Daily (Now mostly weekly at best) Blogg – Part 10; Started 3rd May 2019

Closed - Thursday 30th April 2020 – click here for Part 11

Today I removed the standard MZ exhaust and refitted the hi-level exhaust that the bike came with. Main reason was to get the silencer out of the way so that I could set the brake pedal to a more comfortable position. I was expecting trouble with the fuel tank which when I got it was raised well above its normal position and backwards a little. I had assume this was two-fold, to increase steering lock and to clear the hi-level exhaust. However, it always looked odd to me and when I fitted the standard MZ exhaust I moved the tank back to its correct position. To my relief the tank was still well clear of the exhaust and the forks don't clout the tank either. So moving the tank was not necessary on either count – very odd.

The only other slight issue was moving the RH rear indicator as it was in the way of the silencer. With that done I was able to adjust the brake pedal but not as much as I had hoped. The footrest bar now limits its movement. Nevertheless it sits at a more comfortable position with respect to my foot. Rain stopped play so a test ride will have to wait until tomorrow. Must say though that it does look more the business with the hi-level exhaust and I'll probably keep it that way even if it does crucify the performance.

Wednesday 29th April 2020

I had another play with the rear brake on the Trail bike today and improved it slightly but I am still not overly happy with it. The rain cleared after lunch so I was able to take it for a short test ride to the end of the road and back. There were no major problems, everything seemed to work ok but as I suspected the rear brake was awkward to use and not terribly effective. The pedal has to be set high so that the brake bites before the pedal hits the silencer which makes it difficult to operate. I am going to try refitting the hi-level exhaust tomorrow to see if that helps.

On a more positive note, my new metric tap&die set arrived today and looks really good.

The missing 6mm tap still has not surfaced.

Tuesday 28th April 2020

Very little to report today other than the Trail Bike was finally taxed today at Holt Post Office as an Historic Vehicle. The V5c is now on its way to DVLA to be reissued with the change of class. The bike itself is back in the workshop to see if I can improve the back brake operation and maybe sneak a ride on it. The 4spd TS250 is back in the shed awaiting a capacitor so the indicators will work properly but it's looking quite good I think.

Looking at the photo, I remembered about the faded red spiral wrap which I put on as a temporary measure when I first built the bike. This is actually quite a sensible way to tidy the wiring as it secure yet is easy to undo if you want to revise the wiring but faded red does not do the bike justice. I have ordered 10m of black spiral wrap to tidy this up and enough spare for future jobs. I still have not found my 6mm tap and looking on eBay to replace it I got a bit carried away. I have now ordered a rather nice Metric tap&die set which includes a full range of thread pitches so I can work in metric fine as well as standard. Nice to have even if I never make a lot of use of it.

Monday 27th April 2020

Casting around for things to do it occurred to me that I could do a bit more work on the 4spd TS250. It was originally built on the minimalist principles using whatever bits were to hand to get the last of the Whitminster hoard back on the road. In that guise it has served me well for years clocking up nearly 4000 miles including the 2018 Colombres touring holiday. Having now given it a nice shiny tank (well the panels are shiny anyway) and the correct 4spd motor, it only needs indicators to make it pretty much original in appearance (if you turn a blind eye to the fact that all the bits came from different sources).

Hunting through the spares boxes I managed to find all the right bits including most of the correct wiring loom. Some of the indicators were rather sad but I thought they would clean up enough to enable a test installation. The first part putting on the front and rear brackets and threading through the wiring from rear bracket to headlight was easy. I had to make up earth wires for all 4 indicators. I had no brown wire so these were made with white wire as

it's not a colour used elsewhere on an MZ. I had the correct handlebar indicator loom and a new indicator switch so they were soon married up.

Then I hit the first of a few fortunately minor snags. I built this bike with an ETZ front brake lever which was handy as it had provision for a mirror but nowhere to mount an indicator switch (not an issue at the time as I never intended it to have indicators). I found a new correct TS type brake lever with the indicator switch mounting but it has no mirror mounting. Back to the spares boxes and I found a wing mirror in good nick so problem solved. Then I realised I had also used the ETZ type cold start lever which won't work with a TS type brake lever. Back to the spares box and I found TS type cold start lever in good nick. However, proper MZ handlebars are tapped 6mm to mount the cold start lever. The bars on this bike are not MZ and don't have a tapped hole. Not a problem, I fitted everything else then placed the cold start lever and marked the spot to drill the necessary hole. Always best to do this last else you are likely to find the lever gets in the way of something (don't ask how I know this). Next snag, I could not find my 6mm tap so in the end I had to settle for a 5mm tapped hole which seems ok. I can always open it up to 6mm when I find the tap.

At last we had the major element in place and it was then just a case of putting the right connectors on the cables and cleaning up the connections on the indicator bodies.MZ indicators seem to corrode very easily. The bike is set up to run without a battery but you can wire one in temporarily which makes testing much easier. Initially I wired power direct to the switch (i.e. missing out the flasher unit) and tested the indicators one at a time. Once they were all working I plugged in the flasher unit and hey presto – indicators. Not only that but each side flashed together rather than alternately and the direction was also correct. MZ indicator switches work up & down rather than side to side and to avoid confusion I always run mine with up as 'Turing left' and down as 'Turning right'.

Final stage was to fit the lenses to the bodies. Some were a bit scruffy but they polished up quite nicely. Next time I need spares from Germany, I will buy a full set of indicators and swap out the old ones – I know from experience they will give trouble eventually. So a good days work and a picture of the bike to show the results of my labours will appear tomorrow.

Friday 24th April 2020

Rummaging around a box of assorted spares found a better twistgrip bracket for the ETZ250 which took all of 5 minutes to replace. The bar end mirror on the Trail bike was not as secure as I hope so I made a different fitting which is more robust and should stay in place for longer. The front indicators were clearly going to annoy me so I have modified them to be more obvious. Actually it was quite simple, I just turned them round so they protrude a bit more; another job that only too a short time. Then I realised that I had ticked off all the items on my task list I prepared when lock down began. Not a good prospect, I am in danger of getting bored as all the other things I need or want to do are not possible during lock down. I need another project else I am in danger of taking apart and/or breaking one of my perfectly serviceable bikes.

Thursday 23rd April 2020

Quite a productive day with a couple of backward steps. The morning was spent servicing the ATCO ride-on mower and the ordinary motor mower. I had to break the habit of a lifetime and read the ATCO instruction manual before starting as it was a bit of a mystery where things were located. I discovered that despite the ATCO badge, it is actually an Italian product and like all such manuals had a somewhat quaint English translation. However, I managed an oil change and greased a few nipples and pumped the tyres. The cutting deck has never to my mind been quite level despite the shop having it back under warranty to be fixed. This seemed to work for a while but is steadily getting worse. The manual was of little use with this issue, it tells you to make sure the tyres are correctly inflated (already done) and if the problem persists contact your dealer. I discovered the warranty ran out last December so it's now down to me. First thing I did was find the most level part of the lawn and then put a large flat board under the cutter deck to give a firm base for measuring. Sure enough, one side of the deck was about 12mm higher than the other. Fortunately the adjuster is obvious and easily accessible so it did not take long to get both sides equal. I did discover that the locknut was in the wrong place. It should not have been a major issue in normal use as the weight of the deck should have kept it correctly aligned. However, it could lift on bumpy sections (my orchard has more in common with a ploughed field than a lawn) or cornering which is where I have mostly noticed problems with poor cutting action. I gave it a short test drive and it does seem to be better but I only cut the grass yesterday so not conclusive. Servicing the ordinary motor mower was easy, just an oil change though getting the old oil out is a pain. It does not have a drain plug, you can see where it has been blanked off. I guess the garden machinery workshop has one of these suction devices, I just remove the dipstick and tip the mower on its side.

Back to bikes and the larger tank with its chrome panels is now fitted to the TS250 and very smart it looks. Also, the silencer has been refitted to the Trail bike. Not sure if the caustic soda has done any good, what came out was pretty black. Some was trapped at the silencer box end so I drilled a small hole at the bottom. Doubt it will cause a problem, but I can always block it with a self tapper. I half expected a jet of steam to emerge or it to sound like a hubble bubble pipe but disappointingly it just made the usual ring ting ting noise. I have run out of the large capacitors which are used in place of batteries to smooth the voltage and allow the indicators to work. VAPE want £30 for theirs and the Lucas type are around £25 on eBay. Paul Goff has a clone type for £15 with postage but usefully , he did give the specification. I now have a pair to a higher spec on order from eBay for under £4 inc postage. In the interim I borrowed the capacitor from the TS250 as it does not have indicators anyway. With this fitted, the Trail bike indicators worked fine. I still plan to make a better set of front brackets but its not urgent

Not so fine however was the pool of oil under the offside front fork, some of which had got into the brake drum. I removed the front wheel and cleaned up the linings with thinners and dried them with the hot air gun. I thought it was a leaking seal which is odd as I replaced it only a few weeks ago. Closer inspection showed that it is coming out of the bottom of the fork so now the wheel has to come out again so I can get at the 10mm nut which secures the damper assembly. This has (or should have) a fibre washer inside to seal the aperture. I am hoping I can fit one externally to do the same job should it be more than just a loose nut.

One other task to make the Trail bike ridable is a rear view mirror. Previous attempts to fit a wing mirror were blocked by the ali handlebars which have a much smaller hole than steel bars. I found a bicycle type bar end mirror on the ETZ250 which was surplus so removed it to see if I could modify it for the Trail bike. This meant I had to find one of the MZ bar end caps to hold the twistgrip in place, then cut a hole in the twistgrip for the fixing screw and find a correct size screw. Predictably it then went to worms when I overtightened the twistgrip fixing clamp. These are quite fragile and I am always careful with them, quite why this one decided to give up the ghost today I don't know. I did manage to find a previously repaired spare which is now fitted (very gingerly). Finally I was able to modify the bar end mirror to fit the Trail bike handlebars. What should have been a simple job took all afternoon.

Wednesday 22nd April 2020

The problems I had with the VAPE conversion on the TS125 and earlier with the TS250 prompted me to write an article Powerdynamo Ignition Kill Options which is also in my project folder and has been sent to the Editor of MZ Rider.

Yesterday Terry D dropped off some bits for me whilst collecting his MZ spares. These included a set of indicators destined for the Trail Bike and a pair of nicely rechromed TS250 side panels. The latter are now fitted to the 3.5 gallon TS250 tank along with decent knee grips and badges. Only issue is the dents and scratches in the paintwork which detract somewhat. However, even if I had the enthusiasm to strip and repaint the tank properly (which I don't) , I doubt very much if I can get the primer and colour matched paint for a while; so for now it will have to do.

This afternoon I fitted the indicators to the Trail bike. As the bike does not have an MZ headlight, I had to use some brackets held in place by the bolts that lock the yoke to the fork stanchions (as on ETZs). These were made a while back and inset quite a lot as the plan at the time was to use a set of ETZ251 indicators which are quite big. These turned out to be incomplete hence the gift from Terry. The new ones are a lot smaller and possibly inset too far but they are adequate for the moment. At the rear, there was a handy bracket on the RH side (intended for the hi-level silencer) but I had to fabricate a bracket for the LH side. With the indicators in place I could sort out the wiring. This is all hidden under the tank along with the flasher unit and operated by the standard MZ indicator switch. I temporarily fitted a battery and all is working well. I cannot test it running from Powerdynamo alone as the silencer is still being pickled in caustic soda. The noise on an open pipe is unbelievable. Tomorrow's task is to drain and refit the silencer – another messy job.

Tuesday 21st April 2020

Well the T125 was a runner by the end of the day but it was touch and go at one stage. Fitting the Powerdynamo to the engine was quite straightforward and soon accomplished, Threading the wires under the engine then up into the battery box area a bit trickier but also soon done. Fitting the coil was easy until I noticed it was hard up against the bolt holding the air cleaner so of it came to make up a thick space which meant longer bolts! The VAPE regulator is quite a bit bigger than the old MZ bean can and it took a while to figure out a satisfactory fixing. In the end I had to drill a hole in the mounting plate for a 5mm

captive nut and use one of the fuse box screws at the other end. Which meant of course that there was no room for the fuse box! In the end I concluded that as I intended to run it without a battery this did not matter long term so I jury rigged a fuse for the testing stage where a battery was useful. With everything in place I could spin the engine to make sure I had a spark – success. Rejig the wiring for position 5 kill operation – tick.

