



Vintage & Classic News

Issue 21/2008

In this edition Mannheim 2008 - In the Workshop - Buyer Beware - A geriatric who loves 250 cc BMW's - Some Boxers that never were - etc, etc.



Editorial

The photo above is of an incident that occurred at the ASI Moto Show Autodrome di Varano in Italy this year. Photographed (and copyright approved) by Philip Tooth - a former Editor of 'The Classic Motor Cycle' magazine - it shows five times German champion, Lothar John, dropping his 1954 Rennsport on one of the tighter bends. Philip confirms that fortunately neither rider or BMW were hurt. Not often do we get to see a Rennsport in this position! For more information on this premier classic event in Italy visit www.asifed.it and www.varano.it

Just to remind everyone that discs are available containing all 20 back issues of the Vintage & Classic News. Price is £7.50 (including postage/packing) for the three discs. Cheques made payable to 'The BMW Club' please. In addition I have on disc the R51/3 & R67 Workshop Manual (Price £6.50 for 2 discs) and pre-war R5 Technical Information disc at £4.00. Prices incl. p&p. Many thanks to Mike Silverwood, Mike Fishwick, Patrick Howell, Vic. Doswell, Dave Appleton and of course to 'The Amateur Mechanic' for their input in this issue



Register Diary for 2009

25/26 April

The Classic Motor
Cycle Show, Stafford
Show Ground.
(Club Stand)

May

The Classic Bike
Clubs' Show, Stan-
ford Hall, Nr. Lutter-
worth, Leics.
(Register Stand)

BODGE IT AND SCARPER AND

MORE.... (Part 1)

by Patrick Howell

I had long wanted to own a 1920's BMW; with their classic wedge-shaped tank, clean lines, and stunning black and white-striped paintwork, they were way ahead of their time, and all the more appealing for their simplicity. Thus it was that I came to trawl the columns of Ebay, and came across a 1929 R62, the first of the 750 cc side-valves which eventually went on to power the legendary World War II Wehrmacht sidecar machines. That legacy endures to this day, with the Chinese still turning out the Chang Jiang with fundamentally the same engine.

A Belgian dealer was advertising this bike as a collector's item, and from the photos, it appeared that it had had a complete external renovation. He did however say that he thought that the gearbox was a bit noisy. The bike was advertised at a 'Buy it Now' price, which seemed reasonable, and perhaps what clinched the deal was that he was coming to England the next week, and would deliver it to my house. When he arrived, the bike appeared to have had a complete professional repaint, and with all the plated parts re-nickelled. The frame number was authentic, and tallied with the Belgian logbook, and the frame was straight. The bike, had straight through exhausts, and above the din, I could hear a rattling, which I attributed to the timing chain.

Over the next few days, I began to discover first minor, and then more worrying faults. The speedometer, apparently stuck at 52kph, was zeroed with a magnet, but by the same token, you could set it to any speed you wished! Attempts to kick-start it failed, partly due to a slipping kick-start ratchet; when a bump-start was attempted, the back wheel just locked solid. The fuel supply was also suspect. Apart from a leaking tap and pipe, the tank was full of rust and paint. With stale fuel in the tank, it was a wonder that it had run at all.

The snag list grew longer and longer. For some reason, which entirely escapes me, the bike had been fitted

with over-size 400 x 19 tyres, which were fouling the front mudguard, and which made removal of the rear wheel very difficult. When the front wheel was removed, the brake linings were found to have bits missing, so the wheel must have been replaced in that condition. The wheel itself had been re-spoked, but the restorer (for lack of a better word) hadn't bothered to replace the wheel bearings or skim a badly scored drum. The cardan shaft had plastic garden hose instead of shock-absorbing rubbers. The front fork links had grease nipples which led nowhere. The aforesaid speedometer had a 'mileage' display drum which was kept in place with clear sealant, but otherwise had no internals. Even if it had, it would not have worked, as the gearbox had no drive for it. And I am omitting minor items, such as cracked frame lugs which had not been welded prior to being painted over. In short, the bike seemed to have had a 'museum' make-over, with nothing (good) done to its internals.

