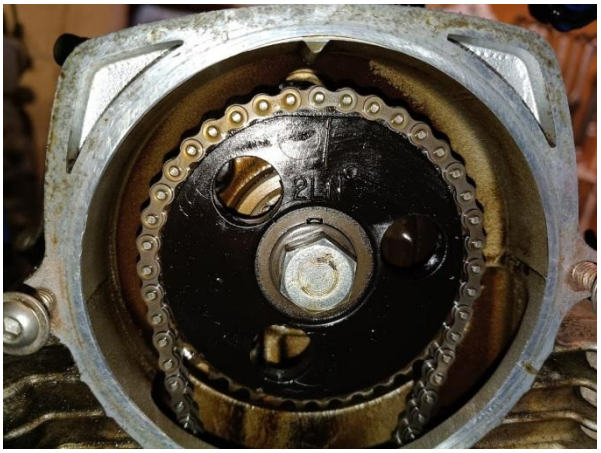
The Viper tank is now clear of the old sealer but has a lot of rust which seems to have built up under the old sealer. Looks to me like the tank was not properly cleaned internally before the sealer was installed. The tank is now filled with Deox-C deruster and will be left to soak for a few days.

The Serow cylinder head is the next job. I tried using heat and mole grips to get the remains of the bolts out without success.Even welding nuts to them did not work, they were really corroded in place so the only opition is to drill them out. Cutting the nuts of flush and centre popping them was easy enough but mounting them in the pillar drill needed more thought. In the end I found an old angle plate which someone gave me years ago that I had never previously found a use for. I was able to mount the head in this at the correct angle and bolt the whole assembly onto the pillar drill plate. I didn’t take any pictures of this process but the picture below shows the mounted head after the

drilling was completed and new s/s studs had been fitted. Made a botch of one so used JB Weld to make sure it was secure. The studs are ¼" whitworth as I was not confident 6mm studs would hold.

Sunday 4th January 2026

Well the head and barrel are now removed, the head causing some difficulty as the exhaust pipe bolts were badly corroded so they had to be removed together. In fact the bolts were so badly corroded that that had to be cut of with the angle grinder. Sadly I have found no mechanical smoking guns from this exercise. There was some wear present which you would expect from an engine that has done 25k miles but nothing obvious to explain why it would not start. The cam timing does appear to be one tooth out but if so it has always been like this in my ownership and yet it used to start ok and even now runs fine once started. So I don't believe that is the cause. The exhaust valve and seat were quite coated but again not enough to explain the bad starting. After all it was giving 120psi which should have been plenty. Before I can reassemble I need to order some valve seals and a new cam chain and to figure out how to remove the remains of the exhaust pipe bolts. The crank appears to be fine as does the small end bush.

Saturday 3rd January 2026.

The Viper tank is still being de-linered (if there is such a word) with actetone soaking. Bit like watching paint dry so I have turned my attention to the Yamaha Serow. This has been an enigma for nearly a year. I actually sold it to a VMCC friend back in May 2025 as I had built an MZ based trail bike that made it redundant in my garage. There will be more about this MZ project later. Anyway, the new owner had considerable trouble getting the bike to start and eventually I bought it back because I felt so guilty about it. The bike then spent a couple of weeks with Matt Young. The intention being to swap various parts between his Serow and mine. Initially this worked to the extent that using my carb on his bike proved that there was nothing wrong with my carb. And using his known good carb on my bike did nothing to help it start. But we hit a snag when it came to swapping electrical bits. Mine is a 1990 model and there was a significant change in the electrical early in 1991. Matts bike is one of the later models and has a different alternator and cdi system so none of the parts are interchangeable. However, we did manage to get it running without finding anything else obviously wrong apart from a weak spark. However, Serows are notorious for having a weak looking spark. So I brought it home around June and just parked it up. Every now and again I tried to start it sometime succeeding, after which it then ran perfectly well. More often failing to get it to start. Even when it did start it was usually only after churning the starter for ages risking burning out the starter and frequently flattening the battery. The last couple of times prior to Christmas I could not get it to start at all.

So it was brought into the workshop for another checkover. Still nothing obviously wrong, fuel was present and there was a spark (still weak looking) at the plug but compression had dropped from circa 140 to 120psi. The decision was made to strip the top end of the motor to check everything and to fit a new barrel/piston assembly that cam with the bike when I bought it. The stripdown starts today.

Friday 2nd January 2026

Prior to Christmas I had been derusting a number of MZ petrol tanks with satisfying results. For no particular reason I decided to check over the Velocette Viper which has not turned a wheel since I did the oil/filter change back on March 2024. I removed the battery which was still vaguely alive and took it to the workshop for a bit of intensive tlc – where it remains on periodic charging. I also decided to drain the fule from the tank as it must by now be very stale. However, I found that nothing was coming out of either tap, not even when I tried blowing through them. When I looked inside the cause was obvious. The tank had clearly been lined with something that was not ethanol proof and it looked horrible. No option but to remove the tank and start the clean up process.

Consulting the internet Acetone was recommended as the way to dissolve the old liner so I bought 5 litres and started the process. It took a couple of days of periodic soaking, draining, washing out and soaking again. I also found another useful tip on Youtube about using the pressure washer to help the process and this is working well.

Thursday 1st January 2026

I used to maintain this diary regularly often daily to record what I was doing, mainly in connection with my motorcycling activities. However for a variety of reasons I stopped up updating around January 2024. Not sure why really, possibly lack of interest, too many other distractions and also because arthritis in my hands made writing and even typing painful. However, I decided it was time to resume the blog. I am not going to try and catch up with all my activities over the past two years but at times I will fill in some of the blanks. Curious really as the last entry in blog 12A concerned the Viper and this will shortly get a mention again.

Saturday 30th March 2024

Serviced the Viper today with oil and filter change at 5358 miles.

Earlier in the week I sold the AJS 14CSR to a friend in the VMCC. I decided I really had too many bikes (10 at that point) and really the AJS did not fit in my future plans.