The BMW Club

Vintage & Classic News

Issue 13/2004

Exclusive– Road Test of 1923 R32



V.M.C.C FOUNDERS DAY RALLY

EDITORIAL – Taken at Stanford Hall, the photo above (courtesy of Janet Dickings) shows just some of the Register machines. The R75/5 in the foreground belongs to Ted Snary and was the only non-black and white present! The Earles 69S, sporting one of the larger Hoske tanks, belongs to John Halls. Unusual for this event the weather was variable and the forecast of rain may have deterred a few but nevertheless, we had a good showing.

While on the subject of attendance, I'd like to mention the Vintage & Classic Rally that was held earlier this year. Although the numbers attending were the same as last year, it was obvious that the number of pre-69 machines was down and that of modern BM's up. It has been commented on that the venue is too far away, but allowance has been made by extending the Rally from Thursday to Monday. No excuse really as we had riders this year from Scotland, Eire and Holland! Although the event is open to all Club Members it is organised under the Register name specifically for you. Next years Rally will be held at the same venue and over the third weekend of June so please let's see more 'oldies'- bikes that is- otherwise the event will become just another BMW Rally. It is a case of 'Support it or Lose it'.

continued on page 8

VINTAGE & CLASSIC REGISTER DIARY
ADVANCED NOTICE OF EVENTS FOR 2005

April 23rd/24th
International Classic Motorcycle Show. Stafford County Showground. Register Stand.

First weekend in May
Vintage & Classic Register Gathering Ilkley, Yorkshire.

May
The Classic Bike Clubs Show, Stanford Hall, Nr. Lutterworth, Leics.

June
4th Vintage & Classic Register Rally, Llwyngwair Manor Holiday Park, Newport, Nr. Fishguard Pembrokeshire, S.Wales.

July
V.M.C.C. Founders Day Rally, Stanford Hall, Nr. Lutterworth, Leics.

September
Stinkwell Classic Show Beaumanor Hall, Woodhouse, Leics.

BLACK BEAUTY – Part 1

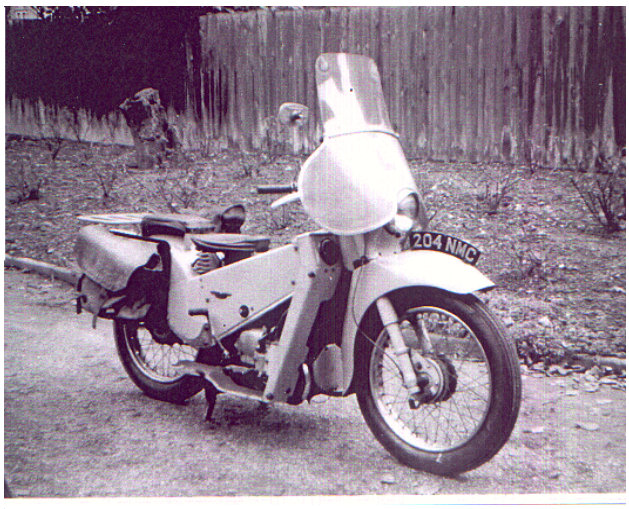
Gerry Douglas-Sherwood, the owner of an R50 which has well in excess of 200,000 miles on the clock, looks back and makes some observations on BMW's and other machines.

Empty vessels make the most noise, or so we are led to believe. The Velocette L.E. was known for its silent running. It was said that Police forces favoured that quirky, diminutive, under-powered bike for its local patrols so constables could creep up behind criminals and collar them before they heard a thing. This tale might be apocryphal, but at least it did the insubstantial L.E. sales figures no harm.

Owning and riding an L.E. was a special and untypical motorcycling experience in the 1960's, as indeed it continues to be today. In that era of crude, loud, oily British machines, the Ace Café, the 59 Club, Rockers, Teddy Boys and headline antisocial behaviour, quiet, reliable, trouble-free motor cycles only appealed to those on the fringe; to those not given to wild flamboyant statements and knuckle-dusters.

It must have been while I was an apprentice with VW Motors in St. John's Wood, London, that I first came to truly appreciate BMW motor cycles as epitomising both equal and superior virtues to the L.E. Both swept by with scarce a murmur, rustling up autumn leaves like a passing ghost. A habit common to riders of both machines was to have their left thumb hovering near the horn button, to make heard that which was not audible within the background hum of London traffic.

Aesthetics played an important part in this analytical equation. Each design elicited visual excitement, but for opposite reasons. The simple, almost stark grey, slab-sided LE was androgynous. It was burdened with an insoluble identity crisis. Its all-weather protection was an anathema to most confessed motorcyclists yet, perhaps perversely, it undeniably stood out within ranks of Triumphs, BSA's, AJS's and a plethora of other contemporary non-scooters. And yet a strong kinship existed too, in that the Velo and BMW shared a



1961 Velocette LE Mk. 3

twin, shaft-driven layout, so making the British bike, in the rose-tinted eyes of an LE rider, a poor man's BMW.

BMWs were big, black, Bavarian and beautiful. They exuded an air of quality, ruggedness and efficiency. The black livery and white pinstripes gave them an .undeniable, distinctive sense of remote sophistication, like the passing of a monogrammed Rolls Royce with darkened windows. Yet they felt drawn from a culture re throttling through a snowy Alpine pass, riding down to Asia Minor or crossing the Kalahari Desert was an everyday occurrence. They were built to last, and earned themselves an almost grudging admiration.

Because of and in spite of its silent running, BMWs were enviously acknowledged as being as near the top of the heap as made no difference. Few were ever seen (or heard) wafting along the roads of Britain. Their exclusivity and desirability was assured. By the one was aware of its august presence it was gone. I seem to recall my first conscious sighting of a BM' was during a school holiday spent in Shelf, a small community nestling between the industrial cheeks of Bradford and Halifax. A black and white spectrum passed by with a mere swish of tyres, its aftermath being the indelible image of a large round rear light flanked by two low-slung cylinders. I was most impressed.

My mentor at V.W Motors was Mike Nunn. Mike formerly worked at A.F.N. Ltd., Isleworth, in the motor cycle department. A.F.N. at that time was the main importer of BMW

cars and bikes. The right-hand-drive version of the successful, Italian-designed, Isetta bubble cars manufactured by B.M.W, were shipped over to England and assembled in Brighton. As the name suggests, A. F.N stood for Archie Frazer Nash, recent makers of a range of highly competitive, lightweight sports cars, otherwise known as 'Chain-gang' Nashes, named after the weight saving chain-driven gearboxes they used.

Mike worked on both bikes and cars, and would often have the use of a BMW bike at weekends to travel down to Hove to see his sister. Although he was not a particular fan of BMW's he would eulogise about their silence, handling "as on rails" and supreme comfort. His own mount consisted of an old Tiger 90 fitted with R26 front forks. That machine would be totally stripped down and rebuilt annually ready for its MOT. Mike used it every day to commute through the West End traffic from Streatham. He was only stopped once, in Park Lane. That was by a policeman who commented that he always saw Mike ride to work but he could never make out what bike he was riding, and simply stopped him to find out.