Then I set to changing all the bulbs to 12v during which I found I had insufficient of the tiny1.2w jobbies used in the instruments. You need 6 and I could only find 4 so the two in the tacho were left 6v – doubt they will last long. Connected the battery and the only thing that worked was the lights. Swapped the flasher unit for another and they lit but did not flash. Went through a large box of flashers (where did they all come from?) before finding one that did the business properly – an old 12v ETZ item. That left the flasher repeater warning , the neutral light, the horn and the stoplight. After an hour or so of checking, playing around and blowing several fuses I had only solved the indicator repeater issue. After lunch the neutral light problem was partially solved – it gets its power from the old 6v regulator cable which is now the kill wire. Running a cable from 15/54 sorted that but the neutral switch itself seemed not to be working – until I connected an earth wire to the engine. I can sort of understand why it fixed the neutral light but suddenly the horn and stoplight sprang into life as well. Bizarre but happy to have a solution.

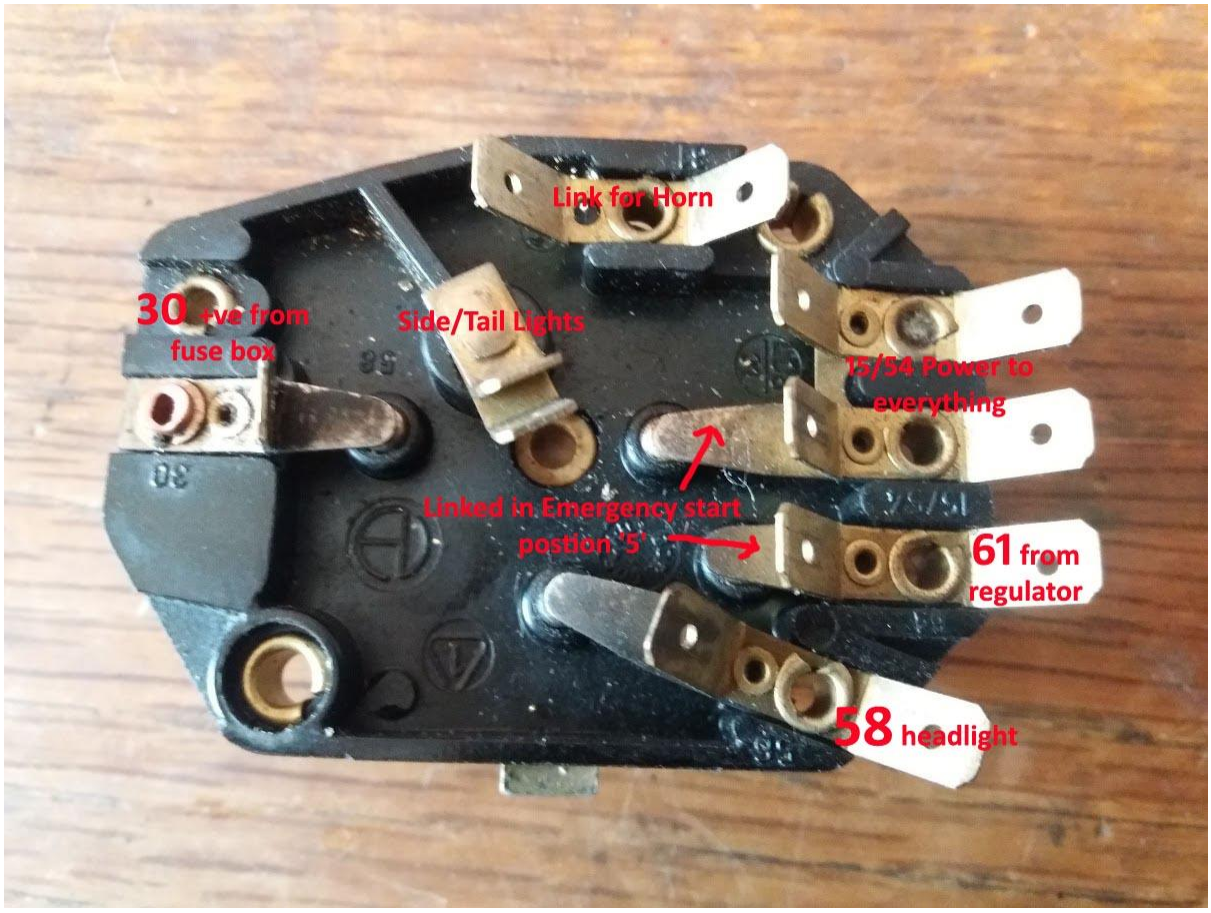
Finally I could try the engine to check the actual Powerdynamo system; absolutely nothing. Fuel in the tank and running out of the tap, good spark but still nothing. Plug was dry so clearly a fuel problem and sure enough the float chamber had only a smidgeon of petrol. Nothing for it but remove carb for a complete strip. Everything looked fine until I tried blowing through the intake connection which was blocked. So I removed it and discovered it had a blockage that looked like a small ball bearing. Then I remembered that I had trouble fitting the fuel pipe when changing to the 24mm carb. The connector on the tap was a lot smaller than the connector on the carb so I fitted a connector from a spare tap as they had the same thread size. It all appeared to work though I only ran the bike briefly and I did feel there was a fuel problem which I put down to a blocked pilot jet. Something that was on my list of jobs to do while the bike was in the workshop. It would appear that MZ fuel tap connectors have a valve that allows petrol to flow out of the tap but not the other way. I punched the obstruction clear and with the carb refitted, the bike started first kick. I had had enough by then so final checking and tidying of the wiring are jobs for another day.

Monday 20th April 2020

Tomorrow we start the 5th week of lockdown. Daph and I are coping quite well so far but it is sad to have missed so many favourite events. Today we should have been riding through West Wales on day 3 of the Twin Dragon and the weather is perfect as it was for the Felix Burke and the Cheddar Trial. Daph missed Crufts and a couple of other dog shows and another favourite – Windsor - has just been cancelled

Anyway, back to the Position5 enigma; my testing this morning proved my theory and I have made the change to the wiring of the instrument panel light. I also connected the headlamp flasher wire to pin 61 so pressing the flasher button also kills the engine. When I get the

chance I will modify all the bikes with a Powerdynamo to work this way. The picture shows the pin allocation on the ES/TS ign switch.



In fact once I fit the new Powerdynamo to the TS125 Sport all the TS modesl will be so equipped. This just leaves the ETZ250 but its 12v electrics are much more robust and anyway its on Sorn at present. VAPE do make a kit for ETZs but I have no experience with fitting or using them In any event, ETZ switches don't have the emergency start position nor pin 61 so some other method of killing the sparks would be needed.

The TS125 Sport is now on the bike lift and I have made a start on stripping out the 6v equipment. All being well it will be a runner again by close of play tomorrow.

Sunday 19th April 2020

The TS250 was completed fairly quickly this morning and it started after a couple of kicks. It sounded fine but I have not been able to ride it yet. One thing I investigated was why ignition kill system was not working. It is wired up to what Vape call the 'Position 5' option. This refers to the emergency start position on the ignition switch and needs the cutout wire to be connected to pin 61 on the switch. That indeed was where it was fitted but turning the key to that position had no effect. To get round the problem for now I reconnected the cutout wire to the headlamp flasher, as I did on the ES250/2 Trophy when I could not get 'Position 5' to work on that machine either. I had a similar problem with Rob Parker-

Norman's Powerdynamo conversion and was beginning to think we had a batch of faulty switches.

However this evening, I dug out the wiring diagram and a spare switch and gave the matter more thought. I found that contact 61 was not connected to any other pin except in 'Position 5' when it was connected to pins 15/54. These supply power when the ignition is switched on to the coil, stoplight, indicators and warning lights. Effectively position 5 is switching the output of the dynamo directly into these devices, bypassing the battery and regulator. However, for it to provide the ignition kill service, there has to be something actually running from pins 15/54 and that is not always true in the way the bike is now wired. The coil is disconnected, the ignition warning light is now headlamp main beam, the horn and stoplight have to be operated and the bike may or may not be in neutral. Tomorrow I will test this theory and if correct, I will feed the instrument panel lights from pin 15/54 instead of pin 58 (headlight) so that something is guaranteed to be live in 'Position 5'. I am pretty sure the same issues apply to my Trophy where the ignition warning light is now the side stand down warning light. In the case of Rob's Supa5, I don't think he had changed the instrument bulbs to 12v at that point and the 6v bulbs were most likely blown, hence no circuit.

Reverting to the Trail bike, it now has the 5 spd engine fitted and runs, albeit very nosily and not for long as the silencer is currently filled with caustic soda to try and degunge it. One thing I was relived about was the fit of the 16t gearbox spocket. When the 4spd engine was fitted there was what I thought to be a tight spot when I fitted the 16t sprocket which made me wonder if it was faulty. However, when I stripped the 4spt engine to fix the gearbox, I found that the chain had been rubbing against output bearing cover and had chewed up a couple of the fixing screws. In part this was my fault as I had used round head rather than countersunk screws but even so the cover itself was gouged slightly. Possibly the fact that the chain was a new HD type with thicker side plates did not help. Fortunately the cover design on the 5spd engines is slightly different and is not fouled by the chain. Always something waiting to catch you out.

Saturday 18th April 2020

The 5spd engine in the TS250 is now sitting on the bench and the 4spd engine partly installed. The chain and sprocket are in place (horrible messy job) and the Powerdynamo system is fitted and sparking well. The only odd thing is that the low tension cutout does not seem to be working. This is probably down to my memory as I cannot be sure which method I adopted to stop the engine. I'll have to trace the wiring but it can wait for now. I swapped the cylinder heads over as I wanted the one with the trimmed fins to stay on the Trail bike. This meant resetting the squish gap, easy but tedious as you have tofit the head, measure the gap, then remove the head and measure the shims to see how much to add or remove. Then refit and re-torque the head to check again. Tomorrow I can jack the engine into the top mounting and refit the exhaust system which should complete the engine swap.

Friday 17th April 2020

The ES250/2 gear cluster did not appear to be damaged despite the missing thrust washer so I started rebuilding the the TS250 engine with the Trophy cluster. Had to dig out the MZ workshop manual as it was having a bit of a mental block over rebuilding 4spd motors. In fact the gearbox is a lot easier as you can build it up bit by bit, unlike the 5 spd cluster which has to be assembled in special tray and offered up as a complete assembly. Initially all went well and I could spin the shaft freely but as I started to select gears, some worked and some simply locked the whole cluster. As you do, I dismantled and tried again even reversing one of the gears and the selectors but that made things much worse. In the end checked each gear individually and found that 1st gear (the big one on the output shaft was immoveable. Tapping the shaft gently towards the output sprocket it quickly freed off and gear changes all worked perfectly. As far as can tell, the cause was the bronze bush the gear runs on not being quite long enough so that the gear could be trapped between the bearing inner race and the thrust washer I had just fitted. I checked the original TS250 cluster and it's bush is also slightly shorter than the hub of the gear.

Anyway all now seems well and I wonder if this issue was the reason the Trophy cluster was missing its thrust washer. I also wonder if the gear whine from the TS250 motor was caused by 1st gear being partially trapped although actual gear changing was never an issue and all seemed free & loose when I dismantled the engine. Certainly I shall pay particular attention to this detail when building 4spd engines in future.

One benefit of my modified 4spd unit with its drive side roller bearing is ease of assembly, No need to heat the case, you just slide the crank in or out as appropriate. In fact the whole thing is a lot easier to build than the normal 4sp engine. Only time will tell if the smaller bearings are going to last a reasonable time. Anyway the bottom end of TS engine is now together. It still needs the electrics and the barrel/head but to keep the weight down, I will fit these after it's in the frame.

Attention now turns to the ES250/2 motor. Initially I thought I wouldhave to leave it in bits because of the missing thrust washer. However, a search in the garage found a box of gearbox components amongst which was a thrust washer from a 5 spd gearbox. It is dimensionally correct apart from width, the original was 1.96mm the replacement is 1.74mm. However, since the gearbox worked fine without a trhust washer, I don't think this is critical. Tomorrow I shall complete its bottom end rebuild – better than having a lot of parts lying around the place and it may come in useful.

Once the engines are built, the next job will be to remove the engine from the TS250 (destined for the Trail bike) and fit the rebuilt 4spd engine. Seems very convoluted but I think it's worth doing. Especially as I am about to take delivery of some newly chromed side panels for the larger tank to make it look much smarter.

Thursday 16th April 2020

I have stripped the spare ES250/2 engine reday to rob its gear cluster. Just as well in some ways as I found that the thrust washer between 1st & 2nd gear was missing. The engine has done about 7-800 miles in the Trophy without any signs of gearbox problems but then you don't spend much time in first gear. I will need to check the whole cluster carefully to make

sure no damage has been done but a superficial check during disassembly showed no other obvious problems

The engine from the Trail bike is also now in bits. Tomorrow I will check it over to see if I can identify the cause of the whine. I am pondering on whether to rebuild it with the Supa5 crank or 'borrow' the crank from the ES250/2 motor.