At this stage, I contacted the vendor with the ever lengthening snag list, and sought an explanation. His response was that this was a collector's item, which seemed to imply that it could be in any condition he chose, that the sale was at a bargain price, and that the expenditure of a couple of hundred Euros would have given him a much better profit. My regret is that I had left it too late for negative feedback on Ebay, there being a three month time limit on such. Be warned, that gentleman is still out there, and advertising.

I decided it was time to have a preliminary look at the engine. Removal of the cylinder heads showed that the pistons were 82.5mm as opposed to the standard 78mm, which meant that they were a whopping 0.177" overbored. The normal limit I understand to be +0.060", so it does



not take too much imagination to see how thin the cylinder liners must have been. One cylinder was also scored, indicating a possible partial seizure. Time to investigate further. I found an engineer who quoted me £300 plus VAT to strip and report back. The report did not make happy reading. "All parts were contaminated with blast particles. There is no doubt that the engine would have suffered catastrophic failure if run for any length of time." There had been an attempt to weld the crankshaft, but this was scrap. The main bearings had been replaced with sealed ones, but fitting these bearings had the effect of cutting off the oil supply to the big ends. The restorer had also blocked off certain passage with silicone sealant, no doubt in an attempt to make the engine oil tight. In that, he may have succeeded.

Now I had to find another crankshaft. Fortunately, about that time, I was contacted by a VMCC member, who told me that a chap in Ireland had a load of spares for a BMW R11, which was the model which succeeded the R62 in 1929. These I purchased, and the crank proved to be salvageable, although it did need a complete overhaul. The rest of the parts I was eventually able to sell to Germany via the BMW Veteranerclub, but again, be warned, freight of heavy parts is very expensive, and if you can find another means, do so.

With the crankshaft overhauled, my engineer was able to turn his attention to the cylinders. Fortunately, the Chang Jiang still uses 78mm pistons, so he was able to turn out cylinder liners to resleeve the bores, though he did have to re-bush the piston gudgeon pin bushes, as they were a different diameter to the small end bearings. New main bearings were also fitted, and a new cam follower made up.

Then it was time for the gearbox. The nut on the end of the mainshaft was found to be loose, which probably accounted for the back wheel locking up when the clutch was engaged on bump-starting. The dogs engaging the mainshaft with the kickstart ratchet were worn, and the teeth had to be cut back using spark erosion. This was an expensive process.

Unfortunately, the remedial work did not stop at putting right the efforts of Restorer Mark 1. The front brake drum, which was supposed to have been machined by a well-known Leicestershire firm, was 12 thou out of true, and had to be

redone by my engineer. As the wheel had to be stripped to do this, it then had to be rebuilt. The spoke nipples had been taped over with masking tape, which did not disguise the fact that they had not been trimmed properly, and would have punctured the inner tube in no time at all. Again, the well-known Warwickshire wheel builders who had fitted the new tyres had failed to pick this point up.

And then there was Fate itself. In July, my house and garage was flooded to a depth of two feet, inundating the frame and all parts except the engine, which was away for rebuild. Fortunately, most parts could be washed down, but I had not realised that water had got inside the petrol tank, which then had to be flushed out with acid, and partially repainted.

On one of my journeys to my engineer, I had the bike on tow on the trailer. To cut a long story short, the car departed the road, went down a ten foot embankment, through a hedge and barbed wire fence, and landed up in a field. The encounter did the paintwork on the car and bike no good at all; fortunately, the now restored tank was not on the bike, which actually sheared one of its tie-down straps. It was a miracle that the car and trailer did not overturn, and I was later able to drive both home. "The Lord must have been looking after you!" someone said. "Yes", I replied, "but not well enough!"