The BMW bug grew. Through lack of use really (I only lived ten minutes walk from work) the Velo LE eventually went to L. Stevens in Goldhawk Road to make way for a white, RHD Isetta. The car was found in the middle of Suffolk, in a tiny village that appeared to comprise just four houses, a lot of trees and nothing much else. Part of the gnawing obsession to own a BMW motor cycle had in a way been satisfied. This rotund, six-feet long three-wheeler was powered by a civilised version of the production R26 motorcycle engine, although very few parts were interchangeable with the bike unit. It sported a 12-volt starter and electrics, a heater and de-mister (neither of which worked; in fact the screen used to ice up severely on frosty nights, when often the heel of my clutch foot would be sliding around in a small puddle of ice). But it was huge fun to drive and could park on a sixpence (5p in decimal currency). It was quite like driving a go-kart. In the race round Hyde Park Corner it could hustle under the wheels of a bus with no problem.

On the other hand, owning such a tiny vehicle did have its drawbacks. My heart fell

MICK BARR
INDEPENDENT
BMW SPECIALIST

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MICK & GLENYSE R67/ 2 & R69 OWNERS

one evening as I clocked out from work. The Isetta had gone, disappeared. A small dry patch on a damp road was all that remained. Where to turn? Then a suspicious giggling could detected from my work mates, with a lot of foot-shuffling and



BMW ISETTA 'PLUS'

averted gazes. The game was up. The swines had bodily carried the car down into the basement well out of sight. Some experiences leave scars for life.

More than the twins, the R26 engine had a reputation for dropping its exhaust valve. The half expected bang and clatter occurred with my Isetta just as I joined the Westway flyover at Paddington. Luckily I was transporting a friend at the time, so we pushed the car the wrong way down a slip road and back to his flat, thankfully not far away. I removed the engine (most basic functions being almost impossible to reach

with the engine in situ) and carried it up five flights of stairs to the spare bedroom. The piston had become mutilated, but fortunately not holed. A good filing and a new valve and gasket soon had the injury repaired.
In the summer of 1970 the Isetta (by then fashionably named "The Hobbit' after the original series on the wireless) and I embarked on a tour of mainland Britain, covering 3,000 miles in ten days. The expedition was nearly terminated when a detached breather pipe expelled a sump full of oil along the roads of Lanarkshire. An immediate tow to the nearest garage, handily just a mile down the road, then a refill, had us on our way again, heading for Galloway.

It would be another seven years before circumstances evolved to a point where I could both afford a BMW motor cycle and one presented itself. At an early stage the decision had been made that an R50 would suit my needs perfectly well, a choice Mike readily endorsed.

It was in the small ads of the motor cycle press. At that time I was living in Colchester. An R50 was advertised as complete but needing work, in Leigh-on-Sea. I had a lock-up garage at hand, a wandering power cable, plus the time between my months on duty on the lighthouses around our coasts to be able to tackle the job, plus a background in mechanical engineering. I had no idea of what to expect or what to look for, apart from a complete bike. BMW's represented a new and exciting book of discovery, ready to be opened. Chapter one began with viewing the machine, buying it for £400 and transporting it back home on the bed of a Transit pick-up. Acclimatisation to its weight would require practice - and muscles.

92 PMG came with its buff logbook, matching numbers and not a lot more. It had been in the charge of several owners since starting life at, ironically, AFN Ltd. in 1958. Its headlight, fuel tank and rear mudguard came wrapped in a heavy overcoat of Isopon body filler, painted white. The dual seat gently lowered one on to the battery. A cheap aluminium front mudguard lay under a set of straight handlebars not dissimilar to a Vincent. Yet beneath the crud and impending air of dereliction, I had a distinct vi-



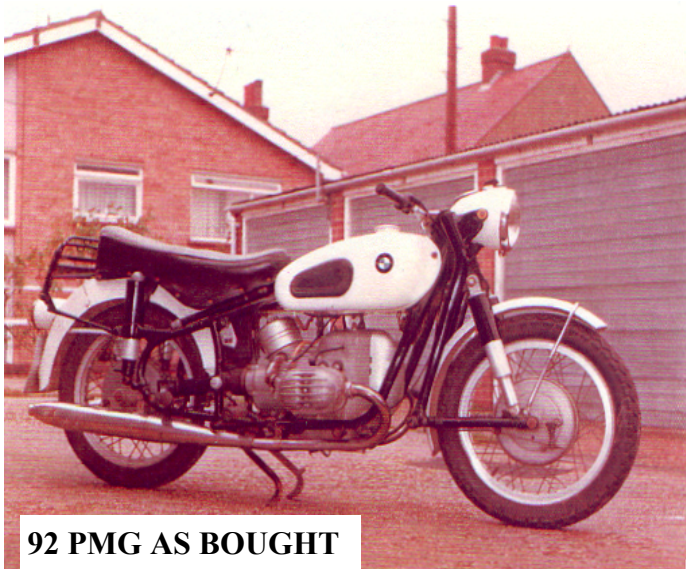
sion of its possibilities. This BMW would rise from its metaphoric ashes.

The task of dismantling and rebuilding an entire BMW motor cycle is not a venture to be embraced by the faint-hearted with no tools. Pretty soon it became obvious that both special knowledge and special tools would be required to make any substantial progress. The first obstacle was solved by the purchase of a copy of *Clymer's BMW Service and Repair Handbook.* Long before these events I had seen an edition of Clymer's comprehensive *BMW Repair Manual,* with its blue and yellow cover, in a book shop in Oxford Street, but being an impoverished, struggling apprentice at the time I could not justify spending out on such luxuries when a weekend treat was to dine out for seven shillings at Lyons Corner House. The handbook was a brilliant and wise acquisition; I still use it today.

It soon became fairly obvious to even the meanest observer that the entire bike was totally - and I mean really totally - worn out. How ever the previous owner had ridden the thing was a complete mystery. It had been thrashed to within an inch of its life Everything to which one could append a name needed a thorough overhaul, apart from the final drive that is. Once the filthy, stinking old oil had been drained and the unit swilled out with fresh lubrication, it proved perfectly service-

able.

I made tools, cobbling together metal bars and tubes with 1/2 inch bolts that did the job. I used my spare time on the lighthouse to assemble a small forge, blasted by two paraffin blow



92 PMG AS BOUGHT

lamps. It was crude but effective. I only once relented when it came to extracting the rattling crankshaft. That was a five-minute job for the man we all thought knew everything about BNW's, Frank Cox at Markhouse Motor Cycles. Often was the time I spent there on a Sunday morning, chatting to Frank and his assorted customers, parting with cash, and avoiding awkward questions about race and politics. If Frank could see you were genuinely interested in bikes then he would give you his time. But whether you liked the man or not, he did have the spares we needed at a time when older BMW parts were becoming scarce and expensive. Let us just say that my wife's Jewish ancestry was never mentioned within Frank's hearing.