Tuesday 14th April 2020

Activity in the workshop has been on hold for the Easter weekend whilst I built my 32mm garden railway track. This is now pretty much finished as you can see if you look at my Railway Blogg; so it's time to start thinking about bikes again. Last night I placed an order on OST2RAD for some spares, the most significant being a Powerdynamo system for the TS125 Sport as it is now the only MZ that is running 6v with a dynamo. Seems like the Powerdynamo name is being quietly dropped and the kits are now being sold under their manufacturers name of VAPE. The rest of the order is just odds and ends along with bits for Terry Dixon and John May. They should be here by the weekend unless the virus epidemic is affecting deliveries.

Before moving the Trophy back to the garage, I decided to investigate something I noticed whilst ordering the MZ spares and which I had wondered about in the past. The Trophy throttle is a straight pull device with the cable inside the handlebar. Mine has always been very slack with a lot of lost play. I noticed in the spares list a spring that seems to fit inside the twist grip and I know for sure mine does not have one. So I dismantled the twist grip and worked out where a spring could be fitted. I found a suitable diameter spring which appeared to be the right sort of strength and took a guess as to the length needed. Put it all back together and a result. Virtually no free play and you can now set a tickover with the cable adjuster. You can also turn the twistgrip the wrong way against the spring and let the slide close completely to stop the engine or simply smooth it out on the overrun. Wish I had done this years ago.

Tomorrow is dedicated to evaluating the engine options for the 4spd TS250 and the Trail bike.

Sunday 12th April 2020

I put together the spreadsheet below to help resolve the clutch conundrum.

Analysis of MZ Engine Speed Clutches

	ETZ250 (5)	TS250/1 (5)	TS250	ES250/2	ES250/1	ES250/0
Rear Pressure Plate	05-44.061	05-44.061	05-44.061	05-44.061	[1]	diff design
Toothed Ring	05-44.116	05-44.116	05-44.116	05-44.116		diff design
Clutch Body	05-44.153	05-44.153	05-44.153 (2)	05-44.118		05-844.16
Spacer	none	none	05-44.119	05-44.119		05-844.214

Outer Pressure Plate	05-44.155	05-44.155	05-44.151	05-44.088		diff design
Thrust Bearing	16005	16005	TGL2986	TGL2986		TGL2986
Operating Lever	05-44.156	05-44.156	05-44.156 (4)	05-44.100 (3)		05-844.26

Notes:

1. No spares book for this model

2. I believe this to be an error in the book. A spacer is not required with this Body. Most likely t should be part 05-44-118 with shorter nose

3. The different part number for the Operating lever on the ES250/2 may explain my problems when trying to use it with a Supa5 clutch.

4. I wonder if this is another error and it should be 05-44.100 see 2 above

5. As expected the ETZ and Supa5 clutches are identical.

Friday 10th April 2020

With the Trophy now running properly, subject to road test when the lockdown situation improves, I decided to investigate the clutch conundrum.

I found 4 clutches in my spares box as shown in the pictures and numbered to aid identification. All 4 are different in some respect.

No 1 came from the spares box and at first glance looks like a Supa5/ETZ250 type as it has the long nose and an ali pressure plate but the thrust bearing is recessed so deeply that release arm rubs on the pressure plate rather than the bearing. I think the pressure plate may be damaged allowing the bearing to recess. Also this is the only one with countersunk screws holding the back plate. Either that or it is actually a type 3 clutch pressure plate but with the wrong bearing. There are no punch marks as used on type 2 which supports that idea.

No 2 is the one I had trouble with and looks to me like a bog standard Supa5/ETZ250 clutch. with ali pressure plate, long nose and later type thrust bearing. Both spare release arms work fine with this clutch. Note that the ali pressure plate is slightly different from no 1.

No 3 is an odddball, It has the early type release bearing and a shorter nose, the spacer shown was attached when I pulled it out of its bag. But it has an ali pressure plate.

No 4 I would say was from an ES250/2 Trophy or possibly even an ES250/1 as I had one for a while and it did come with a load of spare parts. It has a cast iron pressure plate and the early type release bearing but the nose is even shorter then No 3 so would need a longer spacer. This seems to be the best choice for the spare engine rebuild but I will have to make a spacer and working out its length might be tricky.

I have posted the detail above on the forum in case anyone can throw light on the matter.

Thursday 9th April 2020

I spoke too soon about the Trophy. When I tried riding it round the garden it soon became clear I had a problem with the clutch. The action felt strange and was heavier than normal. Sometimes it would not release and even in neutral, pulling in the clutch immediately slowed the engine to the point where it stalled even when trying to build up the revs. Clearly something amiss so I stripped the drive side but could not find anything obviously wrong. The drive gear and thrust bearings were set perfectly and the outer cover with the release mechanism had just been recovered from the spare engine where it had worked fine while on loan. The only odd thing was the clutch itself which was the later type as fitted to The TS250 and ETZ models with a longer nose and ali pressure plate. I noticed this when I fitted the engine but at the time thought it would be ok. The spare engine did have the correct type clutch and had been working fine up to this point so it is now on the new engine and all seems well. Lever action is normal and the engine keeps ticking over even with the clutch pulled in. So we have a solution but no clear reason for the problem.

Sitting here writing up the blogg, I am trying to figure why the proper engine had a wrong clutch. Was it there when I stripped it or was its clutch also loaned to the spare engine along with the outer cover. I cannot remember now and maybe this is a rogue clutch or contrary to my belief, later clutches cannot be used on Trophy engines. However, I am pretty sure I have done this before successfully. It also now raises the question of what to do about the

spare engine. I had planned to fit it into the 4spd TS250 as it was so sweet, and recover its current 5spd engine for the trail bike. Until I have sorted the clutch issue that is not going to happen.

The alternative, which in some ways would be a better long term solution is to strip both 4 spd engines and use the gearbox cluster from the spare Trophy engine (which in truth is pretty tired) to replace the whining cluster in the TS250 4spd engine. If successful (big IF as I am losing confidence quickly at the moment) then I have a good, correct engine for the TS250 which has always been my aim. However it's quite a lot of work and under normal circumstances not something I would contemplate in the middle of what should be the riding season. But life is very far from normal at present. The lockdown looks set to continue at least until the end of April possibly longer. Even then it will likely be lifted gradually with limits on the amount of travelling allowed and priority to those who need to get back to work (quite correctly)

Wednesday 8th April 2020

The engine swap for the Trophy has now been completed. Everything went much more smoothly today and it was running by lunchtime. It did seem to be making a strange noise which had me baffled for a while; then I realised it was coming from the airbox. When I put the outer cover back on the noise went away. Most odd but I now need to give the bike some tlc. It's an oily rag machine so never going to sbe shiny, but the winter weather has identified some minor rust spots which need touching up and some polish will help to keep further corrosion at bay.

The engine that came out of the Trophy is probably going to be fitted to my 4spd TS250 and its engine (which is a 5spd) will most likely go into the Trail bike. No desperate rush to do either of those engine swaps; I need to get the Trail bike on the road t make sure it's now a sound machine. Given the current lockdown due to Covid-19, that could be some way off.

I noticed an advert for a 1938 DKW SB500 twin in the April VMCC Journal. I have hankered after one of these since I saw one in Colombres in 2015. Discussions are ongoing but serious haggling will not start until I have viewed the bike and that won't be for a while. One of the attractions of these bikes to me is the electric starter but sadly this is not working and finding anything out about the Dynastart system is proving difficult. Not sure if it related to the SIBA system fitted to Villiers engines in the 50's or the dynastart system fitted to the BMW Isetta also in the 50's. Interesting challenge to find out.

Tuesday 7th April 2020

Today the ES250 Trophy was put in the workshop to have its original engine installed. No major snags so far but everything seems to be awkward and take a long time for some reason. What should have been a ½ day job is only half finished and that assumes I don't hit any further issues. Still there is no urgency.

Monday 6th April 2020

I have been offered some indicators for the trail bike but cannot pick them up due to the current lockdown. I did identify a way to fit the rear indicators and a way of improving the wiring. However, these jobs are best all done together so I have put the trail bike in one of the sheds to clear space in the garage for another project – the ES250 engine swap. In the interim I spent the afternoon giving the Venom a good clean not that you can see much difference from yesterday's photo. It still needs to be polished but I want to fit the oil level transfer first. Polishing it won't take long now that it is clean. Still a handsome bike as long as you don't park it close to the Viper. The new transfer on the oil tank has successfully disguised the dent.

Sunday 5th April 2020

As a change, I decided to give the Velocette Viper a clean today. It is probably not quite as shiney as when I first bought it but far and away the shiniest of my bikes and it started third kick. With regular use I am pretty sure I could get it running first kick. The faint rubbing noise is still there and I removed the outer dynamo drive cover. There was evidence of rubbing inside but I think this is historic as the noise remained even with the cover still off. Ho hum, more investigation needed.

Flushed with enthusiasm (and sore fingers) I got he Venom out and boy did it look tatty in comparison to the Viper yet until now has always seemed a tidy bike. The picture below belies this as they often do – flattering the Venom and understating the Viper. In the flesh the difference is remarkable. Tomorrow I will have a go at cleaning and polishing it but it will never be as shiny as the Viper. I also need to fit the Oil level transfer, which will hopefully disguise the dent in the tank. This only came to light when it was powder coated a few weeks ago. It must have been filled and painted over previously.

Saturday 4th April 2020

It struck me after I had tried the smaller blue tank that the original white tank should also fit on the forward mounting and sure enough it did. The rear connection is now in the wrong place but it was easy enough to drill and tap 6mm bolts to hold it to the frame and the result is below, Saves me making a decision about painting the other tank anyway. I have also modified the seat fixings so that it now fits snugly against the rear of the tank

I think I have just about exhausted all the possibilities with respect to the petrol tank and seat. This picture is now my screen saver so I can ponder over which version to go with.

Today I made a start on the wiring in part necessitated because the headlight stopped working. What a rats nest and all bound up with ordinary insulation tape so well sticky. The loom appears to be from a Japanese bike but the wires have not been trimmed to length so all the excess is coiled up in various places and of course the clours are not MZ standard. I have now dismantled it totally and rebuilt the loom with just the number and lengths actually needed for the job. It is minimalistic, there is no lighting switch and no sidelight. The headlight and rear light are permanently on though the dipswitch operates and is in its normal position. I added a neutral warning light as with the 4spd box it is often difficult to tell when it's actually in neutral. No battery, current comes from the Powerdynamo but obviously only when the engine is running. Not totally happy with my workmanship as the wire is old and will not solder so there are more choc strips than I like. If I keep the bike I will probably replace it all with new wire. I retained the ignition switch which just earths the low tension side of the coil as a security measure and the ign cut-out on the handlebar. Indicators would be desirable but I could not find anything suitable in my electrical spares box nor could I see any obvious place to fit them at the rear – so a job for another day.

Thursday 2nd April 2020

Out of interest I have now tried the smaller tank currently fitted to my 4spd TS250. This was an option at one time and appears in the spares book but mine is the only one Ihave seen in

the flesh. The shape is identical to the TS125 tank but it has the correct bottom fitting for the 250 frame. I cannot make my mind up which looks best but the smaller tank did emphasise the big gap between seat and tank so I have been examining the fittings to see how easy it would be to move the seat forward. In the picture it is only loosely held in position but does look better.

I also gave the exhaust system a further clean up yesterday and sprayed pipe and silencer with silver hi-temp exhaust paint. Not sure in hindsight that black would have been better but regardless it is certainly better than rust. I still need to clean out the silencer but that wil have top wait until I can get some caustic soda. Despite my reservations about the effectiveness of this product I will give it a try before resorting to cutting it open.

Since I am now pretty much wedded to the idea of a low level exhaust, I removed the remaining brackets used to retain the hi-level exhaust. This revealed a bracket in what appeared to be an ideal location for the silencer rear support rod. The picture shows that this does work but on balance I prefer the forward mounting I made on Tuesday and will revert to that at some point.

I had to move bikes around to get at the 4spd TS250 so I decided to unmothball the Viper ready to give it a checkover, clean and polish. Could not resist kicking it over and after a few false starts it burst into life and sounds lovely. There was however a strange rubbing noise which I don't recall noticing previously. It seems to be coming from the dynamo or primary

chain area. Since the only work I have done on the bike was to fit the rebuilt dynamo I will start there when I investigate. Not overly concerned and it surely is a stunning bike.