According to my engineer, the engine had run satisfactorily, although he did confess to some 'initial' difficulty in starting. That was the understatement of the year, for it took me several weeks of tinkering, a magneto check, and a re-timing of the ignition, without benefit of timing marks or data, and re-setting of the valve clearances, before the engine was made to run. Boy what a joyful, but sad occasion. Joyful, because it proved that the engine could run, but at a crescendo which defied belief, with those straight through silencers. Sad, because the oil breather was chucking out oil at a such a rate that it was spraying oil all over the front wheel, and a good many other places too. So, the engine had to come out, and back to my engineer, who will now modify the breather, at a cost, of course.

So, it's back to the drawing board.....



IN (and out of) THE WORKSHOP with 'The Amateur Mechanic'

CYLINDER BORE LUBRICATION.

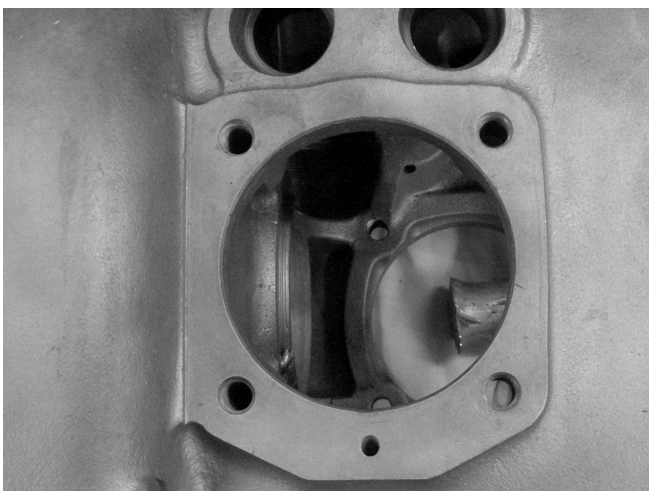
All twin cylinder engines produced between 1951 and possibly as late as mid 1962 only had oil pumped to the offside cylinder. Lubrication to the nearside was simply by splash from the crankshaft webs. Sometime in, I believe, 1962 an extra oilway between the joint face with the barrel and the main (8mm dia) oil gallery was drilled. This was a fairly easy task for the factory as the crankcase already had an internal web in the correct place on both sides.

It had been my intention for sometime to modify an R51/3 engine I needed to complete for installation in my outfit (mentioned later) as well as the 1957 R50 whose crank had just 'expired'. The impetus to undertake these tasks came from a register member who sent a copy of an article he had obtained written by Hans Dieter Petersmeier, someone for whom, as regular readers of my musings will know, I have a lot of respect. The text explained that a 4mm hole accurately drilled at an angle of 31degrees would ensure we broke into the main 8mm oil gallery. Although I trusted the author we did use the digital readout to check the articles validity and ensure that we didn't make any mistakes! Using a 4mm drill minimises the chances of the drill 'running off' and standardises the barrel oil feed sizes.

Having successfully drilled the oilway I became a bit concerned that this extra feed might starve everything else fed by the oil pump, so took the opportunity to quiz Hans Petersmeier whilst at Mannheim. He assured me that he had undertaken this modification on many engines without any problems. It had been suggested to me that a restrictor might be needed but I was assured this was not necessary and that the oil pump could adequately cope without any modification.

I recalled that when the angle of the teeth on the camshaft drive wheels was changed (1962?) the number of teeth also changed. I mentioned this to Petersmeier, as by increasing the number of teeth on the crankshaft gear whilst retaining the same number of teeth on the oil pump gear (36T) the speed of the pump is effectively increased. In fact the ratio on the early engines is 1.636 and with the later gears 1.564. Neither Rabenbauer nor Petersmeier were apparently aware of this change! Whether an increase in speed of 4.5% gives that much extra oil flow is a bit debatable...

As the factory undertook this change themselves on later engines, giving an extra machining operation, we must assume that it was worthwhile...



