



JAWA Motorcyclist

Jawa-ČZ Camping Weekend, 3-5 April 2009 Parson's Green, Clogheen, Co Tipperary, Ireland

On Friday 3 April I loaded up my trusty newish-to-me '01 MZ Skorpion Traveller 660 and set out on a day of watery sunlight for the Jawa-ČZ weekend in Co Tipperary. It was the first Jawa/ČZ-orientated event to be organised in Ireland since the Blackwater event back in 1984. It was a longish trip from Bray at about 220 km, even on my super Skorp, and about 1/3 of the way there it began to rain. I put on a pair of cheap overtrousers, figuring the Traveller fairing would keep the worst of the rain off me. It did, sorta. A miserable day's travel, just the same.

Parson's Green was a combined mobile home and campsite. The site held a restaurant, and the local village was a short walk away. A couple of pubs in the village, plus a supermarket. (No ATM though, and no paying the campsite bill by credit card either.)

Arriving at the site I found a bunch of people there whom I knew. Ger Duhig the organiser and wife Margaret plus family; Jim, Catherine and Darren Walsh from Waterford; Sandy and Mally Morgan from Merseyside, and Carl Janiszewski from Slough. Later we had Mick Doran and Gerry Quigley, the notorious musicians -- well, guitar players and vocalists anyway. Later still Brian Moore arrived from Cork, and John & Lorraine Shaw from Northern Ireland. What with Jim Walsh (Southern Ireland Section) and John Shaw (Northern Ireland ditto) on the site, we had both this island's MZ Riders Club's representatives on hand. Some of you in the UK will remember Mick, Gerry and Brian from National Rallies way back in the Eighties and early Nineties. They have had a lot of musical practice over the last twenty years, but I can't say they've improved any.

Then there was a couple we hadn't met before. These guys had a car and trailer, and they were wheeling motorcycles off the trailer ... and setting up a marquee. The bikes attracted a crowd, as well they might have done. The lady and gentleman were Jana and Pavel, the bosses of Jawa Ireland, the new importer into the Republic. The bikes were a Jawa 250 Travel, a 125 Dakar and a 125 Sport. These were all four-stroke Jawas. The rolling chassis is made in Týnec nad Sázavou as ever, but the engines are bought in from TMEC in China. All have electric starting.

Over the couple of days of the event, these bikes attracted an understandable load of attention. They looked very well made and finished, though I suppose the mechanicals are an unknown quantity. Still, I imagine Jawa have done whatever they needed to make sure these engines are all they should be: it's Jawa's reputation on the line if they aren't, after all.

Some might say it's a pity the engines have to come from China, but I wouldn't necessarily agree. For one thing, Jawa haven't made their own road-bike engines in about fifty years, unless I'm wrong; ČZ made all the two-stroke motors,



and I think still make the few that are produced these days. Jawa are a small manufacturer now, and they have no choice but rely on bought-in engines. It might be most unwise if they were to try making their own motors. Think of the endless trouble, and in the end bankruptcy, that MZ went through over their in-house 1000cc engine. Development cost them a fortune, and the machine didn't sell. Now BMW plan to make their G650 single entirely in China. In the end, what odds were they're made so long as the quality control and spare parts supply are in order?

The 250 is a development of the old 640 chassis. Some parts seem very familiar: the rear hub, the swinging-arm (though it's beefed-up with extra bracing, no bad thing). The silencers have an external seam, just like the old two-strokes had. The riding position is traditional Jawa. The idiot-lights binnacle is identical to the one on my 1997 Kanuni 301. Whyever not, as it works just fine on mine. The headlight and the b-i-g front brake disk are shared with the 650. The engine castings are very clean, and from the outside they're well up to contemporary standards. The chromed outer casings might be a bit excessive for some tastes (well, for mine anyway).

I took a quick ride round the site on the 250. Though I couldn't give it much welly as it had only done 6 km on the LED odometer, I thought it impressive. Very smooth and lively, no snatching. As I told Pavel, it was just like a refined 634 for the 21st Century. There's a 660cc machine due out next year, based on the existing Dakar model. Instead of the 650cc Rotax motor used up to now, the new ones will have Euro 4-compliant Minarelli/Yamaha DOHC, fuel-injected four-valve single-cylinder engines. One chap here with short legs is rather hoping Jawa will consider doing a Classic version too ... Pavel told me the 350 two-stroke twins are still in production in small batches. Last year the factory produced about 1,000 of them. They go to such markets as Iran, Iraq and Cuba. Not conspicuous growth areas.

Ger Duhig is the owner nowadays of my 1976 634/4, and it looks a lot cleaner under his care than it did under mine. It goes well, too.

On Saturday night in the pub, Ger had organised a display to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Blackwater rally. The display included photos of Ger, Brian, Mick and Gerry, then and now. They were all recognisable, even Gerry whose photo showed him at Ballacolla last year with his face painted to look like a badly wasted zombie. That's not Gerry's normal style. The face-painting was courtesy of Mr Shaw's nieces, Leah and Shannon McCall. Gerry didn't have much choice about the design.



Ger had also produced professionally-made stickers and T-shirts. They were quickly snapped up. The T-shirts featured not just the Jawa and ČZ logos, but the MZ and Royal Enfield ones too. The three marques seem to gravitate together here, because the sort of people who own these machines tend to be similar folks in many ways.

Sunday started dry and stayed that way, for the most part. A great weekend, and an enjoyable ride home.

JAWA Ireland have a website, at <http://www.jawaireland.ie/>. Anybody out there who has internet access, please take a look. They are introducing a scheme to rent two 650 Style models from their shop near Dublin Airport; details on site.

Ger presented awards on Saturday afternoon in the local hall. They were as follows:

- Best Jawa - Phillip O'Brien
- Best ČZ - Darren Walsh
- Best MZ - Darren Walsh
- Best Enfield - John Nicholls
- Furthest Travelled - Keith Tisdale (Bradford)
- Jawa/ ČZ Merit Award - Pat Brennan

I have to say Ger and Margaret did a first-class job of organising this weekend. Fair whacks to them both! Here's to the next one.

P.B.