The TS125 Sport also saw the light of day and needed a battery charge. I did get it going eventually but it seems to be suffering from fuel starvation and was very reluctant to pick up. However, that also is a job for another day and it is back in the shed for now under blankets. That the trouble with these old bikes, always something needs doing.

Tuesday 31st March 2020

The new model locomotive has occupied most of the last couple of days but today it was the Trail bike's turn again. I spent the morning tidying up some of the shelves in the workshop and reorganising things so that as far as possible all parts of common type are in the same box or boxes rather than being mixed up and scattered all over the place. The net result was quite pleasing as very little got thrown away, yet the garage shelves are more accessible and there is empty shelf space on the workshop shelves. Ready for more clutter no doubt. Anyway whilst doing this I came across the TS250 petrol tank so decided to make this afternoon's task getting it to fit. The front mounting for the current (TS125) tank is something a PO has welded in place and though similar in design is too far back for the TS250 tank. I spent ages pondering how to overcome this problem but in the end it was quite simple and did not require any further mods to the frame or removal of the current front fixing.

The PO had cut of the original front lugs, which are just a piece of 10mm rod but then drilled right through the frame at the same point to provide a fixing for the horn. So all I had to do was use a length of 6mm studding with double bolts either side and as everyone knows 6mm nuts need a 10mm spanner. Job done, but it did take most of the afternoon to figure it out.

Personally I think it looks better as it does not leave a large gap at the bottom or the front exposing much of the frame. Curiously, the forks still clear the tank even with their extended lock. However, I am not sure if there would be enough clearance for the hi-level exhaust – not that it matters to me as I plan to stick with the standard exhaust system whilst in my ownership. I will keep all the bits I removed so if I sell the bike the new owner can make his/her own decisions. I have done nothing that prevents it being put back exactly as it was when it entered my workshop. Probably not easy to see in the photo, but it now has a height adjuster for the brake pedal. In keeping with my philosophy; it's very simple, just a piece of 30mm plastic rod 15, wide with a 6mm hole drilled off-centre; fixed by the rear cover screw.

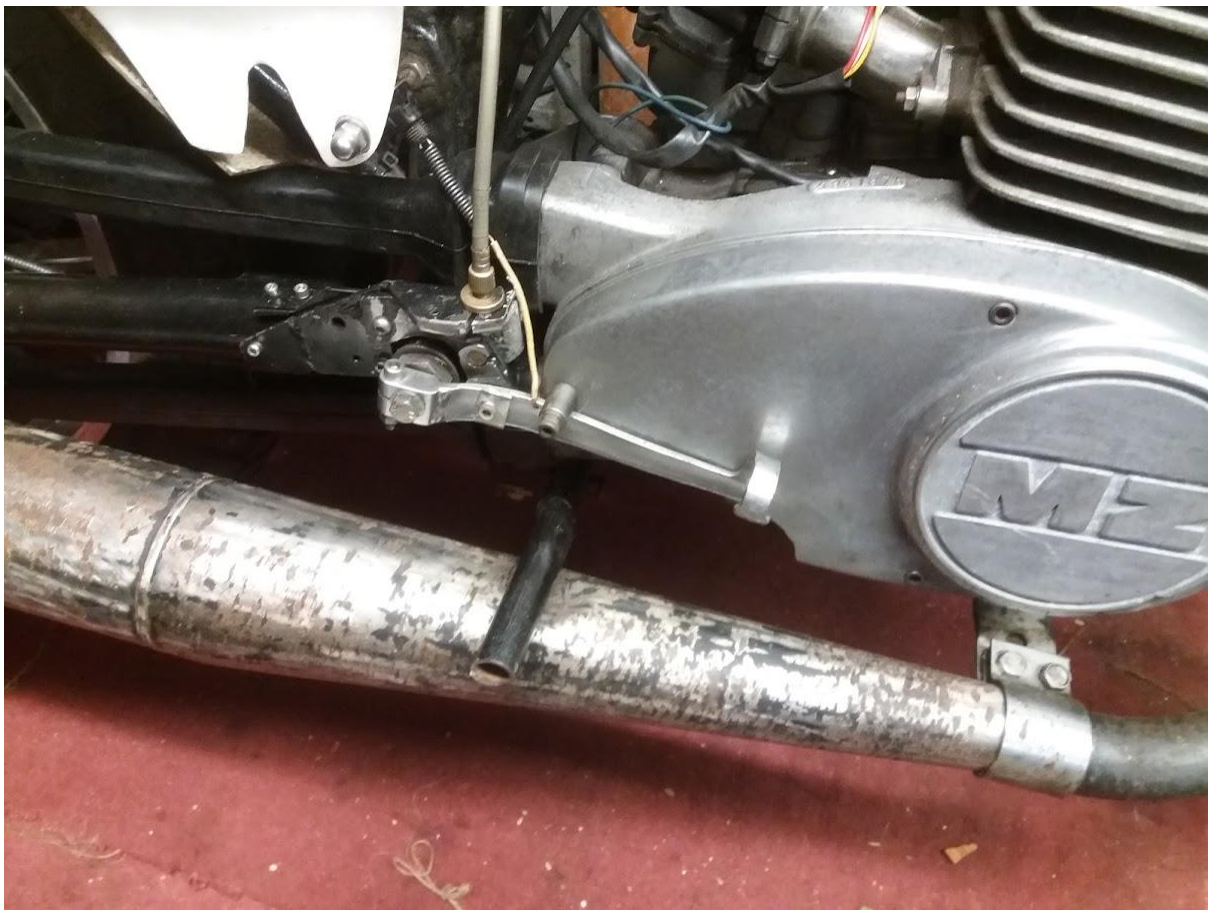
If it all still looks good tomorrow, I will prep the tank ready to paint it white. As luck would have it, there is a near full rattle can of gloss white cellulose on the shelf. The only downside to today was that my memory clearly played tricks as I thought I had a bottle of caustic soda to use on the blocked silencer. Found two bottles of Spirits of Salts but no CS. Don't think the lockdown rules will allow me to do shopping for that – dammit. Also tomorrow is 1st April and in a perfect world I would have been in the post office at 0900 to register the bike as historic. That's not going to happen either and will have to wait until the rules are relaxed a bit. Annoying but I cannot ride the bike yet anyway due to the lockdown. This is one of those things that has to be done at a post office for some reason; not on-line, not over the phone and not by post.

Now I am beginning to wonder about fitting the standard airbox, battery cradle and cover. Sadly my tidying up efforts today only found a battery side cover for a TS250. I did find the relevant bits for at ETZ251. They don't fit as far as I know but might be worth a try...

Saturday 27th March 2020

A lot has changed in the last 10 days. We are now in total lockdown because of the Covid-19 virus and have been for over a week. Only allowed out of the house once a day for exercise and no driving for leisure or pleasure, just to get to the shops or medical emergencies. In fact as over 70s we are not supposed to go out at all but who would walk the dogs or get our groceries. Worse still its me that has to do the shopping as there is no way Daph could stand for an hour or more in a queue waiting to get into the Supermarket. Let's hope things ease of a bit as people begin to realise that its not necessary to panic buy.

Anyway, being confined to home has meant lots of workshop time without the guilt complex. Most of the time has been spent working on the Trail bike. I had two goes at improving the rigidity of the rear brake lever assembly. The first using the existing parts but beefing it all up. Not really the success I was hoping for; still not rigid enough and the pedal was awkward. What it really needed was a new longer lever tucked in closer to the s/arm. Then I had a brainwave, why not try a gearlever. Well not an easy conversion but it finally worked out and the result is below:



You may notice in the picture a different exhaust. I am not convinced the hi-level exhaust the bike came with is going to be satisfactory long term. I think it will be overly restrictive

and the flexible part above the head is already leaking. Plus of course it's a one-off and should it rust through or fail in any other way it's back to the drawing board. So I decided to see if it was possible to fit a standard exhaust system using old parts I had lying around. The picture shows the result but it was not straightforward as explained later:

There were two problems, the first was the standard TS250 exhaust pipe. No way could I get a decent line for the system using this part as the footrest was in the way. The second problem was finding somewhere to mount the rear strut as the part of the rear subframe it normally attaches to is another of the bits removed by a PO. The first issue was resolved by using an ES250 pipe which sits a little lower. The footrest is still a slight issue solved temporarily somewhat crudely by tapping a dent in the silencer. I plan to raise the footrest by about 3/8" with spacers. To provide a top mount I drilled and tapped 8mm in the bracket just in front of the shock absorber top mount. As its quite thin metal I drilled right through to the tube the other side and put in a long stud rather than use a bolt. Overall, I am quite pleased with the end result. I may stick with the hi-level system to start with but at least I know I have another option.

The silencer was bequeathed to me by Rob P-N when he was moving house. It was seriously cosmetically challenged but a couple of hours with rotary wire brushes improved it to the point where I could paint it with hi-temp exhaust paint as I will have to do with the pipe. The other issue is that it is known to be at least partially blocked so I am considering ways to clean it. Never had much success with caustic soda so I may well cut it open. Consulting on this at the moment.

Assuming the bike is now fundamentally road worthy (proving which could be some way of given the Covid-19 lockdown), there are at least two other things I plan to tackle. One is the petrol tank which is from a TS125 so only 2.5 gallons and its set too far back to give better steering lock. Both these features make sense for a trials bike but not for a road/trail bike. The other thing is the wiring which is a mess and the switches make no sense. The dip switch is the on-off switch and the indicator switch is the dip switch – not very logical. I think in essence I am slowly putting this bike back the way MZ designed it – sad really.

Wednesday 18th March 2020

I think the pictures say it all. Very pleased with the way it has turned out and I test rode it round the garden this afternoon. A few things I am not totally happy about and the cosmetics still need attention but it does actually work:

Possibly does not look too much different to how it arrived but this is now a bike you can sensibly and legally ride on the road with a reasonable off road capability. As collected it was a purely a trials bike.

Things still on the todo list include:

Fabricating a stiffer cable stop for the rear brake. Fitting an original TS250 petrol tank. Fitting a16t gearbox sprocket. Redoing the wiring loom. Fitting a 5spd engine. None of these are critical at this point and doubtless when I get it on the road I will find other things needing attention. The big question is do I keep it or move it on?

Tuesday 17th March 2020

St Patricks Day, not that it matters much to me as I am not Irish. The Trail bike is now pretty much back together. The s/arm looks very smart, so much so that I had to give the side stand a make-over as well. Not sure what it was painted with previously but one part needed a serious amount of heat to get rid of the paint. Fitting it was a struggle as it has actually been fitted the wrong way round which means the securing bolt is under the spring so you cannot use the stand itself as the level. Got there in the end without too much spilt blood or bad language. The next thing which gave trouble was the spaced on the rear spindle. It was too long and so were the 5 others I found in the spares box. Very odd as I know I have come across narrower ones in the past which needed washer to pad them out. Anyway it was easy enough to turn off 5mm to make one fit.

With the 18t gearbox sprocket and a 130 row chain, the rear tyre has about ½" clearance from the s/arm cross piece. This is fine as I plan to fit a 16 or 17t sprocket and the chain is brand new so lots of adjustment available. My newly fabricated cbale stop bracket was a litte disappointing as it does flex more than I was hoping for. It does work but I will need to revisit this at some point. Now that the government has told us oldies to self-isolate because of the Corona Virus scare, I can foresee lots of workshop time without feeling guilty.

The angle grinder and the welding torch came into play to reshape the rear brake pedal which is now a better fit. I have also devised a very simple method of limiting its upward travel by extending the screw holding the rear of the timing cover. Initially the brake did not want to pull off properly but I found a suitable

spring to fit between the rear cable stop and the brake arm which has solved the problem quite neatly. So flexing apart, we have a neat rear brake arrangement. You can see the chain rubbers are now standard length and also that I need to paint the brake lever. I will do this when the bike is back on its wheels as I also want to paint the footrest assembly and at present the scissor jack is in the way. While its on its wheels, if it stays dry tomorrow, I will give it a short test ride and hope for a better result than the previous attempt.

This is the Loobman oil reservoir fitted to the Himalayan plus the delivery to the chain. It feeds both sides of the sprocket and then runs down to the inside of the rollers. At least that is the theory. Only time will tell if it actually works. To operate you hold down the button on the top of the reservoir for a few seconds. Not sure how many – need to read the instructions.

Monday 16th March 2020

I did get a rather better ETZ250 s/arm from Ollie on Saturday as well as a look round his workshop and sheds. His Dad is into projects as well and has built an awesome 500cc twin Supa5. It was tucked away in a corner and not too accessible so I did not get a good look or a picture. Apparently it runs and is nearly finished, just trying to sort out the dynamo charging as the second set of points it needs get in the way of the brushes.