Judging by the excessive wear and tear then, the bike had covered a huge mileage. Evidence of a front-end impact was soon discovered but thank goodness, the frame measured straight. Nevertheless, the headlamp had been crushed at one time and the front engine cover holed by the impact of the bracing bar across the fork stanchions. Even the shaft drive was falling to pieces. In the end I adapted a shaft from a /5, the only modification necessary was the paring away of the rear coupling shoulder to miss the swing-arm casting. Although the wiring loom was original it did required a lot of repair. It may not sound like an onerous task, but inserting new runs, replacing sleeving, soldering joints, fitting grommets, etc. took a lot of time and effort..

The frame and cycle parts went to Renzland at Marks Tey for enamelling, while all tin-ware was given innumerable coats of brush-painted, black Humbrol enamel, after removing a whole generation of rust and corrosion.. The finish was to last over 20 years, with the headlamp and fuel tank having retained their 'cheapo' Humbrol finish to this day. Not being married then, I could cure each item on top of the night store heater and old chairs in the sitting room and use the kitchen as a paint shop and de-greasing bay. Rubbing down was done in the sink, with no-one having to care a jot if the house stank of fuel, oil, grease or wet paint. Bachelorhood does have decided advantages.

A sensitive point with many old BMW enthusiasts is the question of lining in the livery of pre-'69 machines. I decided at an early stage in the restoration I would do everything as right as possible, and soon understood that all lining was carried out by hand at the factory. No problem. The back of a dining chair was used to support each mudguard and the tank. Two brushes were retrieved from my water colour paint box, a pot of white Humbrol enamel opened, a deep breath was taken, and away I went.



Lining and curing, 'Bachelor Style'

It is not until you handle these components that a feel for their subtle curvature develops. Using the edge of a mudguard as a guide to

the white line is fairly straightforward, but breaking out on to a gleaming black tank with a brush full of white paint takes a little more nerve. Especially if you have never attempted it before. Always tackle the mudguards first, and have a pot of white spirit and a soft cloth at hand to wipe out any mistakes. For mistakes there will be, however focused and attentive you are.

The project took a strangely significant nine-month gestation period to complete, from first dragging the machine off the lorry to having it ready for its MOT, duly gained in 1978 for the meagre charge of £2.50. Teething troubles abounded, mainly through self- confessed ignorance. The main disappointment was a faulty second gear jumping out of mesh; a headache swiftly remedied by the swap for an exchange unit from Frank Cox. The replacement was an 'S' box that has remained with the bike ever since.

From the beginning I had problems with the crankshaft. It was not possible to tune the engine to run as smoothly as I knew it should, and over the following months and years I stripped the engine down innumerable times to try to effect a cure. The main bearings never seemed to hold together for very long either. Salvation finally came when Motorrad Jaeger sent me a reconditioned unit from Germany. That crank has given sterling service beyond the call for the better part of a hundred thousand miles. Sadly, Jaegers are no longer trading.

With the bike cane three items the true value of which I paid no heed at the time. One was an original Denfield luggage carrier, the other was a set of Breakwell and Green stainless silencers. Several dents in the silencers attested to the bike's hard life, but as most are well out of sight the old BM still has those fitted, and they scarcely look a day older after 26 years of motoring. The front steel pipes, however, lasted a few years before collapsing. Needless to say the first choice for replacements was Breakwells, and they too have given exemplary service.

The use of stainless parts wherever possible simply reflects a personal belief in improving a basically sound product to reduce its maintenance to a minimum and its life to a maximum. The fitting of a solid-state battery, a G. R.P. rear mudguard (the original disintegrated in three parts upon removal) and the use of modem tyres not only gives peace of mind but also ensures the maximum time is spent riding not tinkering. The engine bars came from a /5, with 1/2 inch taken out of its top tube to match the fitting brackets to the frame down-tubes. The screen, a *Speed* 7, is probably the best on the market for complete weather protection. I first fitted it to my metallic green R75/6 for regular runs up to Fife in Scotland, but when that bike was eventually sold I found the screen fitted perfectly on to the R50 with just one altered mounting bracket. In fact a second screen had to be purchased following two disasters with the first. A reversing Trabant knocked the bike over and cracked the right side of the screen, then a suicidal pheasant tried to break through the screen a mile from home (my home, not his). The screen won, but our feathered friend managed to leave a large crack in the left side before retiring, no doubt with a monumental headache.

The bike has run perfectly well with monograde 40 oil in the engine and transmission. The engine oil is changed every 1,000 miles, the rest once a year, preferably in spring to flush out any condensation left from winter. I have worn through twelve rear tyres and six front, the longest lasting was a horrible Dunlop K78 front that simply would not wear out. It made the steering disconcertingly twitchy and I desperately wanted to change it, but as money was tight it had to stay. 22,00O miles later it finally crept towards its legal limit so with a sigh of relief, I changed back to the Pirellis I knew. An average tyre life is six thousand rear, twelve thousand front. Six air filters, three sets of brake linings, seven sets of W4AC plugs, three speedo cables, a dual seat, one fuel tap, two mudguards (front and rear) and a set of handlebar rubbers have marked the passage of time. The original coil finally called it a day recently after forty-five years faithful service. All dampers are the originals.

Major traumas have included a dropped exhaust valve when overtaking a line of fast moving articulated lorries on the M25 when approaching the Dartford Crossing; a holed piston on a particularly bleak stretch of the M4 when riding down to Penzance, and the complete loss of drive a few yards from

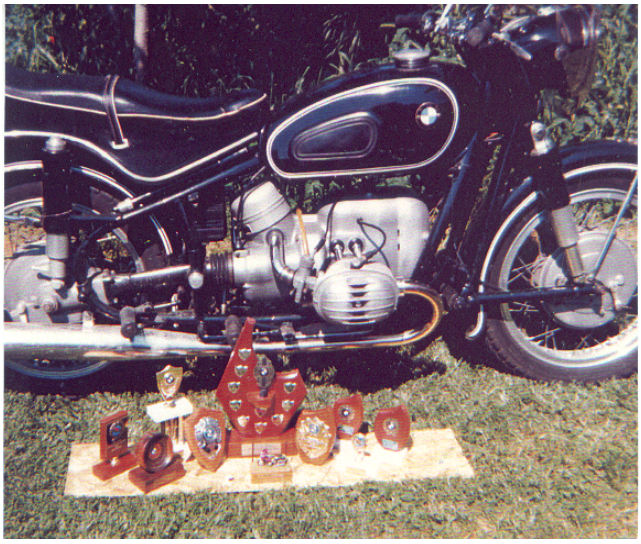
home. That one was caused by the clutch centre plate hub shearing its rivets. Three clutch-less rides came about following 1) a broken cable. 2) the sudden and unexpected loss of a cable nipple somewhere in rural Kent and, as a result of the clutch pushrod wearing its way through the pressure plate in windswept Norfolk.

