Vintage & Classic News

Issue 17/2006

In this issue – BUYING AN EARLES – 2006 MOTO-PISTON RALLY – RIDING THE AMERICAN WAY etc, etc.



Seen at the Club International at Moreton Morrell, Mike Lanigan's beautiful 1977 R75/6

EDITORIAL

I hope that the contents of this n/letter are of interest to the majority of Register members as getting a spread of articles is very difficult. You will notice that it's a 'bumper' issue with 4 additional pages. Due to various unforeseen circumstances this is only the 2nd issue I've been able to get out this year.

I've included a 'touring' article written by a Register member but I don't intend filling the newsletter with these; the Journal covers this aspect more than adequately.

As always please contact me if you have any suggestions to improve the Register or are able to help out at events. Thanks

REGISTER DIARY FOR 2007

Apil 28th/29th
Stafford Classic Motor-cycle Show

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

June 14th – 17th
6th Vintage & Classic Rally, Newport , S.Wales

July 14th/15th
VMCC Festival of 1000 Bikes, Mallory Park Race Circuit, Leics.

July
VMCC Founders Day Rally, Stanford Hall, Nr Lutterworth, Leics.

September
Sleaford Historic Car & Motorcycle Show
Tel. Bill Rodgers
01526 834480

September
Stinkwheel Classic Bike Show
Beaumanor Hall, Woodhouse, Leics.

Please check that these events are going ahead before travelling

OLD HORNS NEVER DIE……

by 'The Amateur Mechanic'

Old horns never die, well, certainly not those fitted to BMW machines made between 1936 and 1969…

History.

A bit of history might be useful here in identifying the correct horn that should be fitted to your particular machine.

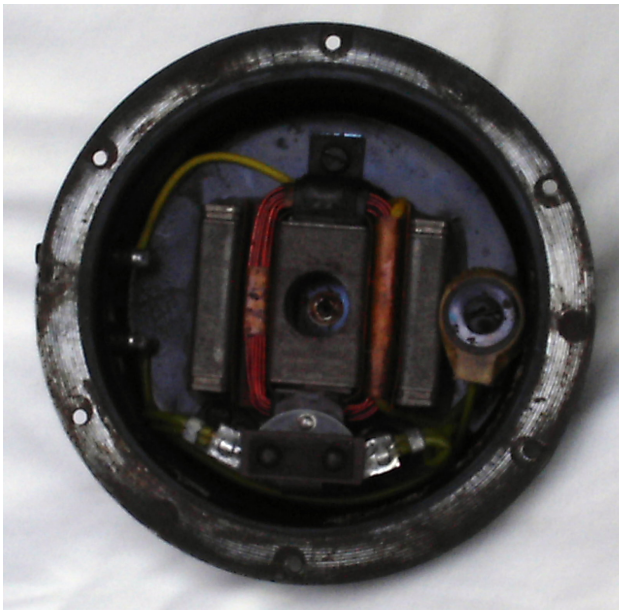
Pre-war, certainly from 1936 onwards, BMW fitted a horn manufactured by Bosch and identifiable by the fact that the fixing plate was secured to the rear of the horn using 4 slotted screws. The rectangular plate itself had a single M10 stud welded in its centre. The model number would be HO/FD 6/1 or similar. Bosch made a few horns with similar type numbers but always indicated the working voltage in the designation.

From 1951 onwards plunger twins were fitted with Bosch HO/FDF 6/3 horns, as were the early Earles models. Sometime after 1958 BMW (most uncharacteristically, at that time) introduced a "foreign" manufactured item onto their machines. The Klaxon ETF 4D. It always used to be a good question for club nights to ask which part of an Earles machine was "Made in France"!
The R26 used a Norris HE 6 and the R27 a Bosch HF 6, these units being basically the same and interchangeable.

Why don't horns die?

So much for the history, why don't horns die? Well, basically because the 6 Volt batteries and dynamo's fitted to these machines simply don't ever produce enough current to burn the windings of the horn out. Avid readers of "Old Bike Mart" will no doubt have seen the advert each month from Taff Issacs and his old horn restoration service. Here is a guy onto a real winner! In my experience ANY horn that you can gain access to by removing either the front or the back can be revived. Read on……

Dismantling.



Other than adjustment or a wire disconnected within the horn, the usual suspect for the device not working is dirty and/or oxidised contacts. So where do you start?
All the horns mentioned at the start of this article are held together using a number of slotted screws. Remove these. Carefully take off the front "grill" noting the position of any paper gasket(s) fitted. Once the "grill" is off the diaphragm under it can be taken out, once again check for paper gaskets and note their positions. With the plate removed all will be revealed, namely the coil, contacts and associated wiring.

How does it work?

At this stage perhaps a description of how a horn actually works might be useful. If you already know, then please feel free to skip this bit!

Horns consist of a coil of wire wound around (normally) 2 pole pieces to form a simple electro-

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MICK & GLENYSE R67/ 2 & R69 OWNERS

magnet. The current to this coil is fed via a contact that is normally closed. On a BMW one side of the horn coil is connected to the positive of the battery via the ignition key. With the ignition on and the horn button pressed an earth (negative) is extended to the other side of the coil and current flows. The current through the coil creates a magnetic field that attracts the plate on the rear of the diaphragm. This plate, as it travels towards the pole pieces, opens the contact. Current to the coil stops flowing and therefore the magnetic effect ceases. The plate on the diaphragm returns back to its rest position, the contacts close, the current flows and the sequence begins again. It is the speed of this diaphragm movement that determines the sound that emanates from the horn. It may be simple, but it is effective.
In my experience, the most common fault that stops the above sequence is failure of the contact to carry the current required to operate the electro-magnet. Incorrect assembly, poor adjustment or, more likely, contact oxidisation problems, cause this.

Re-Assembly.

It is essential to have the plate that is attached to the back of the diaphragm in the correct position relative to the pole pieces and the contact. There is usually a pin in this plate and a corresponding hole in the diaphragm to ensure they are in correct “register” however, as the fixing holes in the body of the horn are equally spaced it is possible to assemble the diaphragm “out of sync”. Equally important is the positioning of any spacer washers fitted between the diaphragm and the plate. ALWAYS note the position of these when dismantling the horn and make sure they all go back in the correct places. Of course if the horn didn’t work and someone else has already messed with it ……. Then you will need to assemble by “trial and error” until the part on the plate that touches the operating extension on the points does so without actually opening them. The thickness of any paper gaskets fitted between the diaphragm and the horn body will also have an effect on the operation.

Contact Problems.

The simplest way of checking for a problem on the contacts is to connect a multi-meter, set to the lowest resistance (ohms) scale, across the terminals of the horn. If you get a low resistance reading (say less than 50 ohms) then the contacts are fine and your problem lies elsewhere. If, as is more likely with a horn that has been unused for some time, there is a very high resistance reading, or no reading at all, then the contacts must be held open due to an adjustment or assembly problem or are oxidised and simply need a good clean. Obviously the first thing to check is that the component parts attached to the diaphragm are assembled in the correct order. Once this has been confirmed check the contacts are not being held open due to poor adjustment. If this is the case then the small slotted screw adjuster on the rear of the horn casing can be turned to alter the height of the contact inside the horn.
Once you have a low resistance reading, a good starting point for adjustment is as follows; Turn the adjusting screw until the points just open and the reading goes, then turn the screw back until you get the first indication of a resistance.