CRANKCASE PROBLEMS WITH A 1951 MODEL

1



2



Whilst BMW fitted bearing carriers in the pre-war tunnel construction engines (first introduced in 1936) for some reason they decided in the early R51/3 and R67's to run the rear 6207 bearing direct in the crankcase. Sometime in late 1951 they obviously realised the error in this and re-introduced a bearing housing. This housing, fitted to very few late 1951 and early 1952 crankcases was retained on three studs and must have given further trouble as very quickly this housing was superseded by the five stud type which was used, albeit in two different lengths, until the last Earles models in 1969.

It has become standard practice for many engine restorers to change the rear main bearing housing whenever an engine is rebuilt. The rear 6207 or 20207 bearing (R68, R69, R50S, R69S) does have a known problem of spinning in, and therefore wearing, the housing. In the early 1951 crankcase this phenomenon effectively renders a crankcase as next to useless. Locktite 'bearing fit' is *not* a recommended solution!

I'm currently in the process of building a 1951 R51/3 outfit with a Steib S501. I use the term 'currently' in the loosest possible context as the project has been ongoing for the last 12 years...Assembling the cycle parts, gearbox and bevels was the simple part. The engine proved much more of a problem as it had a badly worn and damaged area in the crankcase where the rear bearing was fitted. (Photo 1) I pondered this long and hard over several years. By far the easiest solution would have been to use a later unnumbered crankcase, fit a new rear main bearing housing and stamp it up to match the frame therefore retaining matching (?) engine and frame numbers. I was a bit reluctant to do this for two reasons: one: it seems a bit like cheating to me, two: unnumbered crankcases are hard to come by and I might just need it for another project! Anyway I had the one that was in the bike from new and was determined to use it if at all possible. I needed some help!

On the principle that two heads are generally better than one I called in the engineering guru previously mentioned. Having taken measurements on the crankcase we knew that there was in fact enough metal in the rear main bearing area to machine out and install a conventional 5 stud-fitting carrier. Having computer readouts on his machinery my friend was able to 'clock' the crankcase from the location for the front main bearing housing and accurately bore the rear to accept the new housing.

3



Five 5mm holes were drilled to be tapped M6 for the locating and fixing studs. These were subsequently spot faced to accept the accurately ground spacers required to compensate for the difference in height between the carrier and crankcase. (Photo 2) The housing to carrier interference fit was retained and the finished job (Photo 3) turned out as we intended, saving an original item and making it serviceable into the foreseeable future.

And that's what good restoration is about, isn't it?

FIVE SPEED GEARBOXES

The first 5 speed gearboxes were fitted to the R90S and /6 models, introduced for the 1974 model year. These boxes are much easier to work on than the previous 4 speed units fitted to /5 and Earles models. Easier in as much as the change mechanism can be removed and serviced without disturbing the gear shafts. As the return springs seem more prone to failure than the earlier types this is doubly useful!

A friend brought me the gearbox out of his early R90S, which he had already had a bit of a go at since he found a 'dog' off one of the gears on the magnetic drain plug. He'd already bought a replacement gear and selector fork but was unable to make the new parts work with the old. In desperation he brought it for me to sort. As a short term solution I lent him a 5 speed box rebuilt in anticipation of a future project.

Now I'd already worked on an early (1976) R100RS with a similar problem and become acquainted with some of the issues, things like changing the angle of the helical (5th) gear pinions, and was quite aware of the unavailability of spare parts for these 'earlier' 5speed gearboxes.

The loss of one or more of the drive 'dogs' on the pinions was obviously not unknown to BMW's engineers as they initially gave more material between the 'dogs' and groove in the gear for the selector fork simply by manufacturing a slimmer fork which, in turn, allowed them to have a narrower groove. This proved to be a fairly short-term fix. My suspicion is (although I have no real proof) that the fork was weakened enough by thinning to allow it to bend if abused. BMW's final modification involved returning to the 'thick' original selector fork, increasing the overall width of the gear and modifying the rest of the gearbox internals to suit! This did mean of course that parts of the 5-speed box became very specific and to a very large extent not interchangeable. Anyway as the only parts now available seem to be from the last series of gearboxes you either have to obtain a new gear cluster, a second hand gearbox or know someone with a few early spares. I fell into the later category at the time with a large box of early 5-speed parts at my disposal. A quick rummage through the parts produced the correct gear, one with good 'dogs' and little visible wear. Gears that have not previously run together from new are often prone to whine and although it's generally inadvisable in my experience to run non-matched gears together the alternatives of a new cluster (about £900-1000!) or a second hand gearbox of unknown history requiring a precautionary strip down were simply not economically viable.