As time passed by, PMG occasionally became my sole means of transport. It catered for my needs: shopping, long social visits to see my folks, courting, camping and carrying extraordinary cargo. I have travelled back from Wales and the Isle of Wight with huge piles of bags and boxes tied to the bike, twice with the load well above my shoulders. The bike always ran particularly well under those circumstances, especially when pulling hard. I would commute to Broadstairs in Kent from Suffolk on a monthly basis, then to Bridgend in Wales. Once I had to stand relief duty at St.Ann's lighthouse, way the other side of Milford Haven. I was at North Foreland at the time, so had to pack, then ride the 400-plus miles to the other side of the country. It turned out to be a notably smooth, comfortable ride if I recall.

Participation in Club life became a feature too. Splashing around soggy rural back roads the depths of winter, negotiating unexpectedly deep fords and spending the summer chasing obscure pub signs, low bridges or windmills became the norm. In the face of overwhelming competition from modern K's and R's with many times the power and speed of the R50, we nevertheless picked up the East Anglian Trophy in 1986 and Rider the Year Award.

The R50 does most things well, whether it involves cruising down a motorway or climbing up the side of a Welsh mountain. She is economic (averaging I guess about 55 mpg, smooth, quiet and comfortable, and is commendably light on tyres. With 18 inch tyres becoming gradually more difficult to source, this is not a bad thing. At present I run Avon SM Mk11 on the rear, and a Metzeler ME33 Laser on the front. Each is filled
with Ultraseal. It works on my wheelbarrow, so I reckon it should prevent the bike tyres going pop.

Is there anything I would change? Yes. Long-term ownership of a roller-bearing engined BMW reveals that to be quite honest, their engines are frail, however well maintained they are. The most consistent and expensive problems I have experienced with PMG stem from its engine just not being strong enough. In good fettle they will steam along relentlessly. Given their head, they will pick up their skirts and fly. But neglect basic maintenance like cleaning out the oil slingers, or keep running on dirty oil and you will be faced with a pile of trouble.
Next, although the 6 volt Bosch lighting was probably the best available for road conditions in 1958, they are far too marginal forty-five years later. Halogen bulbs are available,



but turn out to be little better than a good tungsten brand. The only answer is a decent 12 volt system. I am used to 6 volts, but on a wet night it is far too easy to lose the side of the road in the face of blazing headlights and glaring reflection.

No other machine has the panache of an Earles-forked twin, its grace, style or elegance. I derive as much satisfaction from ownership now as I did all those years ago; the thrill of riding it has probably increased rather than diminished in direct proportion to the adventures we have shared and our evolved relationship and understanding.

An old BMW motor cycle is only an out of date, mass-produced, manufactured product when all is said and done. But sometimes a factory creates a product that amounts to vastly more than its component parts. It initiates an intense, durable loyalty the strength

of which the producers could never have envisaged. 92 PMG is one of those products.

Gerry Douglas-Sherwood



LETTERS

Bruce Preston, Vice President of the Club writes……

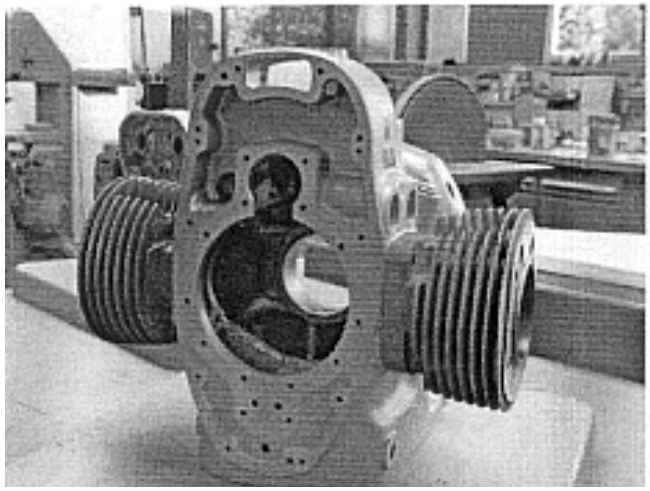
Reading the Vintage & Classic News reminded me of a few things I meant to say. Then I couldn't find them! Now I have so….

Right hand sidecars: I was very much involved in the legislation when the ban was introduced. As B.M.F. Chairman I sat on the Select Committee when the proposed ban was debated, briefing Arthur Bottomley, who was fighting our corner. After some gentlemanly debate, it was put the vote and the (Tory) government's ban was rejected. Fat lot of good it did, Kenneth Clarke the Minister of Transport overturned it and right hand sidecars were banned anyway. Incidentally, it is perfectly legal for right-hand sidecars on bikes made since 1981 to be ridden in this country but… they must be registered in another country!

Tank Slappers: Around about 1959 I was making my way along the Euston Road with all of the club magazines for that month mounted on the rear carrier. It was a newsletter at that time and I was the Editor and I planned to post them on the way home, stopping at numerous post boxes as the Post Office turned awkward if they were all put in the same box. The newsletters were quite a weight, being duplicated foolscap size and the old BMW took exception to its load and started shaking its head, finally dumping me in the deserted Euston Road. It was fortunate that 'licking and sticking' went on until late at night. I'd like to blame this on Earles type forks but I was actually on my R51/3. The later bikes didn't have a monopoly on tank slappers! Incidentally, about ten years later I loaned my R60/2 to the then editor Roy Allen as he was travelling north and didn't want to take his sidecar outfit. This threw a 'wobbler' on Ron and tipped him off on the M1. He didn't have a great load on the back and we never did find the reason; I still have the bike and I have never had it happen since.

STROHLE

Aluminium Nikasil cylinders for R51/3 – R69S BMW's



EDITORIAL CONTINUED…..

Details of these German made sand cast Nikasil aluminium cylinders came to me a little while ago and since I've had the opportunity to see the product. They are available for every BMW from the R51/3 through to the R69S. They are available with bolted flange or studs and no alteration of the crankcase is necessary for the bolted flange option. Threaded inserts are used for the cylinder head fixings. Special bore sizes are available on request.

Now for the 'crunch' the price per pair are 750 Euros and 4 push rod tubes 54 Euros. Worth considering if you need to have your original ones sleeved; the price differential may not be too great with the exchange rate as it is. The company address is:- Strohle GmbH, IndustriesttraBe 29, D-73340 Am-

stetten Germany. *Continued on page* 9
Email info@stroehle.de website– www.stroehle.de

While on the subject of items that are available for the older machines, it is worth mentioning that Keith Shaw has produced a small batch of wheel spindles for the pre-1955 machines. At the time of writing half have been sold so if you're interested contact Keith now on **0115 9727847**. A pair are £65.00 plus £7.00 postage. The quality is excellent; I've just received a pair for my R67. A batch of wheel spindles for the 1955-1969 machines is proposed.

