



Vintage & Classic Register News

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VINTAGE DIARY

**23rd JULY 2000
STANFORD HALL
VINTAGE CLUB
FOUNDERS DAY RALLY
Nr Lutterworth
Leicestershire**

The Club will have a stand at this event. There will be a "Concours" for three classes – Pre '55, '55-69 and Post '69. Please try and attend and show your support for the "Vintage" Section of the Club. Thanks.

**SAMMY MILLER
MUSEUM "GERMAN,
COMPETITION AND TWO
STROKE" DAY, 24th
SEPTEMBER. BASHLEY
MANOR, NEW MILTON,
HAMPSHIRE.**

Awards (Donated by the Midland Section) will be given for best machines in the Pre'55, '55-'69 and Post '69 classes.
Starts at 10.30am ends at 3.00pm

Well, we're off the ground with the newsletter (no thanks to my ineptitude on the computer) but before I get on with it I must apologise to those of you who may have a vast bank of knowledge on the earlier machines: I don't wish to appear condescending in anything I write. Any correspondence is most welcome and I'd appreciate any hints and tips that you would like to pass on. Of course, any articles you think are worth publication would keep things moving.

The intention is to produce, initially, three newsletters a year, but

don't forget you can always give me a call on 01908 216623 at anytime. If you need advice and I can't help I probably know a man who can, thanks to the enthusiasm and help offered by those who have been in touch with me.

Contentious issues seem to be part and parcel of "The Journal" so I might as well raise a topic in this first issue of the newsletter to get the letters flying. The issue that has been presented to me concerns the Vintage Register and what age of machine should be eligible for inclusion. As you will have noticed, the heading reads "Vintage & Classic Register News" and not without good reason.

Now, although it has always been accepted that the last of the Earles fork machines was the cut-off date for inclusion, I've had so many owners of later machines contact me and ask to be on the list that now is probably the time to seriously review the situation. Purists, and I must admit to having been one in the past, insist that only the pre'69 machines should carry the Club "Vintage" label, but why so? The first /5's are now thirty years old, and even the /6's and /7's over twenty. I don't think anyone can deny that the 90'S or the 100RS are anything but true classics in the BM world so maybe all the /5's /6's and /7's should be included. The only thing that separates them from the earlier machines are the production methods used and the numbers produced.

There is a slow drift away from the BMW Club in favour of the V.M.C.C. for riders of the older machines; more and more owners of the air-cooled models feel disenfranchised as the oil head numbers grow within the club. That there exists "The Airhead Beemer Club" reinforces this situation. I, personally, feel that machines later than '69 should be included. Perhaps a rolling cut-off date similar to that in the V.M.C.C. should be used. Perhaps this is just one of the ways forward to help ensure the future of the Club. Your comments, suggestion etc. are welcomed, and I know there will be plenty of discussions on the subject.

Piston Seizures Pre-69

I've had a couple of members in touch concerning their experiences with this problem, unfortunately one incident was rather dramatic and resulted in substantial damage to one con rod : not a cheap repair by any means!

A number of reasons spring to mind, assuming that the correct tolerances were adhered to when reboring, a pair of matched pistons were installed and the running -in process was gentle.

Firstly, was the jetting checked for use with the exhaust system? If you go for free flowing sport silencers you must re-jet. The same applies to the fitting of certain brands of stainless silencers that may not have the same baffle configuration as the originals.

As a point in case I recently treated my R50 to a pair of new Keihans that conform to the German TUV and have baffles as original.

My old set were thirty year old Breakwell & Green that gave a rasp to the exhaust note when winding on and I can only assume they had less baffling. Checking out the jetting with the Keihans while out for a test ride showed that the carburation was now slightly rich and I was able to jet down from 120 to 115

Continuing on with the carburettor theme, I remember Charles Locke from MLG's (they were the main dealer for BM's back in the sixties,) stressing that with the Bing carbs it is essential that the pilot jet air screw is never undone more than two turns. Due to the construction of the carb further weakening of the mixture will have a detrimental effect on the engine running throughout the range. **In extreme cases this may cause piston failure!** I have always erred on the side of caution as far as this is concerned even though the plugs show a slightly rich mixture after idling.

Another thought on the problem are the pistons themselves. Try and purchase BMW originals, some sizes are available (although at a price) from Germany and the quality is guaranteed. I've heard of repro pistons from

Italy that have been manufactured from the wrong material and the expansion rate guarantees a seizure! On the other hand I've heard of Italian made pistons that exceed the quality of the originals! All very confusing! Verify the source before buying and try and get some reassurance on their quality. A source in Switzerland that has been mentioned recently is Mark Huggett. His E-mail number is Huggett@Swissonline.ch - Web site www.BMWbike.com. or telephone **00441-6288-78020**. His web site has pages and pages, a thousand items are listed, many for early models. One word of caution though, Switzerland is not in the E.U. so be prepared for a British Customs bill plus VAT at our rate. But if you need that illusive spare there's little choice but to bite the bullet.