Did the gears whine? To be honest I don't know! You see the acquaintance is a coach builder and the deal was that he replaced the floor in my Steib S501, rebuilt the sidecar mudguard and repaired the rear mudguard for my R35, the cost of the gearbox re-build being used to offset some his charges. It took a little over 4 years for him to complete his side of the deal although to be fair I didn't complete the gearbox rebuild until he rang to say he was about to return the sidecar and mudguards! During the four years he had been using my borrowed gearbox he had tired of the R90S and now wanted to sell it. The price, mileage (45000) and colour (Silver Smoke) were right so I bought it!

There seems little point in changing the gearbox back as they are identical (externally) and anyway, I now own both of them!

Puncture Prone?

I related in an earlier 'In the Workshop' the tale of a puncture in the rear of my R75/5. In the last 3 months I've suffered 2 more but in different machines. Both punctures were in the rear tyres, one the R69S and the other in my recently acquired R90S.

Those who know me well would tell you how fastidious I am when it comes to checking tyre condition and pressure as well as inspecting for flints etc. Prior to the purchase of my K1100RS in 1993 I reckon the last time I had a puncture on the road was in 1969. The advent of the K11 changed all that! In 6 years ownership this bike 'attracted' 11 objects that deflated the rear tyre and 2 that did the same to the front. The K1200RS that followed fared little better...7 rear wheel punctures (but thankfully no fronts) in the next 6 years. The current K1200GT has been 'puncture free' for the first 14500 miles. It was the experience with the earlier K's that led me to make regular flint and nail inspections of the tyres.

Back to the R69S... Sod's Law always, in my experience, prevails! A friend of mine who now lives in France rang up to ask if I could help him out with a bike for a local run here in the UK. The week before I had ridden a couple of hundred miles on the Sunday and used the 'S'. I knew the rear tyre was down to a little less than 2mm and had already been in touch with my tyre supplier, ordering a Metzeler ME77 3.50x18 that was going to be delivered by him on Thursday. The run that I was providing a bike for took place on Wednesday...I'm sure you can work out the rest! It was only a short local run so my friend was allocated the R51/3 and, as the run was so short I opted for the 'S'. There were plenty of other taxed bikes to choose from so why I decided on the 'S' I have no idea. Six miles into the run the rear tyre was flat having picked up a large staple, of a type used to hold pallets together. As always I was carrying a spare tube and tools, so apart from filthy hands it was more a nuisance than anything else. Needless to say the new tyre arrived as arranged the following morning.....

Normally when I buy a second hand bike fitted with tube-type tyres I remove them and check the tubes. Again this is done in the light of previous experience. I wouldn't repair a punctured tube except in a dire emergency. My first BM, an R50 purchased in 1967, had, unbeknown to me, a rear tube with a vulcanised patch. As the tyres were nearly new (and I was 20 years old!) when I bought the machine I just rode it, covering a couple of thousand miles before deciding to ride it (two up) to the Oktoberfest in Munich. We hadn't gone too far on the Autobahn before the rear tyre was flat. In those days I didn't carry a spare tube but did have tyre levers and a puncture outfit. We struggled the bike into a rest area, removed the tube, blew it up on an airline and took it to the washbasin in the toilets. No leak! I'd seen the vulcanised repair but its significance didn't register. We put it back as was and continued. About 50 miles later the thing was flat again. The same procedure produced the same results. Twice more this happened before giving up in the dark and pitching our tent in a rest area with no facilities. We soon had a visit from the police who were good enough to tell us of a village over the hill behind us that was within walking distance and had a good bar. All we needed to hear after the day we'd just had!