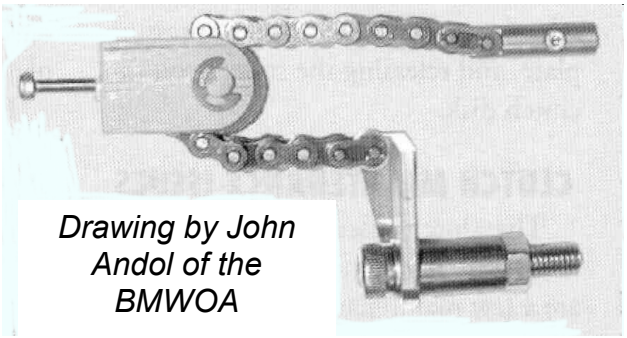
The following article on the 'Easy Clutch' was first printed in the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America magazine. My thanks to them and Craig Vechoric for permission to use it here.

THE EASY CLUTCH

Every now and then I find a product which impresses me because of the simple genius of its design. One such product is the "Easy Clutch," distributed by long time BMW enthusiast and craftsman, Craig Vechorik of Bench Mark Works. Craig, better known as "Vech", is most notable for his expertise with /2 and other vintage BMW motorcycles. However, he is now distributing the Easy Clutch to fit */2, / 5, / 6,* and /7 BMW's.

The Easy Clutch is designed to use an elementary principle of physics to make the actuation of the clutch twice as easy. And, as I said, it is an elegant solution with a simplicity of design. The Easy Clutch uses a simple pulley to make the force required to pull the clutch half what it normally is.

A small pulley wheel is attached to the clutch



Drawing by John Andol of the BMWOA

lever arm at the back of the transmission. A small bracket is attached to the rear of the transmission housing. One end of a small roller chain is attached to this bracket. The little chain loops around the pulley and its other end attaches to the clutch cable. When the clutch is pulled, the pulley moves forward half as far as the cable, requiring only half the effort otherwise required.

Installation is very easy. It is necessary to carefully adjust the clutch so that it fully releases, since a full pull of the handlebar lever only moves the lever at the transmission half as far as it otherwise would. It is possible that some high performance clutch components using a heavier than standard clutch spring might not fully disengage, but this should not be a problem with normal OEM clutch parts.

If you have small hands, arthritis, or any other condition making the clutch pull on your motorcycle a tiring effort, this device was made for you.

Vech cab be contacted at Bench Mark Works U.S.A. 3400 Earles Fork Road, Sturgis, MS 39769, U.S.A. tel./fax. 662 465 6444. Web site www.benchmarkworks.com

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Of course there is another route to take to reduce the effort of pulling in the clutch, and that is to buy a pre-'55 BMW – slightly more expensive however!

Details have been sent to me by Geoff Lewis of Swansea, about a Museum that he recommends visiting if you are on the Continent.

The museum is in Belgium and close to the ring road around Brugge and on the road to Knokke. The address is Dudzeelse Steenweg 27-29, 8000 Brugge. If visiting it is wise to telephone beforehand to confirm when it is open – 0473 70 80 78 or 050-599 056.



If you have internet access check out their site Http://users.pandora.be

SHOW US YOURS– A LOOK AT REGISTER MEMBERS MACHINES
Patsy McGuire's R50/5



OldtimermotorenMuseum

Patsy's 1972 R50/5 was bought in 1999 after he spotted it advertised in 'Classic Bike. It was located in the small Devon village of Appledor.

Although in fair condition a rebuild was called for and Patsy carried this out with the help of a friend. Heads were reconditioned with new seats for unleaded and electronic ignition fitted for reliability. Carbs were fully overhauled etc, etc. (We all know how the jobs snowball on a rebuild!)

One problem however was the combined speedo / rev counter. These are listed as 'not available' from the main U.K. sources but a new one was obtained from S. Meyer in Germany at a very competitive price. Although calibrated in Km/Hr. this does not present a problem. Patsy tells me that Eire is to go over to using metric road signs and speed limits!

All paint work was carried out by the late Eric Krahe, a man who Patsy rated very highly; the standard of work being superb. The seat was also recovered.

This is the short wheel base model and suits Patsy's riding style. It is more agile down country lanes and has an added bonus in that the seat height is lower than the long w/base model. Although only a 500cc it will cruise at 80mph and return 60-70mpg. It is 12lb.lighter than the larger capacity /5's and the questionable stability at high speed of the s/w /5's is not a problem. As Patsy says 'I've never ridden any BMW that wasn't stable in a straight line!'

POSSESSION TAX REARS ITS UGLY HEAD AGAIN!

The DVLA's Consultation on Fee Proposals, issued in August, sees a return to the discredited attempts of the early 1980s and mid 1990s to make motorists pay an annual fee even if keeping their vehicles off the road.

This grossly unfair proposal is one of several contained in the consultation whose theme is that an "annual registration charge" should be collected at tax disc renewal or SORN declaration to subsidise the costs of first registration of new vehicles as well as the costs of issuing / replacing driving licences for individuals. The proposals suggest that first licences for those under 21 should be free of charge.

The level of the fees proposed in DVLA's "preferred option" is £4.50 per VED or SORN transaction, collecting over £155 million extra revenue from vehicle owners, without it appearing to be an increase in taxation. Once authorised, this would be a fee set by DVLA and not subject to annual parliamentary scrutiny in the budget: how long would it be before the £4.50 rose to £10, or £20?