Tuning.

Test the horn. Always use a fully charged battery, remembering that the current consumption of a

horn is high and that the battery will therefore discharge very quickly. I often use a 12v car battery for a quick test, but be aware if you do this that the frequency of the tone will be much higher. Once current flows through the horn coil the adjusting screw on the rear of the horn case is used to “fine- tune” the sound emanating from the horn. If fine-tuning is impossible then look again at the paper gaskets and spacer washers on the rear of the diaphragm. Adjust as necessary by trial and error. With a little patience you will “resurrect” your non-working horn!

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FEED-BACK from 16/06

from Graham (Lunt) Audley, Stoke-on-Trent.

I've been meaning to write a few words for many months, just to say thank you for a brilliant news letter. Only just managed to get around to reading no 16, where you apologise for the delay in this issue, no apology required, you are both doing a first class job ,and I'm sure all the members would agree, a big thanks. *(Thanks Graham – M & W)*

I gave my R60 to my brother a few years ago, and really missed having it around, but looked out for another one about 12 months ago, finally finding an R50 ex- French Police Bike, with 12 volt alternator in December 2005, went to collect it from Eastbourne,

Well in the last five months I've done a complete rebuild with the help of a number of suppliers. The main ones being the following:-

Mark Huggett, Switzerland
huggett@bmwbike.com Excellent service

Mr Kevin Vernon for all your painting and lining. Fantastic paint jobs.
Tudor Motor Body Services,
Market Drayton.
Shropshire, 01630652596

Jeff Holt
K B Wheels
Bolton Re-spoking Wheels, 01204 844204
3 to 4 day turn round quality job

Phil Jenkins
For Chrome and Nickel Plating
01625 585933 THE BEST, does loads of work for motor cycle museum, and most of the top restorers use him.

I tried to use companies in this country for my BMW parts, but most didn't have them in stock, so I found it easier to use Mark Huggett, and the service is just fantastic, all my ordering was by e- mail, maximum 5 days delivery, didn't fail once on delivering all that I ordered.
Glad to say the bike started first kick, hoped to road test it this weekend, but it hasn't stopped raining since Friday lunchtime, honest.
All for now , keep up the good work .

THE GANG GO WEST

by Jerry Wakeman

Well, south and a bit west that is, to NORTHERN SPAIN.

"The Gang", last year, went to Scotland via Ireland to take a second look at the west coast and some other bits that I didn't get a proper look at in '99 when I did the round the coast charity run. Having had a really good holiday without killing each other or even mildly falling out, we thought casually that it might be nice to do it again sometime.

Crete was suggested as it is almost entirely covered in serious "Boreen" roads, but expense and distance ruled it out. A number of people had mentioned various places and one of those was Northern Spain. Good access and not too expensive to get there, also fairly cheap once you've arrived.

Malcolm McNair had attended the annual rally around the Picos area and Adrian Trim who helps organise it enthused about the whole area to me when he attended our Lon Gefn Charity Run (The Welsh Boreen) here in Newport.

As a result and armed with as many maps as we could get hold of we started looking seriously at a couple of weeks exploring the Picos National Park and as much of the surrounding area as we could; time allowing. The idea was to find reasonable accommodation, explore as far as we could for a couple of days and then move on; staying sometimes one night, sometimes two. Another idea was that when ever possible, strip the bikes of all the luggage, and just going exploring. I can tell you now that on one of our best days we only did about 40 miles. So this was not to be about mileage or speed, just discovery.

Just before we left, I spoke to Adrian and he told me that many of the minor roads that we had built into our plans were now closed to motorised traffic except for locals etc. This, in the event, meant that much of the Picos National Park itself was out of bounds.

We decided to make our first base Potes on the east of the Park area. Very touristy, but with many hotels etc. and a good base. Our choice of hotel was in many ways good but slowly spoilt by indifferent service and a strange attitude to their customers. Our stay would make an amusing article in itself but I don't have space. From this base we went both East into beautiful mountain scenery and West into the Nat. Park.

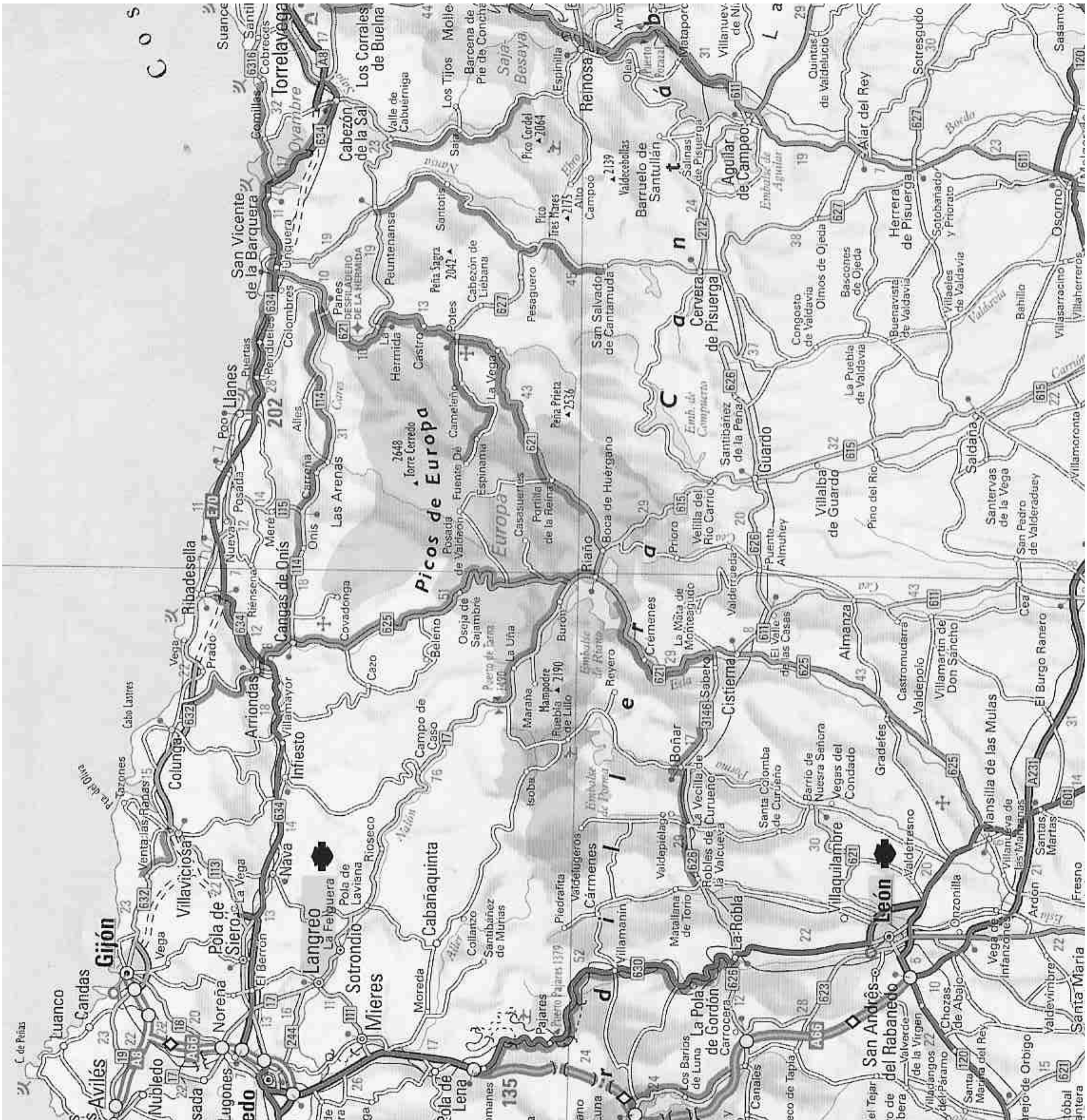
Going West into the Park you end up at Fuente De and a cable car ride to a stunning moonscape area. From the cable car you can walk higher still and come out above an upland valley. In the distance we could see one of the roads we had planned to ride but was now closed to all but locals and officials. Back down at the car park we find the beginning of another road that we had planned to use but is now closed.