Anyway the second s/arm was missing the rubber buses and steel inserts so I had to hunt round to find some replacements. In the end I used old ones from another s/arm as a temporary workround that will likely never get properly fixed. Derusting the arm was a messy business but its does seem much more solid than the previous one. The brake cable stop has been fitted with slightly larger screws and with brackets top and bottom to stop it moving under load. The side stand bracket is also welded on. Just waiting for the paint to dry properly and it will be ready to fit.

I rode the Himalayan on a VMCC run on Sunday. Boy was it wet and I probably would not have gone if I had not promised Brian Newbury that I would ride as back marker. Good fun

though and I stayed mostly dry though my left boot is beginning to leak slightly, this is probably down to the extra stress imposed by the gear lever. Looked up the price of a new pair of Altberg motorcycle boots - £279. I think I paid £130 for mine but that was at least 10 years ago, maybe longer. Well worth it though as they have been comfortable and dry until the last couple of months.

John May gave me a Loobman chain oiler he had surplus as a thank you for rebuilding his engine. It's now fitted to the Himalayan and I shall be interested to see how well it works. Spray Chain grease is quite good but it does make a sticky mess.

Friday 13th March 2020

I have another idea about fixing the cable stop arrangements for the rear brake pedal which I think is more elegant. I can only mock it up at present with the current ETZ250 s/arm as it will eventually need to be welded. However, it is surprisingly firm even though currently only held in place by two 3mm screws.

I also found a new chain which now has the correct 130 links. The chain used with the s/arm that came with the bike was far too long for the ETZ250 s/arm. Making progress and hopefully I will be getting a better s/arm tomorrow at Shepton. I have also sprayed the chaincase silver to make it look like the ali style cases fitted to ISDT bikes.

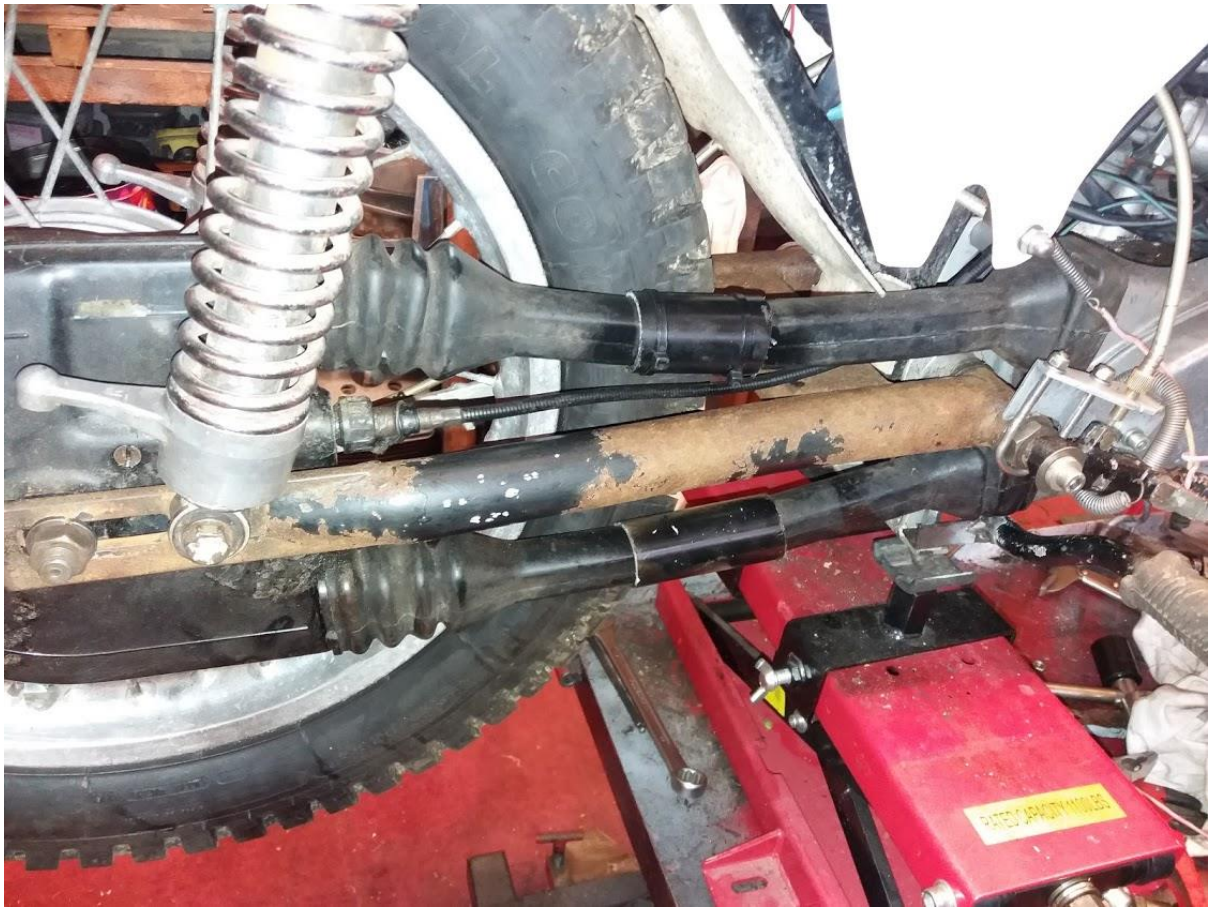
Tuesday 10th March 2020B

Well two paces forward and one pace backward. Flushed with enthusiasm over the revised rear brake assembly, I stripped the whole back end of the bike and fitted the scruffy ETZ250 s/arm donated by Ollie Harris. As expected it fitted the frame perfectly and when I offered up the wheel there was still plenty of clearance for the 4.00 x18 tyre. While the wheel was out I fitted a standard MZ rear brake switch inside the hub – had a new one in my spares box for years and glad to find a use for it. The only part that I did not have to hand were the brackets that locate the rear hub assembly and provide chain tension control. This was to bite me on the a*s later. The next part was hard work and very time consuming but I made up a bracket to fit the side stand arm. This has been tested on the bench and will work well. To help in fitting I added a lug at each end for jubilee clips to hold it in position when I get to the welding stage. All good so far so the bike was taken off the lift so that I could check the alignment of the side stand bracket. Spot on so really motoring now. Next check was to run the engine and observe whether the wobble was going to cause a problem with my rear brake bracket. Nope, hardly any movement of the engine at all so another tick in the box.

Then things started to turn to worms. My attempt to use the standard MZ rear brake light switch came to nothing. This works on the principle of earthing the bulb and requires an appropriate design of light unit common on MZs until very late on. The rear light unit on the Trail Bike is a different type which requires a switch that provides the power, the bulb itself is earthed inside the unit. However, I did manage to connect theoriginal switch somewhat crudely along with a return spring, equally crude but effective. Things were going so well I

decided to give it a quick test run round the garden. The result was some unpleasant noises from the transmission which turned out to be a very slack chain jumping the rear sprocket and smashing the chain case in the process. The chain was slack because the rear wheel moved forward due to the lack of those chain adjusters!!!.

In truth it is not catastrophic; I have a couple of used but serviceable chain covers somewhere in the shed. However, the back end now needs to be totally stripped partly to repair the damage and partly to tidy up and paint various parts. There is also the question of the ETZ250 s/arm. Though it has served its purpose, it is really very rusty and I am not sure it is worth spending time and effort shot blasting & powder coating plus welding on my carefully manufactured side stand bracket. I think it will be best to halt the project until I find a better s/arm. I now know that my modifications will all work so perhaps time to think about the cosmetics of the end product. Also whether the 4 spd engine has served its purpose and its time to fit the 5 spd unit. Another reason to pause is consideration of its long term future. Do I plan to keep it or is it going to be moved on.



The picture above shows the state of the ETZ250 s/arm. It also shows there is plenty of clearance for the big tyre although I doubt you can move the wheel all the way forward in the adjuster slots.

This picture shows the positioning of the side stand bracket. The jubilee clips are just to hold it in whilst getting the position just right. Eventually it will be welded but probably not to this particular s/arm unless I cannot find another. The rubber bands are also temporary, I have the proper spring which works fine but is a b****r to fit.

Overall, I think this bike will be much improved by the time I have finished and certainly more likely to get through an MoT. Whether it actually works any better – who knows possibly not. The good thing is I have not destroyed any of the original fittings so it can all be put back the way it was.

Sunday 8th March 2020

Well the weather was grim on Thursday so I rode the Himalayan to Grittleton and again today to the MZRC meeting at Ham. Terry Dixon came with me and we had a sunshine and showers ride up but mostly sunshine on the way back. Good day.

Back in the garage I am still working on the revised footrest arrangement for the trail bike. The TS250 footrest mounted on the engine plate brackets was a step in the right direction but has now been improved by using an ETZ125 footrest bar which is much flatter. This allows it to be mounted higher up without having your knees under your chin. I should now also be able to refit the bash plate if I need to. I have solved the rear brake pivot dilemma by machining the s/arm spindle. The end has been turned down to fit the internal diameter of the brake pivot and it is tapped 8mm for a fixing bolt. I made up a special stepped washer to

hold it in place, This lined up well with the new footrest assembly. I believe I have also have a solution to the cable stop issue.

The bracket is a piece angle iron fixed at the engine end by the rear bolt of the timing cover. It is shaped to fit round the top of the s/arm trapped partly by the large washer and partly by the u-bolt. In fact the latter doubles as a security fixing for the large spindle nut as I did not have enough. space to include its lock nut. The u-bolt nuts are not done up very tight as the s/arm will move in use but very little. The large is not supposed to move and part of the function of the u-bolt is to stop it moving as well as supporting the bracket. I tapped an 8mm hole for the cable adjuster and you can see the result. I still need to reshape the end of the brake pedal and I may have to reinstate the brake light switch in the rear hub. Apart from that I think it's job done and the current s/arm is redundant provided the ETZ250 s/arm fits. There will remain the question of a side stand but I may well cheat on that in the short term and use a standard MZ rear spindle mounted sidestand.

My only reservation is what effect the MZ engine wobble might have on this bracket. Something to test.

Sunday 1st March 2020

Hurray the Venom oil tank was collected this morning and looks good. I blew it out with the airline though nothing obvious came out, then washed it out with a petroil mixture which also came out clean. I offered up the new HF161 oil filer and it seemed to be perfect fit length wise so I did not need the special spacer that Terry made to increase the pressure on

the rubber cap. However, I did make up a spacer to keep it centralised on the top cap. A bit like the spigot which BMW filter caps have as standard. As Terry had warned me, the tube which carries the oil from the filter housing to the main tank prevented the filter from lining up properly so reluctantly I hacksawed off about 3mm to give clearance. Once this was done all went back together ok. I did have a couple of goes to get the fixing bolts lined up but eventually I learned the trick and all was well. The oil lines and the filter housing were filled with fresh oil and about a pint was put into the main tank. I then used a trick published in Fishtail to make sure the feed pipe was fully primed. You put an airline on the froth tower breather pipe (the one that lubricates the chain) and this pressurises the tank forcing oil past the no-return valve in the feed pipe so you don't get an air lock. May not have been necessary but better to be safe than sorry because this can be troublesome. Anyway the engine started easily and the oil flowed properly straight away. I kept it running for about five minutes just to be sure and then topped up the tank. Bike put away for now but may get used on Thursday if the weather is fine. I need to find the oil level transfer which is hiding somewhere in the house.

With space in the workshop I brought back the Trail TS250 to experiment further with alternative footrests. I tried various permutations including the style used on the TS125s which did seem promising. However, in the end I settled for using the a set from a TS250 as they gave the best fit and only needed a small amount of welding. It ticks most of the boxes, the k/s will operate and it is well located with respect to the gear lever. The existing rear brake will just about work but can be extended if need be. Yet to actually try it in earnest but good progress.

I have also acquired an ETZ250 s/arm, very rusty but appears sounds – enough for me to experiment with anyway. This was designed to take an 18" wheel (albeit with a 3.50 tyre) and if my replacement footrest bar works then I would like to use the ETZ s/arm in preference

to the existing monstrosity. This will mean adding a side stand bracket and providing an alternate mounting for the rear brake pivot and the cable stop. Not insurmountable but the latter certainly requires inspiration. In an ideal world I would also like to bend up a complete new footrest bar based on the TS250 style but with less height so it can be mounted above the bash plate brackets and with a little more clearance for the k/s. As they say, watch this space.