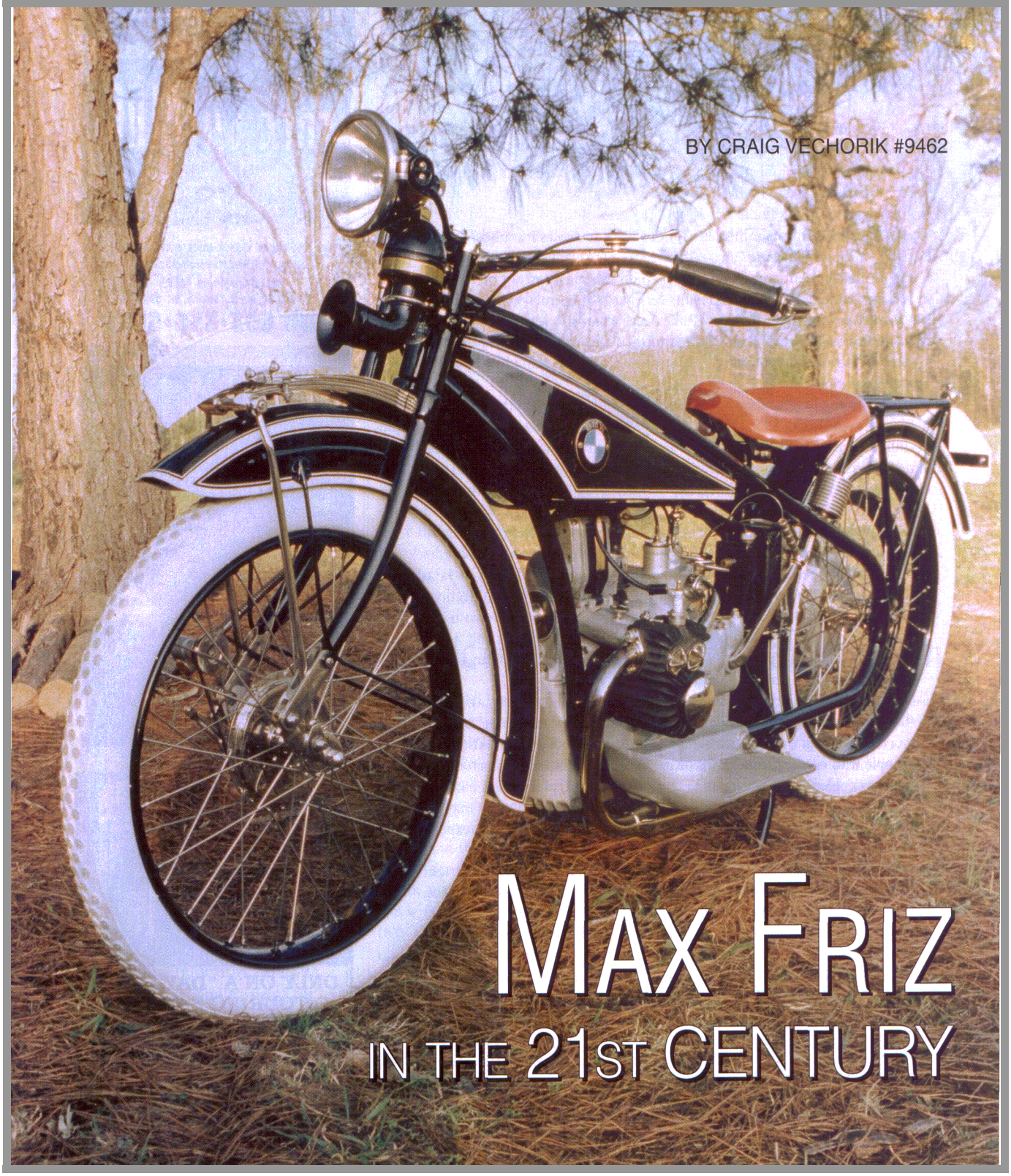
FBHVC Chairman, Andrew Burt, commented "The proposal affects all motorists, but the suggestion that there will now be a charge for obtaining a nil-rate VED tax disc for pre-1973 vehicles, and a charge to make an annual SORN declaration will hit the historic vehicle movement particularly hard. We have already raised our concerns with the Parliamentary Historic Vehicles Club and will be making our view very clear both to DVLA and the Department for Transport."

FBHVC is campaigning to oppose the proposals and invites enthusiasts at the International Classic Motor Show at NEC (October 22-23-24) to visit stand 20700 to sign a petition.

ROAD TEST OF THE 1923 BMW R32

The following road test is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author, Craig Vechoric, and first appeared in the Journal of the BMW Motorcycle Owners of the U.S.A. (The original layout has been revised to allow for use in this newsletter and I apologise for the poor quality of the reproduced-photos.)

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BMW produced its first motorcycle in 1923: the BMW R32. Operational BMW R32 motorcycles are rare these days. I doubt that anyone alive can honestly say they have ridden a new R32 (1923-1926). With that in mind, I thought I would share with you the intimate details of the R32: the history, design and what it is like to start, control and ride this antique motorcycle.

A Brief History
(So, who was Max Friz?)

The roots of the R32 began with Martin Stroller's M2B15 engine design, the *Buyer Kleinmotor* (the Bavarian small engine). The M2B15 was developed as a stationary 6.5 horsepower engine for pumps. Motorcycle manufacturers, in particular Helios and Victoria (1921-22), utilised this engine in their early belt-driven motorcycles.

Max Friz began his career at BMW as an aircraft engineer and BMW asked him to design the R32. Friz used an upgraded flathead version of the M2B15 engine in the BMW R32. The upgraded engine was designated M2B33: 494cc and a whopping 8.5 horsepower at the rear wheel. Friz installed the engine transversely in a double-tube frame so that the flow of air would cool the cylinders. The enclosed gears are coupled directly behind the engine and utilise a dry plate clutch, as in an automobile. Power is transmitted to the rear wheel by a rubber hardy joint to absorb driveline shock, with a drive shaft to the enclosed final drive. Friz's advanced design astonished the ' motorcycle industry when it was first shown at the Paris Motorcycle show in 1923. A layout similar to Friz's survives in BMW motorcycle design to this day.

The Design
(Visual Inspection)

In the first year, the R32 was not equipped with a front brake. The rear brake is an interesting design since BMW had not quite figured out how to incorporate a reliable rear brake with an oil-filled final drive that had leaky, felt rings for seals. (Modern, lipped oil seals had not yet been invented.) There is a second, smaller brake rim directly bolted to the spokes on the right side of the rear wheel, with a single V-shaped brake shoe.

The 26 x 3-inch tires are mounted on clincher rims, not on drop-center safety rims as modern bikes have. If you have a flat while riding with clincher rims, the tire will come off the rim with exciting results!

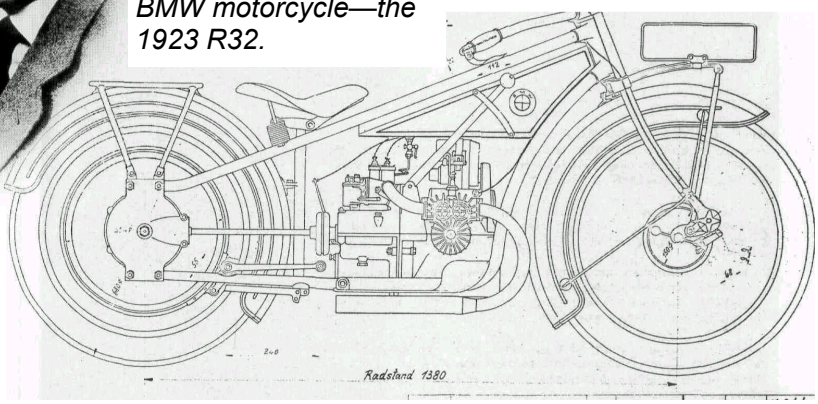
The R32 has a "coffin" gas tank (called this because of its shape). Just to prove that there is nothing new under the sun, the R32 gas tank has a combination gas filter/ gas gauge. The gauge is a tube formed from brass screen. Inside the tube is a spiral of staggered brass tabs. The tabs have numbers stamped on them that correspond to the number of litres of fuel in the tank. Open the gas cap, and a quick visual inspection of the gas level, in relation to the numbered tabs tell you how much gas is in with two neutrals (one between first and second gear and another between second and third gear). Pull in the



The R32 has a hand-shift with two neutrals (one between first and second gear and another



BMW's chief designer, Max Friz, produced the drawing of the first BMW motorcycle—the 1923 R32.



between second and third gear). the tank.