The following morning I walked back to the village, which fortunately had a tyre depot, and bought a new tube. No more problems! It wasn't until sometime later it dawned on me that the so called 'vulcanised' patch was probably lifting when heat built up in the tyre at speed on the autobahn and then re-sealed itself when it cooled down. Hence our 'punctures'.

As my R90S came from an acquaintance I trusted and had just been fitted with a new set of Bridgestone tyres for which I had the receipts there seemed little point in disturbing them. I'd covered around 650 miles on the 'S' before I took it out on a fairly local run on New Years Day. Roads were still wet with salt but it wasn't too cold so the run should have been fun! A good turnout of 42 mainly British machines (only 3 BM's) signed on and were then asked to form up for 'photo

opportunity' for the local paper. I pushed the 90S off the centre stand to join the line and thought the front brake calipers had stuck on, as the bike would hardly move. Then reality dawned and back on the stand the bike went. A light kick to the rear tyre revealed all. Flat. Revolving the wheel the culprit was there for all to see. Right in the centre rain groove a metallic object stuck out. The pliers in the tool kit easily removed the 2inch x10 self-tapping screw that had gone through absolutely square to the tread.

Once again a little crowd gathered to offer advice, mainly on how to ring the breakdown service to get the bike home. There were looks of astonishment when the bottom of the tank bag produced an inner tube of the correct size and a pair of nylon rim protectors but when the seat was lifted to reveal a toolkit complete with tyre levers the looks of astonishment turned to incredulity! Doesn't anyone even try to sort their own roadside problems anymore? Having removed the tyre and found a suitable rubbish bin for the punctured tube all that remained was to re-fit the tyre and inflate it with the BMW hand pump. Unfortunately one of my local section members had asked, a few days before, if he could have some tyre fitting soap and I had given him the 35mm film canister full of soap I always have in the tank bag for emergency use. Once again Sod's Law operated. Memory being what it is these days the canister had not been replaced. However, help was at hand in the form of a large puddle from the recent wet spell. A few handfuls' of water make an excellent rubber lubricant and I started to tread the tyre back on. At this point our local wheel builder came over and tried hard to hand me the rim protectors and tyre levers only to be told they weren't required. After treading the thing on he told me he fits around 25 to 30 tyres a month but always by using levers. Asked about the failure rate from pinching the tube with a lever he admitted to '2 or so in 25'! Forty-five minutes later there was, in my opinion, sufficient air pumped in with the hand pump to ride the 'S' to the nearest garage air-line. Sufficient turned out to be just 16psi after ¾ of an hours hard work!

I'm beginning to think I'm puncture prone!

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PROJECT CANCELLED -

Some Boxers That Never Were - Part I by Mike Fishwick

Some of the lesser motorcycle magazines try to give the impression that BMW have retained the same engine since the advent of the R32 in 1923. Those such as ourselves of course know that as with any other manufacturer, BMW have continuously designed and developed their engines. Many however do not realise the extent of the development work which has been carried out but cancelled for various reasons, particularly during the decade following WW2, while BMW were fighting for survival.

Most of those interested in BMW's rather dramatic history will be aware of their first post-war design, the R10. This was a very basic machine, but in spite of the chilly economic climate of 1947 it retained the BMW ethic in terms of a flat twin engine (albeit in 125 cc two-stroke form) and shaft drive. Many authors claim that this engine (known as the M210a) was originally used as the starter motor of the wartime BMW 003 jet engine, which is an appealing but fanciful tale. This task was in fact performed by a smaller engine of similar type, manufactured by the Reidel company, whose extreme oversquare bore/stroke ratio indicates its design as being optimised for full speed use. It can be seen on a sectioned 003 at the Deutsches Museum in München.