We have continued south, then north and west. At La Rena we head back into the park to go to Cain; quite a long way up a narrow valley. We have been riding slowly stopping when we felt like it for photos or just because we felt like it. Simply to sit in the sun and look at stunning views. We find a hostel; bunk beds, the lot and we are the only occupants. A good stay, good food and nice people.



Then on.

The roads are excellent and the scenery stunning. Mile after mile of fantastic narrow mountain roads through gorges with only the road and the river and vertical rock faces rising either side.



Very little traffic but don't get complacent; a lack of concentration could be fatal. Breath taking stuff and it's warm, beautifully warm. Jackets undone and blowing in the wind, shirts undone, visors raised. We didn't actually ride without helmets but we were tempted.

We ride on; twisting and turning, up and up and eventually come out in the village of Cain with a small bar selling tapas and cold beer and coffee. We park the bikes, take off the gear and sit, served by lovely people in a lovely place. So we watch the world (well a small beautiful bit of it) go by. But it is another dead end road so we ride back down and take yet

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another minor road south and west through the same staggering scenery out onto the western edge of the Park in order to find fuel. We end up at Gangas De Onis, and stay two nights as it is a bit wet. Our first rain for a week. From here we explore, as far as possible, the northern part of the Park. To Covadonga and onto Sistema Del Jitu; a lovely section of unpaved road. Just outside Gangas we found yet another great little cafe with good food and great people.

From Gangas, with full tanks again, we rode first west and then south, finding minor roads through beautiful mountains and valleys. Continuously climbing through bend after bend or doing rolling descents the other side, riding relatively slowly so it doesn't come to an end too soon. By this means we came back out on the same road we used going north to Gangas.

I must explain that we have with us our own G.P.S. system and everything is by design, more later. We head south but before reaching Riano on the N621 we turn west again on C635 and then south to Puebla De Lillo. We are looking for accommodation again. We stop at a cafe come hotel for a beer and a reckie and Mike and Georgie ride on a couple of kilometres to the village to see if there is anything there. Inevitably Georgie got into "conversation" with locals at a bar (as is her wont). And got information that drastically changed our minds as to out next heading.

They had met a Spaniard who was a fanatic "Boreen" man and serious "off roader". He told them, in excellent English, not to go south but west towards Oviedo. That the Picos was nice but too touristy and too many closed roads. He marked on their map unpaved roads that he thought we could manage and this was to really make the second half of our voyage of discovery.

This chance meeting was at a cafel hotel in Puebla De Lillo on the LE331. The owner was christened by Mike, "Mrs. Overall". After the character played by Julie Walters in the television serial, Acorn Antiques. A tiny lady who could not do enough for us and seemed to do a lot of the work around the place despite appearing to be of great age and less than 5 feet tall. Our stay was excellent and the evening meal one of the best. Strongly recommended.



As instructed, we headed north and west on AS253, instead of south. Through the Mampodre Reserve and then along the southern edge of the De Redes National Park.

At Cabana Quinta we turned directly west, crossed the A66 Oviedo road and continued west just following noses and the G.P.S., mostly on as small a road as we could find. We ducked and dived finding two of the roads marked by our Spanish adviser; both were spectacular. The first a minor but paved road was not only spectacular but also hairy in that it was gradually collapsing into the valley below. At one point an avalanche had obviously only recently been cleared off the road. Climbing all the time, we eventually reached the summit only to discover that the road down was brand new.

State of the art tarmac, barriers and pristine white lines for miles and miles. Bend after bend, rolling down into a deep, deep valley and then on through the valley bottom. Through the Natural Park of Somiedo.
We now turn north and stop for lodgings at Belmonte. Here we meet by chance a motorcycle policeman on his newly acquired G.S.Daka, black and chrome and looking very nice. Georgie says "the bike was quite nice too". After we booked in he offered to take us, via back lanes and minor tracks, up to the coast and his home town, Luarca.
By this time it was about 4.30 p.m. and we had a wonderful ride to this very pleasant town on the north coast. It was, after a few drinks in a bar, getting dark and we were quite a long way from 'home' so to speak. Our new found policeman friend decided to go back the quick way. Well of course he knew it and we defiantly did not. We got back at 1O.30 p.m. having had a rather exiting ride.
Well, you get the idea; just more of the same for two weeks then the ferry back from Santander to Plymouth and a horrible ride home on the M4, in serious rain.
My main reason for writing this is to encourage people who may be either thinking of going to Europe for the first time or wondering whether to go to northern Spain, to go. DO IT. If you enjoy the riding aspect of the holiday, it's exceptional. Once you're there and away from big towns or touristy places, it's cheap; both food and accommodation. Plymouth to Santander overnight is 18 hours. When you get to Santander you are already in good riding country. You don't have to cover huge distances. Just poodle around and explore all those little roads that don't appear to go anywhere, you'll be pleasantly surprised.
I would like to thank Adrian Trim for his help, advice and encouragement and my travelling companions, especially Georgie our G.P.S., for a bloody good holiday.
Jerry
P.S. If anyone wants further details I would be happy to pass on anything I can.

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MOTO-PISTON RALLY 2006

by Colin Bembridge

This year the Moto Piston Rally was much the same as other years. Fantastic accommodation. Great food and scenery to die for. However, this year we went from Portsmouth to Bilbao. Why? Because we got our act together with the Tesco points scheme. Yes, P and O Ferries will take the vouchers instead of money. The crossing leaves Portsmouth late on Saturday night and gets to Spain at 8 am Monday. Now that sounds a long time but if we ride down to Plymouth the day before sailing and book into a hotel we are away from home about the same time. The big difference is in the miles covered, Portsmouth being less than 100 miles from home and Plymouth 250. This makes all the difference on the return journey. The 250 miles from Plymouth when I am not at my freshest, can be a bit of a bind. The vouchers also got us very nice 2 berth cabins for both crossings. So what did we do with the money saved on fares? Well, unlike the Plymouth crossing, which is a five days return, the P and O crossing is a 10 days return and we spent the money on extra nights accommodation and had an even better time than the last 3 years. Thank you vouchers. The run from home to Portsmouth takes around a couple of hours and we spent the time waiting to board being entertained by a group of Moto-GP fans on their way from Leeds to Esteril to see Rossi beaten by half a tyre width. A really nice bunch of lads.