Thursday 27th February 2020

Not much bike related activity in the workshop since my last update. The Venom oil tank is still with the powder coater grrh. I have now rebuilt John May's Supa5 engine, long delayed because of his riding accident. He is still on crutches and using a wheel chair but he is sufficiently mobile to drive over and watch as his engine was rebuilt. No real technical problems but there was one logistical issue. The parts supplied by OST2RAD included the wrong main bearings and the gasket set was missing. Fortunately, a local bearing stockist had the correct 6306/C3 bearings on the shelf so we were back in business. I had spare gaskets in stock so that was not an issue. However, the hour or so delay sorting the bearings meant we needed to reconvene a couple of days later to finish the job, mainly fitting the powerdymano system. All now done and the workshop is clear again. Incidentally, OST2RAD sent 6303 as main bearings. Never come across this size before in any MZ engine so a mystery as to why they supplied them. I suggested to John that he raise the matter with them but I don't think he will bother as they were delivered 5 months ago just after his accident and remained unopened until now.

Despite the bad weather, I have put in a few miles on the Himalayan which is absolutely filthy but no point in cleaning it as the roads are still so mucky. Last night pondering on the Supa5 trail bike I had an idea which I checked out this morning. The epiphany was to use an ES250 Trophy footrest bar fitted to the brackets prev owner had welded to the engine plates for the bash plate. These are very robust, equally as strong as the original MZ footrest bracket and as the pictures show they get the footrest closer to its original position and more to the point not on the s/arm. I am doubtful about this on grounds of comfort and legality. The LH side will need a folding footrest too clear the k/s but it should be possible to use a standard gear lever. On the RH side the rear brake pivot can probably stay on the s/arm but the lever will need extending a few inches. I am consulting with John May about this as he has a lot of experience modifying frames both MZ and BMW. The idea is a long way from being a done deal but it has promise. I have also received a new 21" inner tube to fix the slow puncture in the front wheel and the bike is now insure so just need to wait until 1st April to get it taxed and classed as historic.

Sunday 9th February 2020

I am sat at the keyboard when my conscience tells me I should be riding up to to Ham for the MZ monthly meeting, However, we have storm Ciera with 70-80mph winds howling outside and frankly I would be concerned about taking the car out let alone a bike. Richard Warne rang earlier today and reached the same conclusion – he stayed home too.

So that has given me an extra workshop day which I have used to drain the oil from the Venom and remove the oil tank completely. The tank itself needs repainting and has not been removed in my ownership so I was pleased to find that it was reasonably clean inside. Tomorrow I will take it to TPCS in Sells Green for powder coating. I di dfind one of the tank

fixing bolts which also holds the battery carrier was stripped, or rather the thread in the gearbox plate was stripped and it was held in place by a nut & bolt but access to this is pretty cramped and I could foresee difficulties getting it back Inspiration finally struck and I made up a plate tapped 5/16" BSF to go behind the gearbox plate. This is held in place by a ¼" bolt using a nearby hole already drilled in the plate with no apparent use. Whilts doing this I managed to drop the original fixing bolt. It did not reach the floor so its stuck somewhere on the bike but darned if I can find it. I just hope it does not do any damage when it eventually works its way free.

I spoke to Terry Dixon about oil filters and learned something interesting. He ordered a replacement oil filter for his Venom from Grove they sent him a paper type filter which they now supply in preference to the old style felt filters. He thought it looked familiar when it arrived and found it was an standard HF161 filter, the same type used on airhead BMWs. Grove charge £13 plus postage for their filter, I have just ordered two from eBay for £10.40 post paid. Useful info – pity Terry had to find it the hard way.

On Friday I popped over to Bradford to pick up the Trail bike gear lever from Mick. Brilliant job as he used s/s rods. Fits fine and works very well even on the stiff 4spd box. I got the V5 for the bike on Saturday and have emailed my insurers to get it added to the policy. Not really planning to do any more to it until 1st April when I can get it registered as an Historic vehicle which makes it MoT exempt and tax free.

Wednesday 5th February 2020

We have the fencing contractors in today so I cannot go far. I remembered tha the TS125 Sport was still wearing its 22mm carb and 15t gearbox sprocket so this seemed an ideal chance to tick these two jobs off the todo list. Swapping the carb and manifold over was straightforward. Fitting the 16t sprocket went ok until the securing nut would not tighten. It looked ok and my heart sank in case it was the thread on the output shaft. Luckily the spare 125 engine still had its sprocket nut and this did tighten up ok. After that it was fiddly getting everything lined up but no more issues. I tried the engine and all seems to be ok. Now need a road test to see how it all performs. But that will have to wait as I cannot get the bike out of the garage due to the fencing contractors stuff.

Tomorrow looks to be dry and we have a VMCC meeting in Hullavington about 20 miles away. I have got the Venom out ready and wonder of wonders it started second kick. I seem to have sussed out what it likes in the way of a cold starting procedure. Several kicks over with the valve lifter engaged to get the oil moving, good tickle then a couple more easy kicks listening for the sucking noise. Finally get the piston in the right position and give it a hefty kick, first time it coughed, second time it started – hooray.,

Tuesday 4th February 2020

This morning I fitted the Pirelli MT43 front tyre as it is a much better match to the Michelin on the rear. Not without problems though. I had trouble getting the tyre clamp to release and think I must have pinched the tube in the process. . When I tried to inflate the newly fitted tyre air leaked out everywhere so it all had to come off to find and fix the puncture. I

have not bothered to fit the tyre clamps as I shall never be running it at the sort of pressures that require this item. This bike was built for trials riding where pressures of 5-10psi are normal. I plan to use about 18-20 in the front and 20-25 in the rear even for off road stuff.

While the wheel was out I replaced the leaky fork seal in the RH leg though I am not convinced there was anything wrong with the old one which was a good quality double lipped type. In fact I fitted an identical type as replacement. I don't have any fork oil at the moment so I reused the old oil. I measured it at 150cc so will need to add another 70cc in due course. Waiting to see if it leaks first though. I was going to order a 7mm bolt for the Powerdynamo rotor but the cheapest I could find on the internet was £2.45 with postage. So I made one by cutting down a dynamo rotor bolt, threading the other end 8mm and welding on a 13mm nut. Not pretty but it means I can now use the slimmed cover which hides it anyway.

I was then able to get if of the bike lift and wheel it outside. The engine started easily and I have a full set of working electrics plus two methods to kill the engine, a key under the seat and a button on the handlebars. The modified gear lever seems to be ok though right now one of the temporary bolts catches the kickstarter on full travel. This should be fine when it is welded up and the bolts removed. Worst case is I have to bend the lever inwards a little to clear. So this phase of the project is pretty much completed. I need to fit drain pipe tubes under the carrier, one for an oil bottle, the other for a tool kit. Plus I am sure a few more (hopefully minor) issues will arise once I can ride the bike. The next phase will primarily be to smarten it all up which may involve a total strip down to do it properly plus fitting a 5 spd engine. The 4spd engine currently fitted has done its job and I was impressed how quiet it was mechanically. It is a hybrid as it is fitted with a Supa5 crank the conversion for which was documented a couple of years ago in an earlier blogg. The conversion itself worked fine but the gearbox was very noisy so I put it aside but it has proved jolly useful for this project. Curiously, I found out later that what I had done was exactly how MZ built the /1 engines. Direct oil feed from the gearbox which required a modified crank, only came with the /2 models. I discovered that the bearing and oil seal sizes I worked out are identical to the ones in the /1 spares book so I was not quite as inventive as I first thought.


MZ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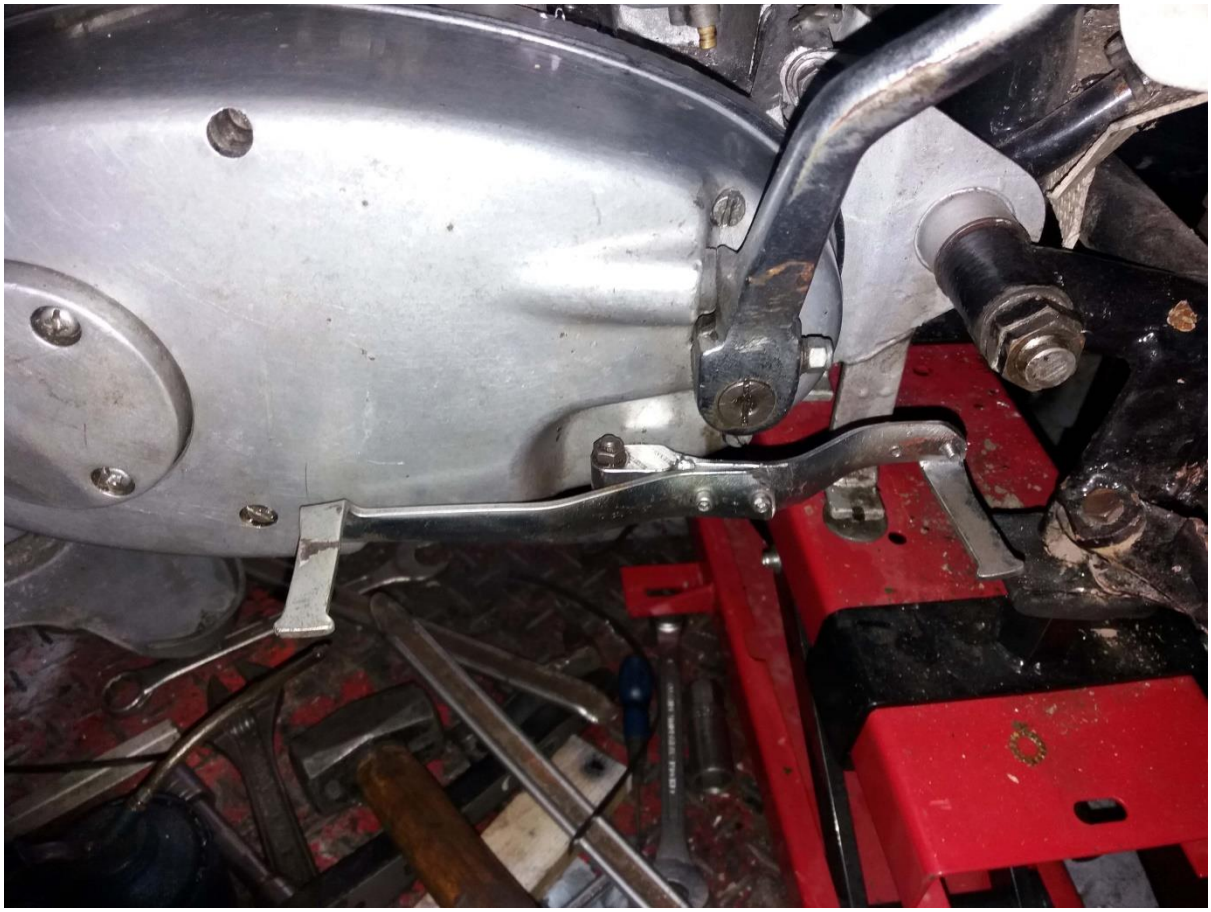
Monday 3rd February 2020

Work on the trail bike had to be delayed as I needed to carry out some emergency work on the garage in the garden. This is used store the bikes not in immediate use and has a load of shelving for assorted spare parts. Unfortunately it has developed a leak at the bottom end, right above all the shelving. I cannot see any obvious source of the leak to repair and looking at the general state of it, a complete replacement is really the only sensible solution. That means time to do some research and marshall helpers so a short term solution was needed. Today I have stripped everything out of the garage and moved the shelving to a part which has (until now anyway) remained dry. Then of course it all had to be put back. It took me until mid afternoon at whoch point I needed a cup of tea and a sit down but I think things should now stay dry for the time being.

Later I resumed work on the gearchange of the trail bike and I think I have a working solution as shown in the picture. Basically I have created a rocking pedal lever so that you can press down at the front to change down and down at the rear to change up. The rear part is tucked well in so that it clears the kickstarter. I opted for this solution because any sort of conventional single lever would have been very short making it very stiff for upward changes. This way I can exert a lot of pressure without hurting my toes. At present it is all bolted together while I fine tune the positioning. Eventually it will all be welded up. I spoke to my friend Mick about the job as I ws not sure if you could weld on top of chrome. You can't unless you use s/s rods and he has offered to do the job for me.



Sunday 2nd February 2020

Having pondered the question of rear tyre, in the end I took the pragmatic approach and fitted the Michelin Competition tyre. It may not be the long term solution but at least I now know that a 4.00 x 18" tyre will and the bike can now be ridden for test purposes. I will keep looking out for suitable tyres, a 3.50 x 18 with enduro type tread would be preferable to give a bit more clearance – see picture below:.

I will now have to change the front tyre to the MT43 as it has a better match of tread pattern to the Michelin rear.

Next battle is the gearchange and I have a cunning plan.