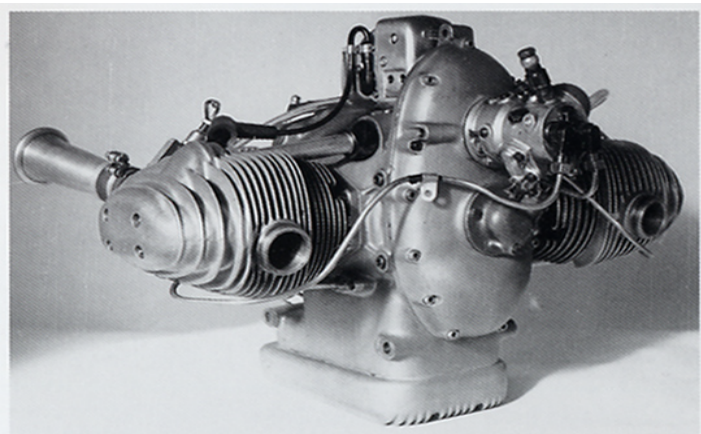
As the Allied Control Commission relaxed its rules, and suitable machine tools again became available the R10 was soon shelved in favour of the R24 250 cc four-stroke single, this being based upon the wartime R23. The R10 was destined to be the only two-stroke motorcycle developed by BMW.

By 1950 the majority of European car production was reserved for export, with the result that motorcycles were in great demand. Most motorcycle manufacturers were convinced that a utility two-wheeler would attract vast sales from the 'Man in the Street' with the result that many basic machines were produced. In Britain BSA built the Bantam (a profitable 'mirror image' copy of wartime Germany's DKW) while Velocette drove the first nails into their coffin with the LE. This was an intricate 200 cc flat twin, using side valves and liquid cooling, with enclosed bodywork. Payments on the huge loan for the associated specialised tooling was to pursue Velocette to their grave.

BMW was no exception, and soon produced a 200 cc single whose utilitarian nature was obvious in its side-valve layout. This little machine (which was also known as the R10) bore more than a

passing resemblance to the Velocette LE in its pressed steel bodywork and small wheels, but did not progress beyond the prototype stage. The need to develop the R24 into the R25 series obviously represented a better return on investment, and soon to become the best-selling BMW motorcycles in history.

As BMW began the climb towards prosperity the first post-war production Boxer, the 500 cc R51/2 was launched in 1950, this being a modified version of the pre-war R51. A 350 cc version of this engine, the M231/2, was developed alongside it until 1951 but never put into production, as this capacity seemed



The M253c engine with gasoline injection could deliver up to 58 bhp.

to be more popular in England than elsewhere. The R51/2 engine was also used to power the Type 531 car, a diminutive two-seat saloon prototype built in 1951 but cancelled due to the company's lack of funding to buy the necessary press tools for body manufacture.

Within a few years the German Economic Miracle was gathering speed, and by 1950 BMW were on the racing circuits of Europe again with early versions of what was to become the well-known 500 cc dohc 'Rennsport' or M253 engine. Some extensive development work took place, engines being built with valves operated by pushrods or overhead camshafts, and cylinder heads containing two, three, or four valves. The favoured solution was of course the use of a two valves operated by bevel-driven double overhead camshafts and rockers. This engine was destined to carry more World Sidecar Champions to victory than any other.

By 1953 it was obvious that BMW would be at a disadvantage on the race circuits if they retained the flat twin layout, and a four cylinder engine was planned. This was known as the 'Haufenmotor' ('heap' or 'pile' engine) and basically used a flat four cylinder layout, using direct fuel injection and crossflow cylinder heads with long ram pipes. As a manufacturer of flat twins the attraction of 'doubling up' was obvious, as was the equally obvious problem of providing cooling air to the rear cylinders. For this reason the rear cylinders were tilted upwards by an angle of 20° to produce a 140° V-twin at the rear allied with a conventional flat twin in front.

This cylinder layout must have given a few balance problems, as did the complication of operating the staggered valves at high rpm by bevel-driven double overhead camshafts on each side of the engine, mounted diagonally. This modern yet definitely-BMW engine was, however, never constructed due to the worsening financial situation. In spite of the generally buoyant situation of German industry at that time, BMW were skating on very thin ice due to the car division's 502 series, these 3.2 litre V8-engined limousines being fine cars but not suitable for the market of the period.