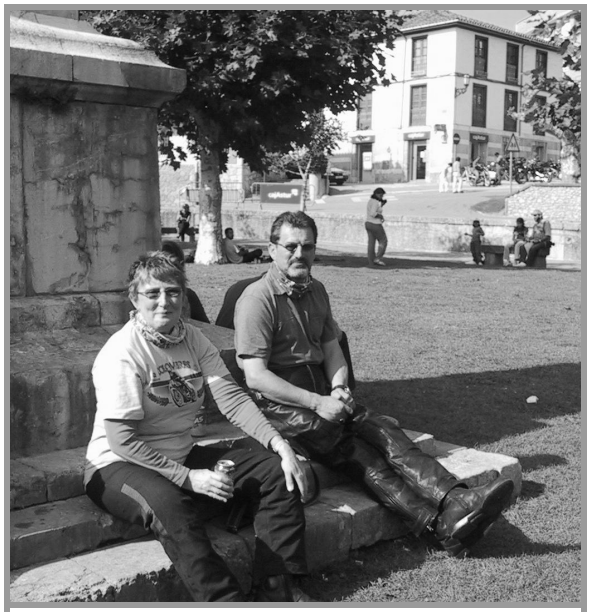
We met up with Fred Salter with his R69S from the Isle of White on the boat and travelled most of the way to Santander with him. He was meeting a friend off the Plymouth boat and we were going straight to our hotel at the rally. We met up again a day later. The run to the rally was completed in beautiful sunshine with temperatures between 26c to 28c, just like the last three years.

We tried to make a note of the numbers from the Vintage and Classic Register, we think it was fifteen after adding first timers Jane and John Taylor from Otterley St Mary (Anita could not believe how Jane kept her hair looking so nice when wearing a crash helmet all day). All were on beautifully prepared bikes and most of them looked as good as the day they left the factory. Some of our group dropped their prized possessions, but from all accounts the injuries were not too severe and they were caused by others . Diesel was at the centre of at least one of the offs.

The good weather only deserted us for just a few hours and all the runs up into the Picos Europa's were therefore well supported. A change to the event programme was the timing of the road trial referred to as the 5000 Curves Competition. This was run along side the day trips into the mountains, it was tagged on at the end of the rally, unlike last year on a day when many rallyists were heading for the ferry home. The event takes a full day and as Dave Bertram found out last year it is a very hard day on 50 years old classic bike.

Saturday was the day of the hill climb with so many spectators in Columbres that some people were having to park up to a mile away from the finishing line in the centre of the village. There were a good number of Brit competitors there again and the sun lifted the temperatures into the middle 80s. For those looking for a bargain the sports hall in the village was home to the auto jumble where we bought 'Made in Britain' tools cheaper than we could buy them at home. We spoke to a German trader who earned his living driving from one auto jumble to another living in his van and towing his wares on his trailer.

When we book the rally we also include evening meals which is when most of the rallyists sit down together for a silver service spread. This year was even better than previous years and as before the wine flowed freely. Keith Shaw won an award for his lovely 90S and we had the Presidents plaque.



Janet & John Winn from Northampton relax in Columbres Town Square

On Monday morning everyone was up for an early breakfast and off to catch the afternoon ferry to Plymouth. We heard from John and Janet Winn' who look after us when we visit the Midland meeting at the Rangers Hut, that the heavy rain did not ease off for 150 miles of their 250 miles run home. We at this time were having a pleasant gentle run along the coast back towards Bilbao to be within striking distance for our Wednesday ferry home.

We used our satellite navigator to pinpoint a hotel on the beach in a town just 15 miles from the ferry. As we booked in we were informed that a large group of BMW riders had spent the previous weekend at the hotel. We put the outfit in the lockup garage then went up to the room, and what a room.

We seem to be followed to the rally by bad luck, the first year we went we thought our gearbox had thrown a wobbly only to discover a pebble in one of the front wheel discs. The 2nd year Anita was visited by the salmonella bug, and this year a diode died in the diode board and a spare board we were given had the same problem; thank heavens for testers. The good fortune was that a little shop less than a mile

mile away from our home, repaired them both in one hour for £30 and we were very quickly running the bike up the road for a test. Whilst we were at it I had new purpose made PTFE lined cables for the carbs fitted with the adjusters a few inches up from the carbs so I can get at them when needing to adjust the lengths. The reason for this is that the Difazio fairing is in the way and the sidecar side of the engine is just impossible to get at without taking the carb off. Not anymore. The biggest change is the incredibly light and smooth action from my 60-year-old Feridax left hand twistgrip for which I paid half a crown in 1965. I have been told it was made for the Indian V–Twins.

Anyhow, the old girl (the bike I mean) is ready for her next assault on the tarmac.

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SCREENS - What's Available?

I've been asked about this subject so many times that I thought a few suggestions might be appreciated.

Moto-Bins offer a range of screens that mount on the handlebars and headlamp mounting, also Givi have a number that mount in a similar manner. Both ranges may not be in keeping with the pre-69 styling but every ones taste varies. If you want the 'American Look' Givi supply perspex ones with the polished horizontal strip that is more associated with Harley Davidson. Roland Slabon's book illustrates a similar type on an R60.



One that came to my attention recently is a 'Universal' type (*shown left)* that is available from F1 Motorcycles the Ural dealer located in Banbury. This is a high quality British made screen with numerous fittings. Will fit most machines with 22 mm or 25 mm handlebars and also attaches to the headlamp bolts. Has a wide range of adjustment. Price of this one is £120.00 including UK p&p. Shown fitted on a Ural.

Additionally, shown below is an all metal handle bar screen that was fitted to a number of Urals. Should still be available. Plastic Ural legshields could also be adapted in place of the old Heinrich ones to compliment any screen. It may, and I stress only maybe, possible to get fibre glass Heinrich copies made if anyone has originals to use to make the moulds. Please let me know.

From the screen perspective, if only minimal protection is required it is possible with new brackets to fit the R90S type handlebar fairing. They look good on the Earles machines





'More Butchers than Dewhursts!'

(Some of the pitfalls to look out for when buying an Earles Fork machine)

by 'The Amateur Mechanic'

The header for this article is the favourite expression of a good friend of mine and Register member, adequately expressing his feelings when restoring his R60.

I often defend the butchery that has taken place on some machines with the fact that, during the early 1970's the value of the Earles range had fallen so far, a £100 bike found a £100 mechanic! So, how do you avoid a butchered, cobbled together example of the marque? My first advice to anyone is BE PATIENT. Buy in haste and repent at leisure. I realise that once a decision has been made to look for, and purchase a bike, a sense of urgency prevails but *take your time!* The more examples you can see the better chance you have of finding the right, trouble free machine.

What follows is based on my own, and others, experience covering the purchase of many machines. I hope it doesn't step on too many toes!

Avoid imported machines, particularly those from Greece (or its Islands), South Africa and Holland. Greek machines are nearly always well past their sell-by date and have been ridden into the ground. They may look good cosmetically but they almost all contain cobbled together internals. The South African machines I have looked at have been assembled to sell, they look OK on the surface but closer inspection will reveal many flaws. If an Earles bike has come in from Holland (or Germany or France) ask yourself, why? There is a flourishing market on the Continent (with prices in Germany currently above those in the UK) so who would want to ship it across the channel to sell? Chances are it either won't sell or can't be sold over there for some reason.