Saturday 1st February 2020

Our first day no longer a member of the EU. Not that you would know the difference. So far as I can see, most people got so fed up with the whole Brexit issue, that the actual implementation has been largely ignored. I voted to leave, only time will tell if it was a wise or foolish action.

Anyway, back to the real world and bikes. I should have known that things were going too well. I fitted the 18" rear wheel today and immediately hit a snag. The tyre is too wide and fouls the chain rubber. Though notionally a 4.00 x 18 it is actually nearer 5" wide as there are pronounced studs on the sides; doubtless to provide fantastic grip in sand and mud. The really annoying part is that if the swinging arm had not been extended the tyre would have

been a couple of inches further forward and not fouled. I really don't know why the previous owner felt it necessary to extend the s/arm as there is enough room to fit an 18" tyre. I have done it in the past and so has Graham White. The centre stand is a problem but can be easily resolved. I toyed with the idea of sourcing a standard s/arm but then I have no footrests and no rear brake lever so a major job and not one I want to tackle yet if at all.

So for now I now need to replace the rear tyre and first port of call was the shed where the spares tyres that came with the bike are stored. These turned out to be a Pirelli 2.75 by 21" MT43 front tyre which is probably the optimum choice for mixed riding – and it looks brand new. The other tyre is a Michelin 4.00 by 18" Trials Competition, very similar tread pattern to the MT43 but equally it is stamped 'for off road use only in USA & Canada' – not encouraging. Research on the internet suggests that this tyre is legal for road use in the UK but only for short duration journeys – but noindication of what this means in time distance or speed. Mine is stamped MST which stands for Multi Surface Tread which appears to make it road legal. The good thing is that this tyre is 15mm narrower at the critical point than the MT21 and should clear the chain guides easily. Although not new it is little worn and in good condition.

I am now in a dilemma. Use the Michelin or try and source something like an MT43. But if I go down this route, I will need to get my hands on one to check the width. Best to sleep on it.

Friday 31st January 2020

I went to see John May this morning. He is now able to walk short distances using crutches which is big improvement since my last visit. We had a long chat mostly about the trail bike project. He has built a number of BMW and MZ specials and is a useful person to bounce ideas off. We had a long chat about tyres – he has a lot of experience of off-road riding and MCC type events and recommended Pirelli MT43 as being a good solution. I have a feeling that the spare tyres which came with the bike could be MT43's but they are in a shed at the far end of the garden so not easy to check right now. The tyres currently fitted, which I thought were dedicated trials tyres turn out to be Pirelli MT21 Rallymasters which are actually road legal so maybe I don't need to make tyres a priority issue.

This afternoon I tackled a couple of small but time consuming jobs. The regulator is now rubber mounted. While I was working in that area, I tidied up some of the wiring and fitted the LH side panel. The stop light switch also has a proper mounting rather than flopping around on a cable tie. I am busy on model railway related stuff on Saturday and Sunday so further progress on the trail bike will have to wait until next week.

Thursday 30th January 2020

I took the Himalayan out for ride today, first time on 2 wheels for over a fortnight. Only about 5 miles to a VMCC lunchtime meet but it was great to be riding again. I had hope to take the Venom but the roads were wet and muddy and there seemed little point in getting another bike dirty. After lunch I fitted the petrol tank to the trail bike. This is a modified TS125 type and though fine for a trials bike is perhaps a bit small for a 250 if longer journeys

are planned. I tried offering up a Supa5 tank but the front mountings are now in the wrong place. I think it will be possible to make a second set of front mountings allowing both types of tank to be fitted but that is a job for another day.

Next job was to fit the Powerdynamo regulator and capacitor and connect the wiring loom. I have fitted the former under the seat but I am not overly happy with its location and ideally it should be rubber mounted. This will be tackled later as part of a general tidy up of the wiring system. The aim of all this work was to be able to run the engine. So with ½ gallon of premix in the tank I tried kicking it over. Nothing at all to start with so in the end I fitted a new plug. Still no joy so I then tried kicking the bike over with the throttle wide open on the basis it was probably flooded. Sure enough it soon started to cough and finally burst into life with the usual clouds of blue smoke. The lights came on so it seems we have a runner, always a great relief.

Apart from tidying the wiring and making a proper mounting for the regulator there is at least one outstanding issue. I found that my foot connected with the gear lever in what is supposed to be its running position. I have removed it altogether for now. The MZ gear change requires quite a lot of pressure especially the 4 spd version. Changing down is ok as you are pushing downwards. Changing up means lifting the lever and can be painful on the toes after a while. The short lever necessitated by the repositioned footrest is not going to help and may need to work in reverse (down for up instead of down for down). The previous owner clearly solved this problem; hopefully so shall I. The other thing is to fit the 18" back wheel. In theory this should be straightforward but…

Wednesday 29th January 2020

Playtime with the trail bike was limited today due to other chores. However, I have solved two of the outstanding problems. The first was the chain tubes and the picture probably says it all. I have cut up 3 original tubes and mixed/matched them to create two longer tubes joined at the moment by a piece of plastic. I have left it white for now to show the join more clearly. I will paint them black later. In fact the chain keeps the rubbers quite rigid so their primary purpose is to keep the water out. To quote the Repair Shop's favourite saying 'pleased with that'.

The other job was to make up a new rear brake cable better suited to the torque arm now this has been moved back to its original lower position. I found a suitable donor cable in the shape of an old Honda front brake cable. This is a heavy duty design and one end is threaded 6mm which provides an adjuster at the hub end. I have also replaced the stop bracket as the old one was set to the wrong angle and was rather a long way back. Another job done.

Two other small jobs to finish the day. The front driving lights have been removed for now mainly because the new speedo gets in the way of the LH one. I doubt I will ever refit them but they are in the box of 'spares' just in case. I have also drained the petrol from the tank. It was clearly very old and a dark brown colour, not sure even the lawn mower could cope with this. Pleasingly very little muck was evident in the filter and there is no sign of rust inside the tank. I dismantled the tap but this was also very clean. So the way is clear to fit the tank, fill it with fresh fuel and try to run the engine.

Tuesday 28th January 2020

Things are progressing well with the trail bike project. I did briefly offer up the ETZ150 motor and I think it would fit but needs is own rear engine mounts which involves stripping out the swinging arm. I have parked this idea for now.

Instead I have fitted a TS250 4spd motor. Not the long term motor I propose to use but it was already in the garage and is fitted with the earlier type cylinder head which I hoped might be easier to shape round the hi-level exhaust. Indeed this proved to be the case as I only had to trim back 3 fins to give clearance and the system is now in place. Still not convinced I will stick with it long term but it is one aspect resolved.

Next step was to fit the Powerdynamo system and make sure it is working. This hit the blocks temporarily as some of the fixing screws were missing. A search of my nuts & bolts box found suitable countersunk head 5mm screws to fix the stator – they were even the right length. The bolt to fix the rotor was more difficult as it's 7mm – not a common size. I have got round the problem for now by using the bolt that holds the MZ dynamo rotor with a long spacer but as you can see from the picture, it sticks out too far. A better solution will emerge in due course. With the coil fixed in place and wired up, we had sparks so all looking good. I was hoping to find a 17t gearbox sprocket but the smallest I could locate was an 18t. I will look further as I also need a shorter chain. The one that came with the bike is sized for a huge rear sprocket – could be cut down but I might regret that later. This took most of the morning and it is bitterly cold so I have retreated to the house to warm up and consider the next move.

A bit more progress this afternoon. I have found and fitted what seems to be a good usable carb. And I also found a speedo, cable and Supa5 type housing. However, when I came to fit the latter, it fouled the headlamp. So I have mounted it on top of the LH fork nut which strangely enough is how MZ fitted a speedo to the early ISDT bikes. The speedo itself looks very tired and I am not convinced it will work properly, even supposing it has the correct gearing. However, at this point it's more about getting the construction sorted, a suitable speedo should not be hard to find. A clutch cable came with the bike but it was a home-made job based on a bicycle cable. The spares box donated a correct cable so we now have a full set of controls. The red button is the ignition cutout (and it works!)

Whilst rummaging through the spares boxes I found two used but very serviceable Supa5 chain rubbers. As expected they are not long enough but I have a cunning plan to sort this which will be revealed if it works. Still lots to do; need to make a plan.

Monday 27th January 2020

Quite like old times tinkering on a new to me bike in the garage. Perhaps I should list the changes observed so far to a stock Supa5 to create this machine. In case I forget to say it later; in the main the mods are well thought out and executed even if not always to my taste. In no particular order:

Steering stops modified to increase steering lock which is why the tank (from a TS125) had been moved backwards and raised slightly. The frame has been modified to provide a new tank front mounting. The tank has new rear brackets locating into the original rear frame mounting. All still rubber mounted. I am not too sure about how it looks and may well review the way the tank is mounted.

Swinging arm has been lengthened to allow the fitting of an 18” wheel. The extension is to the flat part where the wheel is fixed, not the tubes.

The bracket that supports the rider’s footrest bar and the centre stand has been removed, indeed it seems like the part of the main frame which supported these

bits has also been removed as there is also no sign of the tube through which the rear brake pedal fitted, nor the pillion mountings.

The rider's footrests, the rear brake pivot and the side stand bracket are all welded to the front of the swinging arm. I am a bit concerned about how this will feel when riding the bike. See below about the chain tensioner. The rear brake is now cable operated.

The rear sub-frame has been shortened and raised to provide a support for the plastic rear mudguard and a neat carrier. The latter has square tubes as retainers for the GS style panniers seen in the picture below. However, there is no way that this mounting is strong enough to support the weight of two loaded panniers so they have already been consigned to the shed.

Front wheel is a standard TS hub laced to a 21" rim. It is currently wearing a supposedly road legal trials tyre. A neat bracket which doubles as a fork brace lifts the trials type mudguard clear of the tyre.

Rear wheel is a standard TS250 hub laced to an 18" rim. It is currently wearing a supposedly road legal trial tyre and like the front will most likely get changed for something more suitable for mixed usage. The sprocket carrier has been modified to take a larger alloy sprocket to give better trials gearing. However, this is too large to take the standard chain cover with its speedo drive. This negates one of the benefits of MZ design regarding chain protection and will be reverted to standard in due course. I will simply use a smaller gearbox sprocket to lower the gearing. It seems likely I will have to make extended rubber chains guides as the standard ones will not be long enough. Once that is done, the chain tensioner currently fitted will be redundant.

The rear brake plate is mounted upside down so that the torque arm is at the top. I was told this was to reduce the chances of it snagging in trials sections. Indeed the late MZ ISDT G5 bikes also used this idea but I am pretty sure they may have modified the cam to ensure a correct operating angle. Apparently it was not worth doing and though the brake works it is no better than ok! Whatever that means.

Extra brackets have been welded to the rear engine brackets to provide the rear mounting for the bash plate. The front fixes to the engine itself. The exhaust system is a mixture of bits from several sources and includes a piece of flex pipe. I have no idea if it will work or not. One downside and a possible the reason why I will junk it is that the head has to be cut back clear the pipe. We shall see.

The speedo is a simple digital bicycle type and despite a new battery is showing no signs of life. I have never been impressed with these and will most likely fit a standard speedo.

The original battery box and air box have both been removed and the air intake is a 2" piece of flexi hose with an after-market air cleaner screwed in.

The electrics are totally non-standard and at first sight the wiring does not inspire confidence. The original dip switch is now the lights on/off switch though the horn button is still operative. There are no indicators, instead the switch is used as a dip switch. Amazingly, once I had traced a broken earth wire, all the electrics worked; even the LED running lights. It is intended to be run without battery using a Powerdynamo kit which I have also bought. For testing I have temporarily wired in a 12v battery – this will be replaced by a capacitor later. The trials type headlight looks neat but not sure how effective it would be for night time use. I will review the wiring once I have an engine in place and the Powerdynamo system fitted.

As of close of play today, I have replaced the forks and front wheel and fitted a standard TS250 sprocket carrier assembly and a 16" rear wheel (only because it was lighter and easier to work with). The brake plate and torque are at the bottom and I have bodged the brake cable so we have a temporary rear brake solution. This needs to be revisited but at least the bike is on two wheels and mobile.

I now need to take stock and come up with a more detailed plan of action. This may include offering up the ETZ150 engine to see if it would fit. Not something I have seen or heard of and I may well shortly find out why.

Sunday 26th January 2020

Today I drove over to Newport to view and (of course) buy another MZ project. It was in the not too distant past a Trials/Enduro conversion of a 1979 Supa5. The engine is now in a Racer that Bill is building so the rolling chassis was up for grabs. Originally Rob Parker-Norman was going to buy it but he is in the throes of moving so passed the details over to me. I thought it looked promising and when we were able to do a deal including some of my surplus parts it became a bit of a no-brainer.