While the optional speedometer instrument is of a conventional nature, it is driven by the front brake drum. The drum has a large external groove, in which a round leather belt runs, to drive a small gearbox mounted on the front fork. This gearbox drives a conventional speedometer cable. It is interesting to note that when you apply the brake (or hit a bump), the suspension moves up, which loosens the drive belt and temporarily disconnects the speedometer.

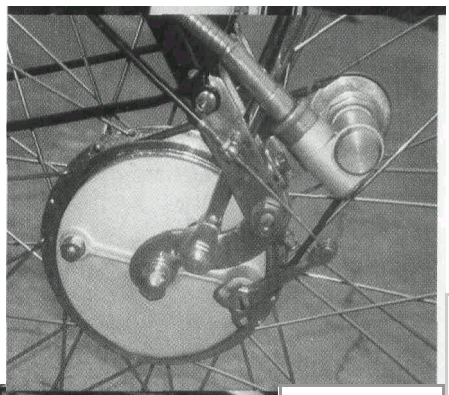
The mechanical design of the drive train is pure Max Friz. *It is definitely an airhead BMW.* Consider what other brands of motorcycles in the era had: miserable (messy) chain drives, external oil lines, external oil tanks, primary chains, and exposed valve trains. In the BMW, the monolithic beauty of the drive train, devoid of leaky banjo fittings and high-maintenance valve and oiling systems, must have seemed to come right out of Buck Rogers.

Electrical lighting and speedometers were options, even as late as 1925. I'm fortunate this machine has the factory lighting and speedometer options. Even though it has electric lights, there is no such thing as a high beam or a brake light. The keyed switch mounted in the back of the headlight bucket is not the ignition switch, but rather the on/off switch for the lighting.

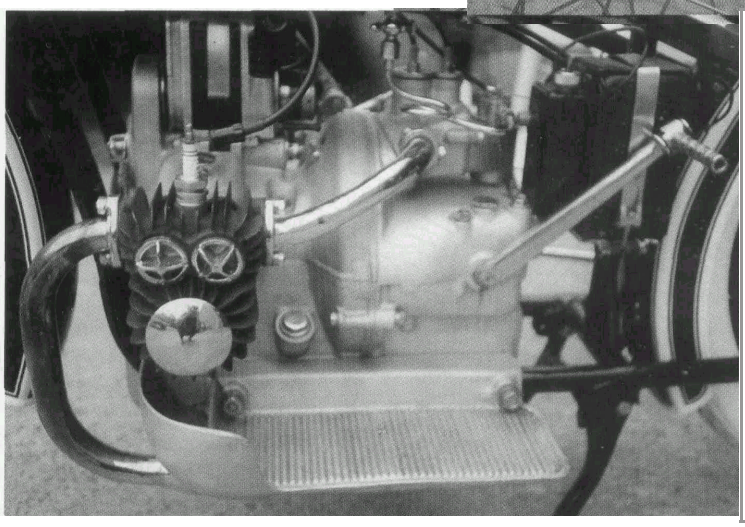
The R32 was built in more trusting times (no fork lock and no ignition switch). There is only a kill button on the right side of the handlebar. Since it is magneto ignition, all it takes to start the machine is a bit of luck in setting the controls and a good kick.

The R32 was designed before needle-slide type carbs were invented. As with many early motorcycles, the R32 does not have a twist-grip throttle. The single carb is a rather primitive affair controlled by *two* levers on the top, right of the handlebar. The upper lever controls the carb/fuel slide, while the lower lever controls the carb/air slide. This means that you must manually set the carb/fuel/air ratio for optimum running or even idling. The carb features a lever on the side of the float chamber, which allows you to change the orifice diameter that feeds the main fuel jet. The lever has two positions: a rich setting (I suppose for cold starting) and a lean setting. The carb has a tickler button on the float chamber to further enrich the mixture for starting.

There is a third lever on the top, left of the handlebar. This lever controls the spark advance. You must remember to retard the spark to start or to idle and you must advance the spark to accelerate (such as the acceleration is).



Left: The drum has a large external groove, in which a round leather belt runs, to drive a small gearbox mounted on the front

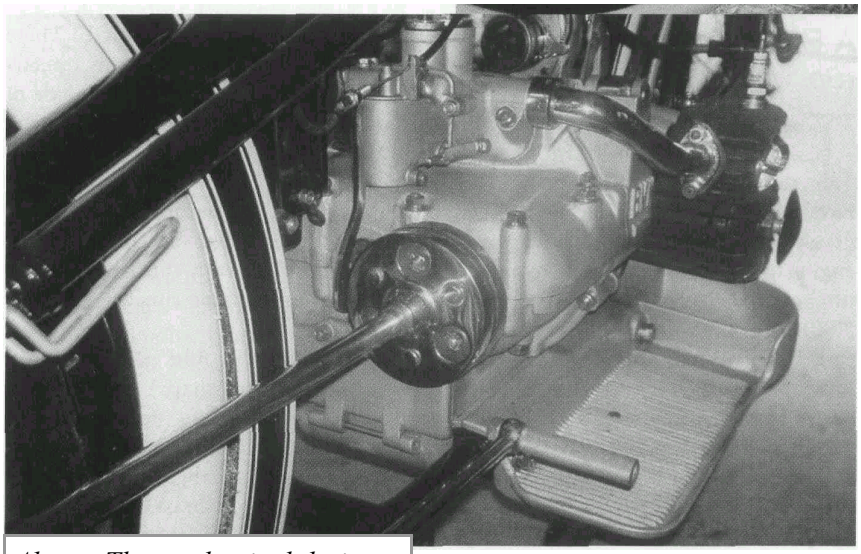


Left: Fold out the kick start lever and kick vigorously. If you are lucky, you may get a brief response from the engine.

The Thrill of the Ride!

In preparation to ride, don your boots, jodhpurs, goggles, jacket, scarf and a leather helmet (after all, you must look the part). Turn on the petcock and wait for the float chamber of the carb to fill with gas. If the engine is cold, depress the tickler button and wait until fuel dribbles out of the carb. Rotate the handlebar spark advance lever clockwise, to the retard position, and then bring the lever back, leaving just a little bit of advance. On the right of the handlebar, turn both carb levers counter-clockwise to insure that both are closed. Clockwise, rotate the carb/fuel lever about 15 degrees and rotate the carb/air lever at about 30 degrees.

The R32 has a hand-shift carb/fuel lever. Going too fast into a curve on rippled pave-

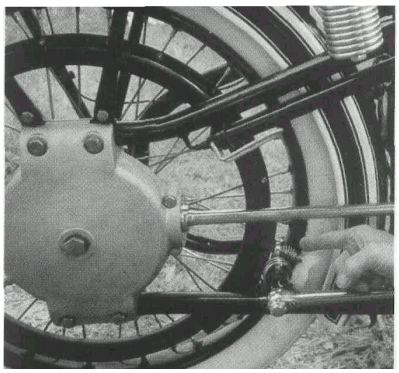


Above: The mechanical design of the drive train is pure Max Friz. It is definitely an airhead

clutch lever and find neutral between first and second gear. Release the clutch lever. Fold out the kick start lever and kick vigorously. If you are *really* lucky, you may get a brief response from the engine. If you do (you had best be really quick), use your left hand to depress the tickler button on the carb (briefly and periodically), until the engine warms up enough to continue to run. Once the engine runs, push the R32 off the centerstand, throw one leg over the bike, and prepare for the ride of your life.