Always check engine and frame numbers. These should match. Check against each other and the registration document. They should match naturally and not because they have been "doctored". There may be a good reason why an engine has been changed at some time (accident, massive blow up etc.) but non-matching numbers equals less desirable and lower purchase/re-sale value.

Always attempt to get provenance. How long has it been with the current owner? Is there any history regarding rebuilds (particularly engine)? Old MOT's to prove usage? Just because a bike has had limited use over a number of years doesn't, of itself, necessarily auger well. A regularly used machine is nearly always better than one that spends most of its life idle!

Cosmetically most machines are easy to asses. We can all judge the quality of the paint work, look for signs of rust and spot dents! Or can we? Often prospective purchases are seen through rose tinted spectacles. Take someone with you who is honest enough to point out the faults and problems you try not to see! It's important to check the vulnerable, unseen places as well. On the Earles the majority of chassis problems occur on the mudguards, wheels and front suspension units.

1. **<u>Mudguards.</u>**

These are both prone to rot from the inside, particularly the rear. In the case of the rear it is the wiring channel running up the centre of the guard that is the usual weak spot. Easy to check by simply lifting the hinged rear section. This also serves to check the hinge itself, which rots. If the

vendor is unwilling to let you undertake this on his machine then be suspicious of a problem. The front mudguard is more difficult to probe for problems. These almost always occur where reinforcing plates are spot-welded in behind the front and rear fixings. Judicious probing inside the mudguard with the fingers may reveal uneven "bulging" around the reinforcing giving a clue to the horrors awaiting the unsuspecting. Look for telltale signs where the chrome front stay fixes to the guard. Rot on either or both mudguards is expensive to cure, especially if replacements are needed. It shouldn't put you off an otherwise good machine but some allowance needs to be given when putting a value on the machine.

2. **Chassis.**

Always check the chassis for alignment. They are durable but old; consequently an accident in the past, or simply pulling a sidecar for a long period of time, may leave its mark. A rough check can be taken by simply fastening a piece of string to the rear wheel, taking it past the stand at low level, and pulling it tight to the front edge of the front tyre. The string should be touching in two places on each wheel, assuming the correct 3.50x18 tyres are fitted. Another easy check is to follow someone riding the machine when you will see any mis-alignment problems. Always check the front and rear dampers. Look for any trace of oil around the bottom of the units and bounce them up and down to check the effectiveness of the damping. Pull on the front and rear swinging arms to check for play. This is only detectable this way if there is a real problem here. Its not the end of the world if there is, but again will reflect in the price offered.

3. **Wheels.**

Another source of potential problems! The original design of the wheel hubs definitely didn't allow for prolonged use in our climate! It isn't unusual to find the braking surfaces cracking up. Now for the hard bit. How can you find out about the surfaces without removing the wheels? Well, the simple answer is you can't! How you persuade the seller to remove the wheels for inspection may prove a bit of a task, but persuade him you should. Otherwise you could find yourself in for some REALLY heavy expenditure. New hubs are, like most parts, available at a price. Expect to pay £350+ per hub. There are well proven cheaper methods of overcoming the problem but even the cheapest repair is likely to cost in the region of £150. Add to this the rebuild cost for the wheel(s) and the need to check the condition of the hub becomes obvious!
Assuming you manage to persuade the vendor to remove, or allow you to remove, the wheels, how do you check for trouble? Obviously a visual check is the first thing to do. Look for any sign of hairline (or bigger!) cracks running across the braking area. If this proves negative then use the edge of a steel rule and see if this "rocks" across the braking surface. Any sign of "rock" indicates that the liner is starting to "belly" in the centre. This phenomenon usually takes place just before the cracks start to appear. If all is well then great! If not, then once again the offer price should reflect this.

4. **The Mechanical Bits**

(a) The Engine & Ancillaries.

The engine fitted to the Earles range was the quietest mechanical unit of its day, devoid of noise and rattles. At higher engine speeds the rustle of tappets was all that could be heard. This of course was when the bikes were new some 35 to 45 years ago. Time has taken its toll on many engines and they may not seem as quiet now as they did then. Listen for any "odd" noises at tick over and above. A healthy engine should be capable of running very low r.p.m. consistently.

(b) The Gearbox.

I wouldn't go so far as to say the Earles gearbox was unbreakable, but would say they were very reliable. Like any other component running on roller and ball races these can wear but usually only after an enormous mileage. Listen for bearing noise and gearbox whine. It's almost inevitable there will be some but this shouldn't be excessive. Pulling the clutch lever will (eventually!) stop the gearbox enabling a test to be carried out. BMW have never really made

gearboxes that could be considered anything but agricultural so don't expect "knife through butter" changes! Check for jumping out of gear under load. At the same time check the clutch for slip.

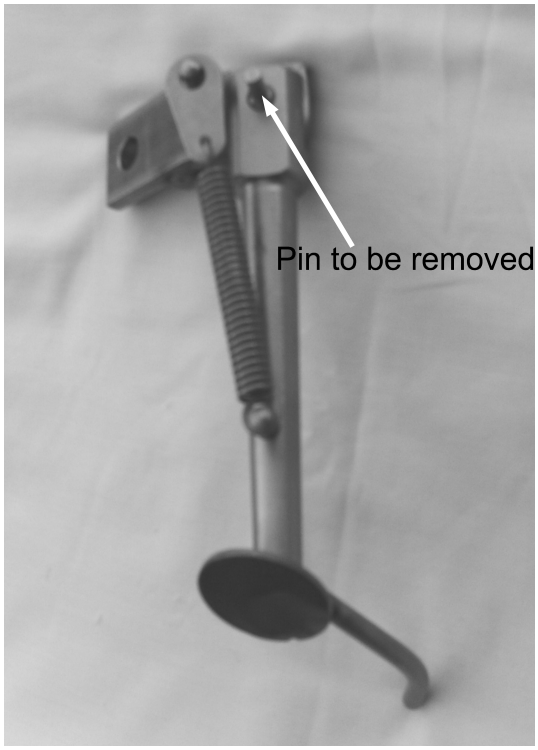
(c) <u>The Bevel & Shaft.</u>

Only recently I heard of the first shaft breakage I have ever known on an Earles machine. The universal joint, at the gearbox end, has been known to wear, as have the internal teeth on the rear of the shaft and the teeth on the barrel shaped gear on the input to the bevels. Hold the universal joint through the rubber boot to check for wear and bevel backlash.

The bevels themselves are usually very reliable if the ratio is 8/25. Early R50's 60's and 69's ran bevels with 11 teeth on the pinion and these have been known to give problems (hence the use of 8/25 as the standard ratio across the range).

<u>Finally!</u>

Don't be put off purchasing an Earles machine by any of the above! Just go into it with your eyes wide open and try to view a few machines before you buy one, unless of course the first one you see is the one we'd all die for! Good Hunting.