We had to dismantle it to get it in the back of my Berlingo (The Renault van is on SORN at present) and the rain poured down the whole while. Anyway it is now back in my garage and tomorrow I can start reassembly combined with a detailed examination of what mods have been done. The deal included a Powerdynamo system which will be useful.

Thursday 23rd January 2020

I rode over to Clutton on the Himalayan on Wednesday to deliver the s/arm. It was nice to see John and Chris again and we had a long chat but his dementia is clearly getting worse even though he has remarkable periods of clarity. He is clearly very hard work fro Chris but somehow she keeps her cool with him. I guess having the rest of the family close by helps a lot. As I suspected, the rusted out swinging arm was a figment of John's imagination. When I looked at the bike – not easy as its well buried in a shed – the s/arm was absolutely sound on both sides. In fact talking to Gerry his son-in-law, John has not been near the bike for months and he could not get at it without a lot of help. So how he got the idea of a rusted outs/arm is a mystery. Bit annoying but it serves me right for not visiting him more often and checking his story first.

What was a bit more annoying is that I was developing flu and really would have preferred to stay home in the warm. Be sure no good deed goes unpunished and the bug is a brute still with me as I write this 9 days later.

As you might expect motorcycling has not figured much, indeed not at all in the intervening period. I had three shortish trips lined up, all on the Venom but simply did not have the

energy to get kitted up and start the bike. However, if you read my steam loco blogg you will see that I have not been idle as I am working on a new railway project. I have also bought another toy which sort of covers both interests. This is a cheap Go-Pro type action camera, the sort that sportsmen use when skiing, canoeing and diving for that matter. It is only about 3x3" and has a waterproof housing plus a selection of fixing. Mostly they get used to record video whilst doing exciting things. I have made up a bracket to fix it to the brush guards of the Himalayan and another to fix it to the top of one of my helmets if its needed when riding another bike. The other planned use is to fix it to one of my railway wagons so I can record the locomotive running round the track. Should add a bit of interest and playing with this plus has helped me avoid going stir crazy.

Tuesday 14th January 2020

I decided I would swap the s/arm I got from Roger for the one in my TS/ETZ project bike and it was a good decision. Though it fits, there is a significant difference in the design between the two types. The earlier type with metal bushes needs to be clamped in the frame cross tube so that the s/arm pivots on the bushes. The later s/arms with rubber bushes don't need these clamps and the later frames don't have them. It won't be a problem in my project bike, but it would not have been a good idea to mix/match them on a road bike. Anyway all swapped over and John will never know the difference, in fact he won't even have to paint the one he is now getting.

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 a 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 agood 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 confims 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 then 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 coupe 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 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 n 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 of 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 its 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 tp 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

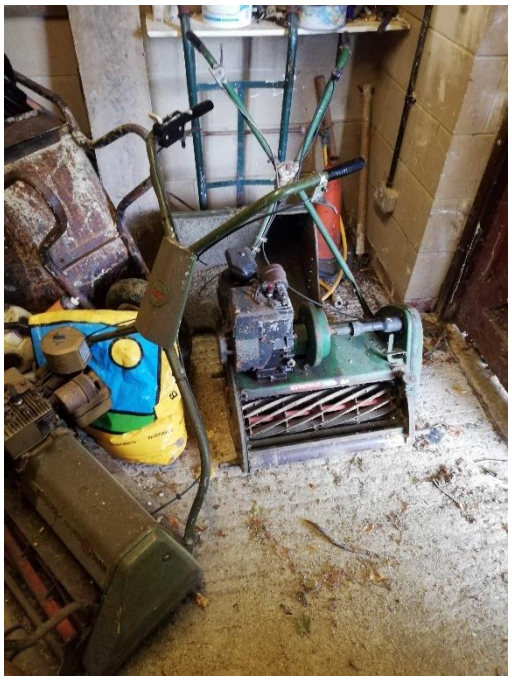
On Thursday I went to Peter Goodwin's funeral in Swindon. He had been the Chairman of the Moonrakers section for many years with Julie, his wife as Secretary. It was a pleasant non religious ceremony and they showed pictures of his life whilst playing one of his favourite songs. I thought it was a brilliant 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 of 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 this 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 ae 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 theend

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 tat 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 todays 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 of 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 of 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 of 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.

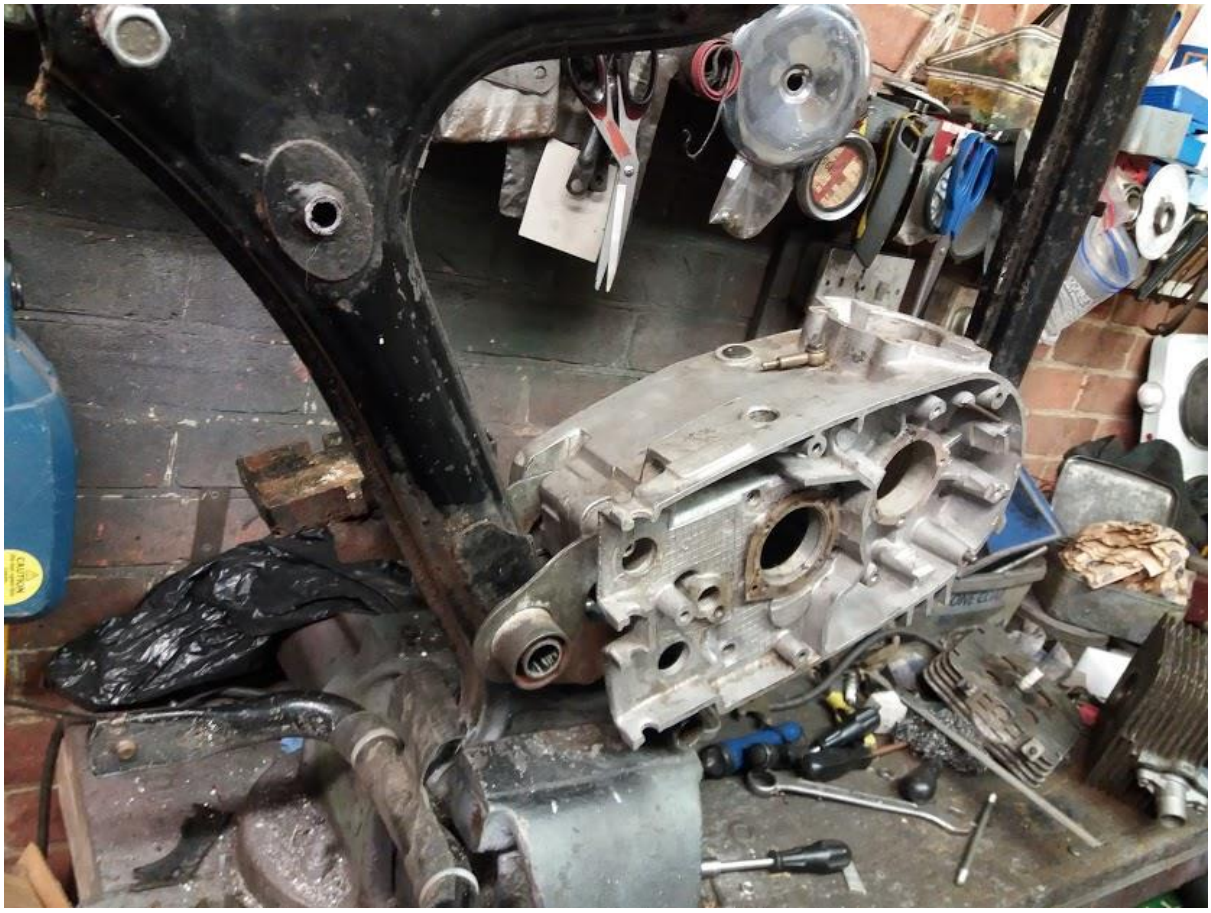
On Tuesday I brought my Supa5 up to the workshop for a checkover as this will be the fallback bike for Cornwall if the Venom does not shape up. I honestly cannot remember when I last rode the bike but it started very easily and sounded sweet. I gave it a cursory checkover, pumped up the tyres and took 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!!!

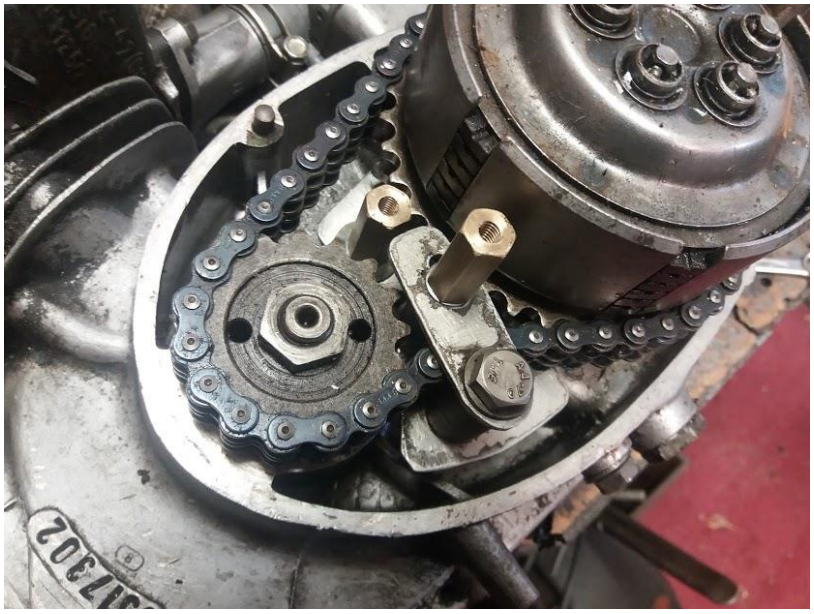
The postman also delivered the brush guards I ordered from M&P. They were only £13.95 and I was favourably impressed with the quality of them. Fitting the LH one was relatively easy once I got the hang of the fittings. The RH one was rather more difficult because the brake master cylinder and the throttle 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 of 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 optimate 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 tls 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 a 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

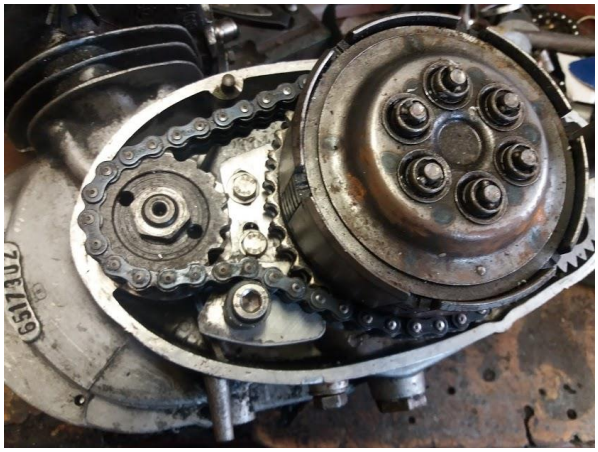
I have now taken the recommissioning of John's TS125 as far as I can without spending money. I don't yet have a phone number for Chris & John so I emailed Tracey, John's daughter with a status report asking how they want me to proceed. That was on Tuesday and I have not heard back as yet. For the moment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

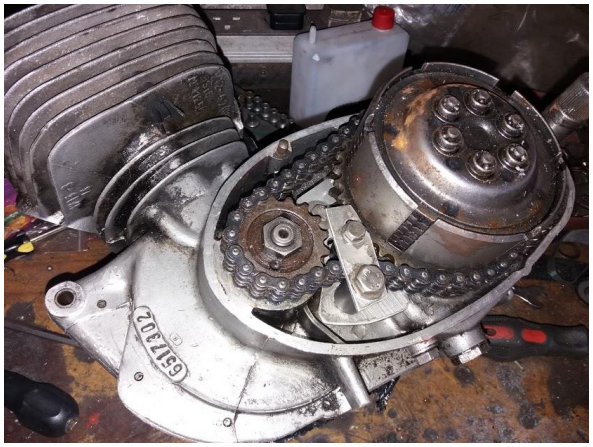
Rode the Himalayan to Chippenham Rugby Club on Thursday evening where is was much admired. Next ride will likely be on 1st August to Cricklade for a VMCC meet. I will only go for coffee as Mrs F is in Swanage with the grandchildren and the caravan so I cannot be out of the house for too long especially 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 Longs 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 ¾" 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 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 of 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 aa 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, Ribblehead, 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 Ribblehead. 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 somone 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 turned 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 backwords 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. Salutary 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 sweety 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 u 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 abut 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 is 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.