Seat Recovering

I had the dual seat on my R50 recovered last year by a firm in the Midlands who advertise regularly in all the classic magazines ; no names, but I expect you have all heard of them. Now, the result was perfectly satisfactory to a point, but it's always that "to a point" that niggles so I'll explain what happened.

The firm were most helpful on the phone and confirmed that they had seat covers as the originals; black with white piping. They pointed out that dual seats with a rubber support instead of the "bed spring" arrangement were a problem and they could not help if the rubber was perished. Fair enough so far, and as mine did have the bed springs, off it went (having paid extra for insurance of course) with Parcel Force. Three weeks later it returned and at first sight looked great. Then I saw the aluminium strips that run along either side. They looked as though they had been attacked by a hammer-wielding maniac, this observation probably fits the workshop junior perfectly as surely only a delinquent could have reeked so much havoc! Despair set in after I had telephoned every

known stockist of spares in this country, as the reply was always the same, "don't stock it as it's too fragile and gets damaged when we send it out!"

I did overcome the disaster eventually after spending a day in the shed gently tapping out the dents so that the strips looked fairly presentable, but the moral is, take them off before you entrust any one to recover the seat and refit yourself. Incidentally, the strips and fixing screws are available I've since learnt, from Martin Kornhas in Germany at 49Dm per side, plus postage and packing.

Stainless Steel items

Mention of Martin Kornhas leads me nicely in to the next topic, stainless items.

If you're a stainless freak like myself and are prepared to put practicality over originality then this is for you. I've just received from Germany a couple of items that may be of interest.

Available at **29Dm** each are **Wheel bearing screws -for R25/2 -27, R51-69S**. These are the screw in covers that hold the hubcap and bearings in place. If yours are like mine were they're probably rusty and the four tool location holes are probably burred over from the previous owner using a punch to remove them! The stainless ones are nicely made and polish up with a little effort, but one thing to note, they are for use with the earlier felt grease retaining rings and not the later neoprene seals. You may need two felt seals and a seal case for each wheel but I'd check before ordering.

Also available are **Generator cover screws complete with circlips-10mm or 14mm heads. for 51/3-R69S. Price 14.5Dm each.** Once more nicely made and polish up well. One word of advice when ordering from Germany try and send a reasonable size order to spread the postage and packing charges over all the items otherwise the order value may be less than the postage. Ideally send a copy of the parts list sheet with the items ringed. Delivery time by

Parcel Force usually 12-14 days. Express 6-7days, but at a price!

I've been slowly replacing items on my R50 with stainless steel and so far have come up against a brick wall in trying to obtain thick bevelled washers for use on the fork spindles, suspension unit bolts, fork top nuts etc. but now there is a source. If sufficient people want a set I'll speak ever so nicely to Keith Shaw and maybe he will oblige us. As most will be aware, Keith supplies stainless fixings for post '69 machines but has a soft spot for the Earles fork models.(see his R69 on the Club stand at Stanford on July 23rd)

Tank Covers

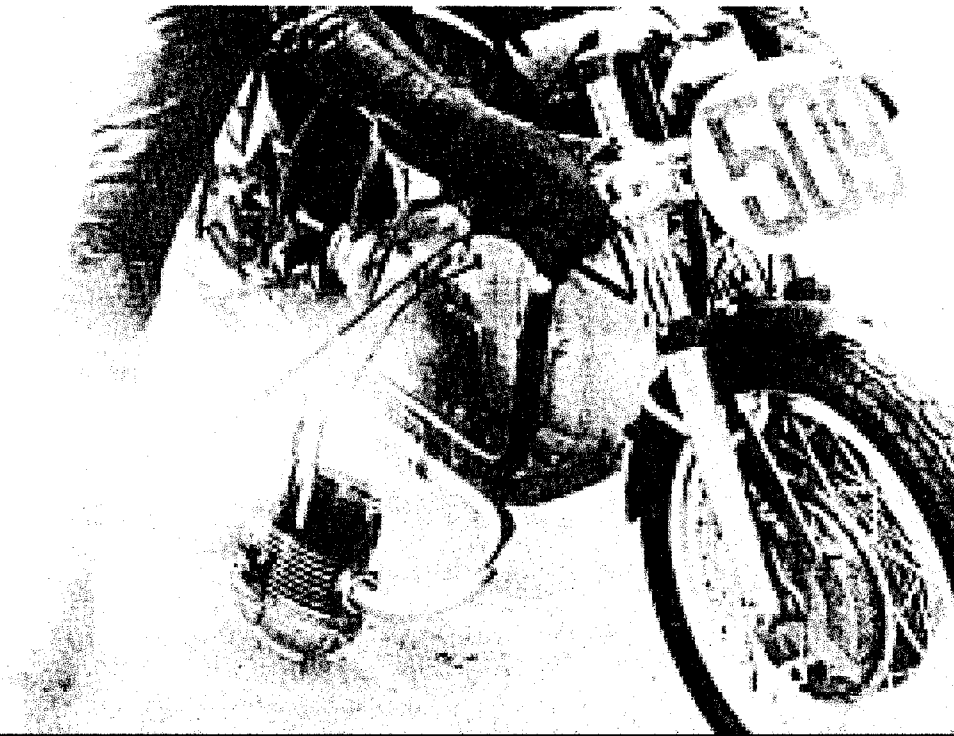
It's nice to get a recommendation of quality work. From Eric Rance comes praise for the Motorcycle Seat Works, 366, Woodside Road, Wyke, Bradford.BD12 8HT.