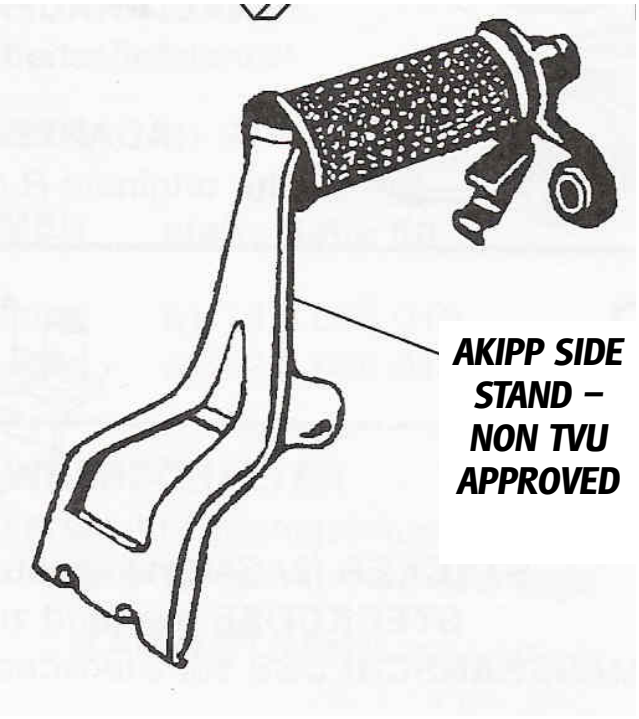


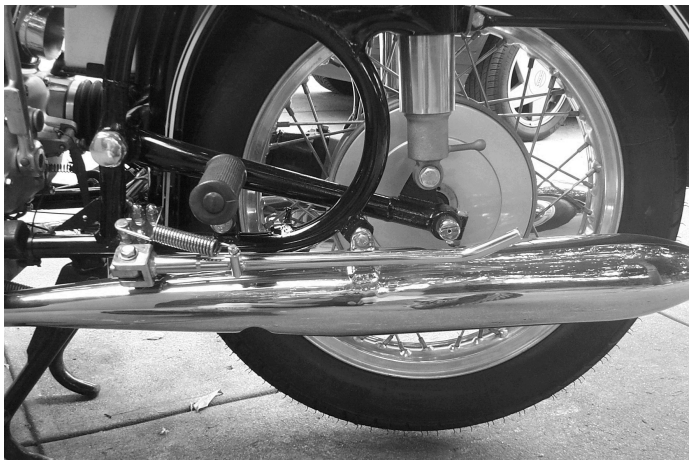
One item that can be of great use on any machine is a prop/side stand, especially when we reach the age that heaving a bike onto the centre stand can be a trifle daunting after a long ride and before the limbs recover.! Unfortunately not all of the pre-69 BM's have a lug on the frame for a prop stand but all is not lost as alternatives are available. The stand shown is generally available from the German dealers and versions for either the Earles or plunger machines can be purchased. The stand locates on the frame in the space where the front near side engine mount spacer fits. The example shown is my own for the R67 and is in stainless steel but mild steel version are available. To comply with German TUV requirements, it is 'fly back' but to overcome this the pin highlighted will be cut off. Nothing worse than someone leaning on your bike and the stand retracting when pressure is relaxed!



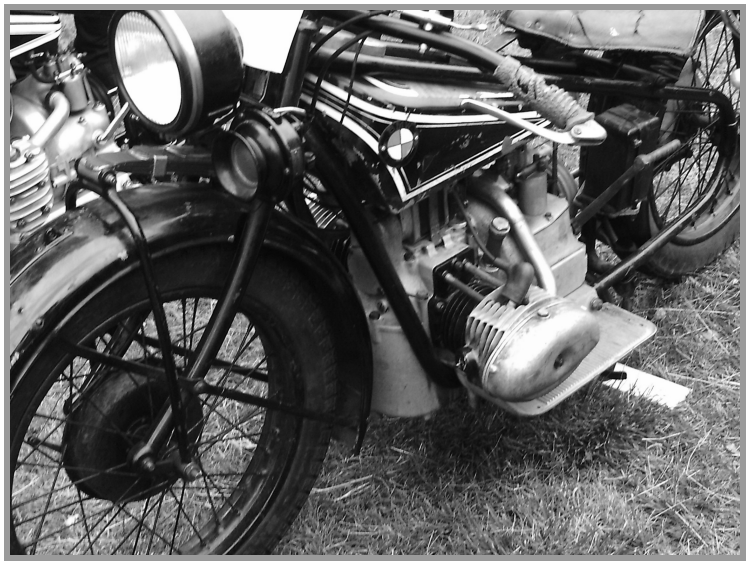
Another alternative that I did seriously consider is the German reproduction of the 'Akipp 'that locates on the near side footrest. Nicely chromed and 'different' it was tempting and having spoken to several people who have one fitted I considered it carefully. Roland Slabon in his book on 1951-1969 BMW's warned of the consequences of the stand coming down if the retaining clip weakened. This seemed a good reason to avoid it, plus one owner informed me that it can be difficult to prop the bike on an uneven surface. It does give good support with its wide foot on soft ground however.. It is sold in Germany with the proviso 'for exhibition purposes only' which I suppose gives an indication of potential problems. It's a great idea however and good looking.

The other prop stand, shown below on an Earles machine, is the American 'Flanders'. If you look carefully it extends back over the silencer from a fixing on the frame. I'm not sure whether it clamps around the frame similar to the old British designs, but whatever, I can't but help think it's a bit 'in your face' unlike the type that tuck under the frame. Not one I'd go for! There are alternatives I'm sure including the modified Chinese versions.





On show on the Register stand at the 06 VMCC Founders Day Rally, was this 1928 R57 that was imported from Germany in April. One of 1012 of this type to be manufactured between 1928 & 1930 it has had only three previous owners and is in original un-restored condition. This was the sports machine in the range with the ohv engine producing 18 bhp @ 4000 rpm. The R57 weighed 150 Kg and had a top speed of 115 kph (72 mph). For security reasons I've deliberately left out mention of the owner who has indicated that only minimal restoration will be carried out.







IN (AND OUT OF) THE WORKSHOP (2)

WITH 'THE AMATEUR MECHANIC'

Gearboxes seem to have been a recurring theme recently!

The first one I tackled was stripped simply to check if it was OK inside. Why? Well it was off an R69 that had been broken down into large "lumps" in the early 1970's and remained unused since. Immediately prior to this the gearbox had been stripped and rebuilt in Berlin. When the R69 was "laid-up" a few hundred miles later the box was left with its oil in. In theory at least, this should have been a precautionary check. In practice it certainly wasn't! Everything, and I mean *everything*, above the oil level was red rusty. The selectors had suffered dreadfully but may just be salvageable, the gears themselves that had somewhat more than mere surface rust came out of the bead blast cabinet looking rather more presentable than when they went in!

I can only surmise why the box suffered so badly; although the output flange had been wrapped up the speedo drive was open to the elements, the box had been stored in a damp environment, liable to great variations in temperature producing large amounts of condensation in the gearbox.

It's easy to have 20/20 hindsight but *if* the unit had been brimmed full of oil, possibly none of this would have happened. Moral of the story? Always fill engines, gearboxes and bevels if they are to be stored for a few years! But do remember to lower the levels before use! I well recall an owner who, having read the instruction in the Earles handbook to "fill the engine with oil", did just that. Right up to the bottom of the dipstick thread! The engine took some turning over and, when it did eventually start, proceeded to blow all the oil seals!