To ride the R32 demands that you concentrate on the lever positions in relation to the sound of the engine. You are so busy listening and adjusting that you scarcely have time to look at the road. Pull in the reverse-pull clutch lever with your left hand, remove your right hand from the grip, and wrestle the gear shift lever back into first gear. As you let out the clutch lever, you must open the carb/air lever on the right side of the handlebar *and* advance the spark lever on the left side of the handlebar. Once you get rolling, you must open the carb/fuel lever just a bit. Too much carb/air (or too much carb/fuel) and not enough advance or vice versa in any combination thereof, and the R32 barks, coughs and will backfire... *loudly!* It's great for scaring children, livestock and police officers. When you find the perfect ratio of carb/air, carb/fuel and spark timing, the bike smoothes out. The engine sounds smooth and mechanically tight. It sounds like any other BMW twin (without mufflers). And the bike takes off.

All too soon however, you must shift. You cannot shift to second gear unless you slow the rpm's. That means you must remove your right hand from the grip and use that hand to close the car/fuel and carb/air levers, while you pull in the clutch lever with your left hand. (You aren't done yet!) Use your right hand to shove the hand-shift lever forward to put the bike in second gear. Then you must let out the clutch lever with your left hand while you open the car/air lever and readjust the carb/fuel lever until the engine catches and runs well again. As soon as it does, it is time to shift and start it all over again.



Above: There is a second, smaller brake rim directly bolted to the spokes on the right side of the rear wheel, with a single V-shaped brake shoe.

During all these control manipulations, you must avoid potholes, rippled pavement, cars, dogs and anything else in the way. Keep in mind that the front forks have twin cantilever leaf springs, which give about 1.5 inches of travel without any sort of damping. The rear suspension consists of only air in the tire. My advice is to find a *really smooth* road.

Once the R32 is in third gear and rolling, the speed will surprise you. It is capable of 60 mph and it accelerates about as fast as a 1956 BMW R26 single. I personally proved this when I rode the bike from the Dogwood Trail rally site to town. When clocked from the rear by my buddy, John Andol (who rode a BMW R1100S), I hit an honest 60mph. John's R1100S served as my brake light since the R32 has no brake light and the R32 tail light is about the size of a cigarette lighter.

I must mention what a cheap thrill curves can be. You cannot dump speed easily or quickly because you have to remove your right hand from the handlebar to adjust the

The R32 test gives an insight into riding an early BMW; not much chance of taking in the scenery with all the juggling of

ment, and removing one hand to close the carb/fuel lever, will put your heart in your mouth. You must anticipate curves and slow speed well before you hit the curve. The same preparation holds true for stopping.



The single carburettor is rather primitive, controlled by two levers on the top, right of the handlebar. There is a third lever on the top, left of the handlebar

As for brakes, the R32 has true ABS (Almost Braking System) and will scare you silly if you must stop fast. T make matters even more difficult for a modern motorcyclist, the rear brake is not activated by your right toe, but rather by your right heel. This hokey-pokey brake lever position means that you: pick up your heel, keep your toe on the running board, slide your right foot back, apply pressure to the pedal with your heel, and stop before you crash.

Considering the technology of the era in which it was made and the fact that the R32 is now 79 years old it is truly a wonderful machine: rare, beautiful form, satisfactory function and moving art deco on wheels. I give two thumbs up for this grandfather of all BMW motorcycles. Max Friz and BMW, you make me proud.

Sincerest thanks to Craig for allowing this report to be included in the Newsletter.

BMW R32 SPECIFICS

Manufacture dates……1923-1926
Number produced……3,090
Price……2,200 Reichmarks

ENGINE:
internal designation……...M 2 B 33
type……..4-stroke 2-cylinder flat twin
bore x stroke……...68x68 mm
displacement……..494 cm3
output……...8.5 HP at 3200 rpm
compression ratio……...5.0:1
valves……sv
carburettor……single BMW special 22mm
engine lubricating system……..forced-feed lubrication
oil pump……gear pump

POWER TRANSMISSION:
clutch……single discs,dry
number of gears……..3
shifting…… manual
gearbox ratios…… 2.27/1.50/1.08
solo rear wheel ratio…… 1:4, 41
sidecar wheel ratio……...1:5, 36
bevel/crown wheel……17/75 teeth

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM
generator……...Magneto generator (option)
ignition system……..Bosch magneto ignition
spark plugs……Bosch W145

CHASSIS
designation……R32
frame……twin-loop tubular frame
front wheel suspension…… twin cantilever spring
rear wheel suspension…… rigid
wheel rims……...26 x 2.5 inch
tires, front……26 x 3.0 inch
tires, rear……26 x 3.0 inch
brakes, front……drum brake 150 mm diameter (none on first series)
brakes, rear……..block brake

DIMENSIONS/WEIGHTS:
length x width x height……82.7 x 31.5 x 37.4 inches
wheel base……...54.3 inches
fuel tank capacity……3.1 gallons (US)
dry weight……..269 lbs.
weight with sidecar……..405.6 lbs.
top speed……...60 miles per hour

And now… a few tips from R50S owner, Robert (The Jolly Jester) Freeman.

1. The 'bean can' rear light will hold spare bulbs for the headlight etc - packed in foam of course.

2. A piece of thin wire such as fuse wire, secured to the spring on the clutch arm and the gear box, saves the loss of said spring if the clutch cable snaps.

3. The lower end of the rubber battery strap is a metal tube, just the size to take a small screw driver, thus easing the fitting and removal.

4. The R50 / R 69S range can be put on the centre stand with one hand! Standing on the left, near-side of your bike, place your right foot on the curve of the stand leg, right hand on the frame, just behind the up-right tube supporting the swinging arm, left hand on the left handlebar grip to steady, and gently lift / pull back-wards. The bike almost jumps onto the stand. Of course, at 436 lbs, (196 kgs) its a light weight by todays standards.

5. I lost the mixture screw from the carb once, while tak-ing part in the National Rally. A plug of Insulating tape, the canvas type, got me round, albeit, lumpy. After that I drilled and wired the screws.

6. On the standard fuel tank, reserve is enough for about 20 / 25 miles, at low speed, with a gentle throttle.

7. Once a year, it's a good idea to slacken off the lower engine mounting bolts, and tighten up the opposite side, thus moving the long threaded rod, in the crank-case. This prevent the bolt gluing to the crankcase. Of course it was greased prior to assembly!!. Don't forget to re-verse this procedure.



Love them or hate them there is no doubt that 'specials' have a place in the Register. This 'Café Racer' is owned by S. Strickland from Great Yarmouth. (Please Mr Strickland get in touch with details of your machine.)

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