Tel.01274 6044672

Eric has had covers made for both the standard R50/60 tank and also a large Hoske. In both cases they fitted like a glove and the quality was excellent at a reasonable price.

Sheet Metal Work

Brian Dees, of Deespray Quality Painting, was the only person to contact me when I asked for information on the services available for the older machines. Brian is getting known for his quality work on sheet metal and fibreglass. His recent projects have included, returning a pair of pre '69 mudguards to as new condition from rotting remains, and removing the toolbox and infilling the aperture on the top of a Hoske tank. He can modify fuel tanks to suit different models, offer stoving and wheel rebuilds etc. His paint service includes hand lining, and all to Concours standard. He can be contacted (8am-10pm 7days a week) on 01634 843755.



I can't help publishing one of my favourite photos. This Muthig- race prepared R50 is still running even though the cylinder broke off at the flange and dropped into the road. Machine is fitted with Ceriani front fork and Fontana front brake. Shows what can happen when you soup-up a standard road machine!

In the December issue of "The Journal" you may remember reading a letter from Paul Sharman of Bedfordshire. Well, Paul is approaching that age when "life is supposed to start" (It's forty if I can remember that far back) so he's going to celebrate the occasion. Not with a major p...-up you understand; that would soon be forgotten after the headache had worn off. No, he's going to do something he'll never forget; ride the main land coast on his newly restored 1938 R66!! Paul's R66 will, hopefully, be on display at Stanford Hall, so anyone with a similar project may like to discuss the trials and tribulations with him. Alternatively, you may fancy accompanying him on the ride.

As an insight into the vagaries, or otherwise, of this pre-war 600, I decided to include a Road Test from "Motor Cycle", August 4th 1938. Will Paul find his BM performs as the test shows or was the tester "economical" with the truth? I'll get Paul's verdict after his ride!

The 600cc Overhead-Valve Spring-Frame BMW R66

In recent years BMW machines have earned for themselves an enviable reputation. Their flat-twin engines are recognised as magnificent examples of modern engineering practice, and in the racing and trials spheres their list of successes is rapidly becoming formidable.

The standard models have long been first class machines, and the latest 600cc overhead-valve model with spring-frame shows that the designers have not rested on their laurels. Perhaps the most fascinating feature of this extremely pleasant machine is the suspension. The front forks, which incorporate spring-loaded plungers, hydraulically damped, are well known. The rear springing is of the plunger type, similar to that used on the racing BMW's.

It may be stated straightaway that this suspension absorbs all but the very worst road shocks.*(I certainly hope so for Paul's sake. Ed)* Cobbled roads and tram-setts are unnoticed by the rider. On the open road the BMW simply glides along.

So excellent is the suspension that the BMW requires getting used to; at first the rider automatically rides bumpy roads taking the weight of his body on the thigh muscles. This is quite unnecessary, for while the wheels may be moving up and down considerably, the rest of the machine remains perfectly steady. Even on very bad roads *(nothings changed then! Ed)* the springing was able to cope with bumps at normal speeds, and it was only when a deep drain or bad pot-hole was hit at speed that the forks bottomed; the rear springing was never made to bottom, even when a pillion passenger was carried.

Steering and road-holding on a motorcycle go hand-in-hand, and it is not surprising, in view of the suspension, that the steering of the BMW is excellent. Tramlines, even deep-set ones, are not noticed at all, and on the open road the BMW was above reproach. Fast bends could be taken in long sweeps, and on twisty roads the model was quite at home.