I wrote some time ago about my long-term ownership of an R75/5. This bike has had quite a bit of use in recent months riding in VMCC events outside my own "local" area. It was however on a very wet local event where the 75 gave me the biggest fright I've had on a bike in a very long time (in fact since I saw my K1100RS disintegrate, burnt out under a Mercedes articulated lorry, but that's another story!). Two up, going uphill at about 60 in third, the back end suddenly snapped round to the right. This was followed by a swing hard left, then right again before straightening up and heading across the apex of the left-hander we were just entering. We left the road ending up with the front end wedged in the hedge, stationary. At this point the pillion passenger, having survived everything else, fell off! My immediate reaction to check the bike! Others who had witnessed the incident and stopped took care of the pillion passenger! (She was unhurt!) My first thought was that the frame must have broken, as no amount of steering input seemed to have had any effect. Not that I had any influence on the outcome: I was merely a passenger until the bike stopped. In the event it turned out the valve had ripped from the rear tube causing instant deflation of the tyre. I should have stopped to investigate a couple of

bends before, when the bike started to move about on the road through the corners, but I put it down to the very wet conditions and the amount of gravel that had been washed onto the (already) poor road surface. I surmise that a slow puncture had allowed a drop in pressure sufficient to allow the wheel to turn inside the tyre when accelerating hard in 3rd. At this point the wonderful BMW factory toolkit came into play. Much to the amazement of the other participants on the run we didn't end up being loaded onto the backup trailer but simply changed the tube on the side of the road. It would be nice to report that everything went smoothly during this tube change. Unfortunately 33 years of inactivity for the hand pump had rendered it almost useless. Fortunately the back- up vehicle was carrying a decent foot pump so all ended well! Having had the rim drop heavily onto the tyre I set to and fitted a new tyre the next day even though there was plenty of life left in the cover.

All this started me thinking about punctures. It is a fact of course that almost all punctures occur when it's wet. Don't believe me? Then try slashing an old tyre with a sharp Stanley knife. Believe me you will struggle to cut through the tread. Then wet the tyre and see how easy it is to cut through now. QED. Although I always carry new inner tubes on the 75/5 (a 19" for the front and an 18" for the rear) and a 35 mm film canister filled with tyre fitting soap it hadn't occurred to me that I should also have a couple of the CO2 cylinders from the tubeless repair kit of a K or late R, then I wouldn't have to struggle with the hand-pump! Mind you, it is only the second puncture I've suffered in over 83,000 miles on this bike…. Fair weather rider? Since I penned this I have purchased an '06 registered model and guess what? There is no longer a tubeless repair kit and CO2 cylinders supplied with a new machine. Progress??

A friend who mentioned in a previous article his R80ST has recently bought a late, low mileage, R80R. Nice bike and the last of the air-cooled engines. Out a few weeks ago he suddenly started to get a misfire up to about 3000 rpm. Over this the bike ran as well as ever. This was a phone diagnosis so somewhat difficult. We looked into all the usual culprits, starting with the carbs, although I was a bit doubtful the trouble lay in this area. All to no avail until my friend decided to take an HT lead off whilst the engine was running. Then he quickly found the problem when he got an almighty belt off the lead. The one-piece lead and plug cap had split where the lead enters the cap. I can't say it's something I've seen before, mind you I have always used wire leads and detachable BMW plug caps on all my machines. He tells me these late one-piece leads are in fact wire and not carbon track, is that right? I know earlier moulded leads were carbon track and prone to failure at high mileage.

Another great article by 'The Amateur Mechanic'. I don't know what we would do without his input. Please, please submit something for the next newsletter as I can't guarantee to fill it with my own articles. Of concern is that I get little on the post 69 machines; please help. *Ed.*

'Riding & Training the American Way'

by The Register Secretary



To give you a little background, quite a few years ago I had the good fortune to be invited to the U.S.A.F. base at Lakenheath to take a three day beginners motorcycle course, and later, a one day advanced course, under the supervision of an instructor from the American Motorcycle Safety Foundation. After over forty years of riding motorcycles I thought, well, maybe I might learn something new, something that may help me get to terms with the vagaries of my Electra Glide.

To be quite honest those four days were the hardest, and also the most rewarding, I have spent on two wheels. To set the scene, imagine nine hour days of being shouted at (remember this is a USAF base) concentrated lectures, exams, and riding on the bleak tarmac of an airfield in eighty five degrees wearing full protective clothing (well some of the time – see pic.). Oh, and being arrested by gun toting Military Police and the M.O.D. on suspicion of trying to buy petrol, sorry gasoline, without paying British tax. But that's another story!

Anyway, the course is the standard one they use for motorcyclists in the U.S.A. and is conducted off road, although the U.S personnel over here have to ride under instruction on the British roads before gaining a pass.

The theory papers I found very interesting, but it was the practical instruction out on the range - yes they actual called it that - that was an eye-opener. Normally the beginners ride lightweight machines (up to 350 cc) but I was let loose with my 1340 Harley. The first exercises, and a must to pass, was to push the machine in a straight line for 100 yards, around a cone and back after lifting the machine up from a horizontal position! If only I'd realised I'd have taken a 125 and maybe chosen days that weren't the hottest of the year!

Once actually sitting on the bike, and moving it under its own power, we progressed through basic exercises that any learner would have to master to gentle manoeuvres through widely spaced cones. Then to more severe turns (still through cones) and this is where the counter-steering technique that they taught was invaluable. On a signal from the instructor we ended up, hopefully, in a marked box he pointed to, either to the right or left of him, and at the end of a crash stop! Interesting to see his quick reactions to those who carried straight on towards him especially as we were travelling at 25-30 mph!

Now, the Harley Electra Glide is not the most agile of mounts and I can say, without doubt, that without using the counter-steering method I would never have managed to pass the course. To all the doubter's I would say, "Just try a gentle push to the left or to the right when on a quiet road. Amazingly simple and effective you'll find, although if you want to perfect the method after years of riding, it does take concentration and-practice until it becomes a natural riding technique'.

Another valid point that was drummed into us, and as far as I'm aware is not taught in the U.K, is the procedures when cornering. I quote from the 'SLOW, LOOK, LEAN, and ROLL' instructions from the paper on cornering.

LOOK - The first is that it should involve not just a movement of the eyes but a turn of the head so as to 'face" the exit and the intended path after the turn. For gradual turns, it is a minor turn of the head; for sharp turns, it is an exaggerated head turn; and for U-turns, it means turning the head as far as it will turn. The reasoning behind this technique is that it not only allows the rider to SEARCH more effectively, but it also pro-

vides what we call ‘visual directional control‘. This means that the mind tends to ‘automatically’ make the control inputs necessary to make the motorcycle go where the rider is looking. It also tends to discourage looking down, which causes balance problems. And it prevents wobbling by permitting the rider to perceive the turn as a single, co-ordinated manoeuvre rather than as a series of short arcs.

One final aspect of the head turn associated with the LOOK is that the eyes should be kept level with the horizon. The reason for this recommendation is that some individuals tend to become disoriented if their head is tilted while in a turn. Not all people are affected in this way, but keeping the eyes level is a good idea. Those who are prone to this reaction will be spared the problem, and it doesn't hurt anything for those who don't have this problem‘.