Wet roads were encountered only once during the tests. They were in particularly slimy condition after a spell of fine weather. So much was this the case that on several occasions wheel spin was experienced when the machine was accelerated hard, but at no time did the model deviate from the straight or the rear wheel slide outwards, even on corners taken at very high speeds. This question of cornering at speed, however, has to be watched carefully with the BMW, for the whole machine is so smooth at wide throttle openings that there is a very real tendency for the rider to go into corners at far higher speeds than is usual.

So much, then, for the steering and road holding. Of the braking little needs to be said, for both brakes were extremely powerful; the front even to the point of being fierce, and it was an easy thing to squeal the front tyre when braking hard from high speeds.

The power unit may be said to be first-class. At low speeds and when ticking over there was a certain amount of noise from the valve gear, but once the machine was on the open road this was unnoticed by the rider.

Hills encountered on normal main roads are simply eaten up in top gear. The machine, however, prefers "revs" under these conditions to being made to pull, and if on a hill the speed in top gear dropped below some 40mph there was a tendency for the engine to labour. During the test an alcohol fuel was used, and even when the motor was maltreated it refused to pink. The engine's preference for high revs on hills will be better understood when it is said that the 600cc BMW is a fast machine. Under any conditions the speedometer could be pushed up to 60mph in top gear with ease, and the speedometer was checked and found correct. The mean timed speed of four runs over a quarter of a mile was 85.7 mph, but there was a fairly strong wind blowing at the time of the test, and the best timed speed of 90mph is probably nearer the machine's true maximum. In third gear (6.1 to 1) a timed speed of 80mph was attained, and in second gear (8.2) the maximum was 68mph.

But as far as performance is concerned it was in acceleration that the BMW shone most. In the intermediate gears the acceleration is almost breathtaking. The figures in the performance table give some idea of this feature of the BMW, but in third and top gears the best performance was naturally higher up the speed range. The figure of 72mph attained at the end of a quarter mile from a standing start is an excellent one, but even this was

attained with the rider closing the throttle for each gear change. The reason for this was the gear change on the model tested was not ideal. Good changes could be made if the throttle was closed and care taken, but it was not found easy to make a clean change from third to top at high speeds. Some small criticism could be directed at the neutral "notch", which had to be felt for carefully; preferably with the auxiliary hand lever; and to the clutch, which, although perfectly sweet, required care in engagement for a smooth getaway.

With a machine that provides such an excellent speed range and such rapid acceleration there could be some justification for a high minimum speed in top gear, but the BMW could be throttled down to less than 10mph in top gear if the ignition were fully retarded, and would run quite smoothly at this speed. If there are any doubts about shaft drive this machine removes them. Throughout the test there was nothing in the behaviour of the machine to indicate that the transmission was by shaft, except that at certain speeds a slight whine could be detected from the bevel-box if the rider was listening intently; this was so slight that at traffic speeds the noise from the air intake was greater than any other sound, including that of the exhaust. At high speeds the exhaust note was a pleasing low snarl, at low speeds it could cause annoyance to none.

Starting the engine from cold seemed to require a certain amount of knack. In view of the traverse action of the kick-starter, it was found best to start the engine with the machine on the stand. A wide throttle opening and generous flooding were required to produce an easy start from cold. When warm, the engine always started perfectly, and on several occasions the rider started it by hand while in the saddle. The engine of the machine tested is so well made that after several hundred miles of really hard thrashing there was hardly any trace of oil to be seen anywhere on the exterior, and the whole machine could have been put in showroom condition in less than fifteen minutes.

To sum up, it may be said that the BMW is one of the best of modern luxury mounts. It is fast, yet docile, has thrilling acceleration, and, above all, is supremely comfortable to ride under all conditions.

Further tests of the 600cc BMW under better climatic conditions give a timed speed over the quarter mile of 91.8mph. The machine was also timed over a lap of Brooklands and averaged 89mph. In the road test article it was stated that the best timed speed of 90mph was probably the machine's true maximum; the further tests prove that the maximum is, in fact, comfortably over ninety. An important point in this connection is that the speeds were achieved with the air cleaner in position.

Specification

Engine: 69.8/78mm. (597cc) Carbs.: German Amal. Gearbox: four-speed.

Transmission: Shaft drive, spiral bevel gears, and rubber shock absorber.

Ignition: Bosch coil and dynamo. Lighting: Bosch 6-volt with voltage control.

Fuel Capacity: 3 gals. Tyres: Dunlop 3.25/19 Ground clearance: 5 1/4 inches.

Weight: 415 lbs in full touring trim. (?? Ed.) Price: 135.00

Performance Data

Quarter mile from standing start: 72 mph. Braking from 30 mph: 35 feet.

Fuel consumption at a maintained 40 mph: 69 mpg.

One last request folks, if you have any ideas for the 2001 season, give me a ring. I've a few ideas of my own but I need input now so that dates can be pencilled into the calendar. Ride safely.

Marked in MC Rider