I had never considered this aspect of riding in all my years on the road, and when I was instructed - well, it was more like threatened - to comply, I soon realised how much quicker and smoother I was able to take a bend. I also realised the bad habit I'd developed of hardly looking more than a few feet in front of the wheel, especially on tighter turns. "*Keep your bl. . . . head up or you'll go where you’re looking‘* was the cry, and the words ring in my ears to this day, especially when I have a lapse in concentration.

So, as with the counter steering, just take a few moments when you’re out on the road. Consciously apply the rule of turning the head and keeping the eyes level with the horizon when taking a bend. Much smoother approach and exit, eh?

Finally, I don’t think it was coincidence that the instructors used BM’s with ABS especially when demonstrating how to control a rear brake only crash stop!



FEED-BACK from 16/06

Hi Malcolm,
You may be aware of a US website called 5United which is solely for /5 BMW owners. I recently discovered this site which is quite interesting, describing as it does various design foibles of the /5 series and how to remedy less desirable characteristics.
Among these is a section devoted to the /5 starter relay 'cricket' noise and starter problem, which I guess all /5 owners have experienced - I know I have, and over a period of time I’ve installed new starters and new batteries that either or even both have gone again, but having read this article I now know that I was never in with a cat in hells chance!
This article describes an effective modification to the starter relay involving removal of the potentiometer and adding a resistor and diode. (Sounds impressive, but I don't know what I'm on about - its just what it says on the print-out!). A local TV shop sold me the two parts involved for a few pence and an electronically minded friend has carried out the mod for me. Could my /5 be the only /5 in the UK with reliable electric starting properties?
The six page article contains much that is irrelevant, and may be easily condensed into 3 pages.
Best wishes.

George Compton – (BMW R60/5 with electric start!)
george@comptonelli.freeserve.co.uk

6th Vintage Classic Rally
14th –17th June 2007
Newport, Nr Fishguard, South Wales



MANNHEIM 2006

by 'The Amateur Mechanic'

Organised by Veterama and held each October at the Mai-Markt-Gelande in Mannheim, this 'Oldtimer' market is reckoned to be the largest event of its kind in Europe. The organisers claim that to pass every stall would require a walk of some 20km (12.5miles!). Having attended this event for the last 10 years or so without *ever* seeing every stall I can believe them! The autojumble officially opens from 08.30 till 18.00 on Saturday and 08.30 till 16.30 on Sunday, but a lot of deals can be done on Friday by purchasing an 'insider' ticket. This year insider tickets cost 20 Euro and the holder could start searching for those illusive parts at 12.00 on Friday and continue until 20.00 (by which time it was dark so you could hardly see what you were trying to buy anyway!).

Obviously, given its location, the predominant make is BMW. It used to be said that if a part for an old BMW couldn't be found at Mannheim then it wouldn't be found anywhere. I'm not sure that is true anymore as, like all the other autojumbles I have visited recently, private sales of second hand and 'new, old stock' spares are definitely diminishing.

That leaves us with the 'oldtimer' BMW dealers; almost all of them have attended Mannheim over the years with the notable exception of Stemler (Motorrad Stemler GmbH). Apparently his spares business is so large he doesn't need to be seen there…. As well as seeking parts Mannheim is a social event and gives me an opportunity to catch up with developments. A chat with Hans Petersmeier is always both interesting and informative. Petersmeier GmbH produces, in my opinion, the best quality replacement components of all, (not the cheapest for you only ever get what you pay for). He has developed electronic ignition systems for 1951 to 1969 models that can be re-programmed remotely, R69S rocker mountings that offer greater rigidity at high revs, alloy barrels with nicasil linings that enable closer piston to bore clearance, enough components to build a new set of 1951 to 1955 telescopic front forks, parts to replace most of the gearbox internals for R51/3 to R68 models, as well as offering a comprehensive spares service from his base at Bielefeld. This year, however, he had no new developments. Like a number of other dealers I spoke to he reckons the spares market is gradually diminishing due to the quantity of completely restored machines increasing and the use they are put to reducing. Apparently the growth area in the spares business is for pre-war machines, as they emerge from the former eastern block countries. Hence the increasing number of autojumble stalls from the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Latvia and Hungary. Some of the petrol tanks, mudguards and exhaust systems on display produced in these countries appeared to be of the highest quality this year. Of course, whether they fit anything is another matter….. Not too much comeback if they don't, the vendor probably wont be there next year, but anyway could you ever find or recognise them if they were?

It's easier perhaps to talk to Mark Huggett than most (Mark Huggett GmbH). Mark is, after all, South African and therefore speaks English. He doesn't ever have a stand of his own but shares space in the Main Hall with Herman Rabenbauer (Rabenbauer GmbH) with whom he appears to have a very close working relationship. Quite what the tie up is I'm not sure but they do run combined adverts in the German press for their two businesses. It was these two dealers who approached Kolbenschmidt to restart production of KS pistons for the 1951 to 1969 models, made to the original specification (but with only 3 ring versions available) using better materials with lower expansion rates. (KS were OEM piston suppliers to BMW along with Nural and Mahle)

After some years when they were unavailable either new or second hand (and believe me I know, having searched for about 5 years to find some!) R69S rockers are now in production again. Available either through Rabenbauer or Huggett these are among the latest parts to be re-made, but more new items are in the pipeline. Again Mark confirmed the Petersmeier view that the big growth area is pre-war parts and as such is concentrating greater effort in this arena.

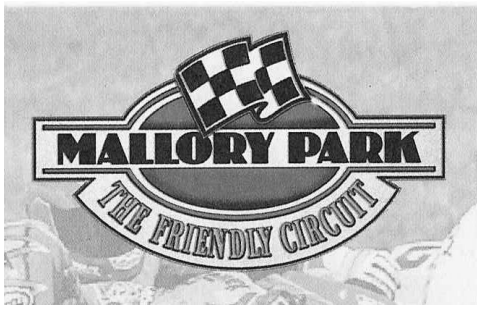
After two and a half days selling even the most ardent autojumblers have had enough and by just after lunch on Sunday the farthest travelled are packing up and on their way home. When this starts it's our signal to leave and by 14.45 we are on our way. This year to the University town of Heidelberg, which is close at hand, for a visit to the castle followed by a meal and drinks at the Bauhaus in Schwetzingen. And then Mannheim's over for another year. All things being equal we'll be back again next year, but then there's always Ludwigshafen, Kassel, Ulm, Utrecht….

FEED-BACK from 16/06

From Bob Porecha – an alternative to the switch arrangement I showed on my R67.

Thought you would like to see and publish this photo showing rear stop light switch I fitted on my R5. This can also be done on any other models. Switch is from 1985 on Mono-shock twins, front or rear stop light switch. .All it needs is a nut welded and switch screwed on. It is neat, small and hardly visible, as you will agree.





For 2007 I hope to have a Register stand at Mallory Park for the VMCC Festival of 1000 Bikes on Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th July. There will be the opportunity on the Saturday to ride the circuit but it is necessary to register now either on line at www.vmcc.net or by contacting the VMCC on 01283 540 557. The Sunday, when there are less stringent noise regulations, is for the racing exotica when some of the finest, and noisiest racing oldies show their pace. This is all in addition to static exhibits, 'Concours' etc. It's a good opportunity to chat bikes if thrashing around the circuit is not your thing, although this year I understand Mick Barr thoroughly enjoyed himself and impressed many with the performance of his R69!
Should be a good weekend.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM WENDY & MALCOLM

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