By 1954 the motorcycle engineers had decided to take a step away from flat twins, and had designed a 500 cc racing twin which consisted of a pair of 250 cc singles, the crankshafts of which were geared together. Students of old British motorcycles will doubtless remember that this basic layout was used by Velocette on their supercharged 'Roarer' of 1939, which was to have provided BMW with stiff competition had WW2 not intervened.

After WW2, however, supercharged engines were banned from racing, and so München made significant changes from the Hall Green concept. The inlet ports were almost vertical, and the valves operated by BMW's usual design of rockers and overhead camshafts. The cylinders were inclined outwards by 5 degrees (probably to improve cooling on the inner sides of the bores) and each 'single' used a separate bevel shaft to drive its camshaft. The cylinder heads were deeply finned and equipped with direct fuel injection.

By now BMW was again struggling to survive, and no doubt problems were being encountered in reducing weight to a competitive level. These factors condemned this engine to exist only on paper, in spite of a redesign involving the use of large rotary valves which covered almost all of the combustion chambers.

During the mid-'fifties the scooter boom began, and the ephemeral 'Man in the Street' once more began to tantalise most motorcycle manufacturers, whose sales were now beginning to suffer as the general availability of cars increased.

BMW produced a scooter prototype using a single-cylinder 175 cc overhead-valve engine, the cylinder head of which used a simple but efficient wedge-shaped combustion chamber with parallel valves, based on their small car engines. The engine was soon enlarged to 200 cc, and plans laid for extensive production in München, with engine and gearbox manufacture at the old (ex-BRAMO) aero engine factory in Berlin, which is now the BMW motorcycle plant.

This attractive machine, which bore a close resemblance to the later Maico series of scooters, would probably have been too expensive to compete with the established Vespa and Lambretta. BMW had recently purchased a licence to build the Isetta bubble car, which promised sufficient regular sales to avoid the bankruptcy which was fast approaching, and the scooter project was cancelled. It was a wise move, for the Isetta was to save BMW during the mid-'fifties, and remained in production until 1962.

By 1955 the racing solo 500 cc class was being dominated by Italian companies such as Moto-Guzzi with their 170 mph V-8, ridden by such as John Hartle. It was therefore decided to instead contest the 250 cc class using a smaller version of the successful Rennsport engine. While this little twin, the M207, was obviously based upon its larger brother, it differed in two main areas. The crankshaft was supported by three main bearings, the additional item taking the form of a large-diameter ball race. This bearing was sandwiched between the halves of the crankshaft, which were located by large dowels and bolted together. This in turn dictated that the crankcase be manufactured in two pieces, which was also something of a departure from established BMW practice.



The end product was a very pretty little engine which produced a promising 34 bhp during its initial tests, even though running on carburettors rather than the direct fuel injection which was planned. Unfortunately BMW's financial situation could not support a new racing effort and the small engine remained no more than an interesting development. This engine was last seen in the motorcycle museum at Otterbach, north of Kaiserslautern, with some other interesting BMW prototype engines.

This is by no means a complete list of BMW's cancelled projects during the early 'fifties, but gives one a good idea of the kind of thinking – some of which was quite radical – which was current in the period.

As the 'fifties drew to an end BMW's finances headed towards the red again, but good times were ahead, and would bring some of the most interesting developments.

.....

As time goes by the number of professional people who work on pre-1969 machines is declining. Many times I've been asked to recommend someone in a particular area but it is becoming increasingly difficult and I usually end up by referring to a Register Member who has the knowledge and certain skills. If you have a particular ability and knowledge and don't mind doing the odd job, or know of anyone who has the skills please let me know.

Obviously no one should expect work to be carried out for no re-numeration so an indication of the costs would be appreciated. Incidentally, I would recommend that you always get a firm price for any work that you are going to get done by a professional restorer, I've heard of some 'rip-offs' lately. Had good service and quality work from a professional in the classic scene? Please let me know so that I can pass the word on.

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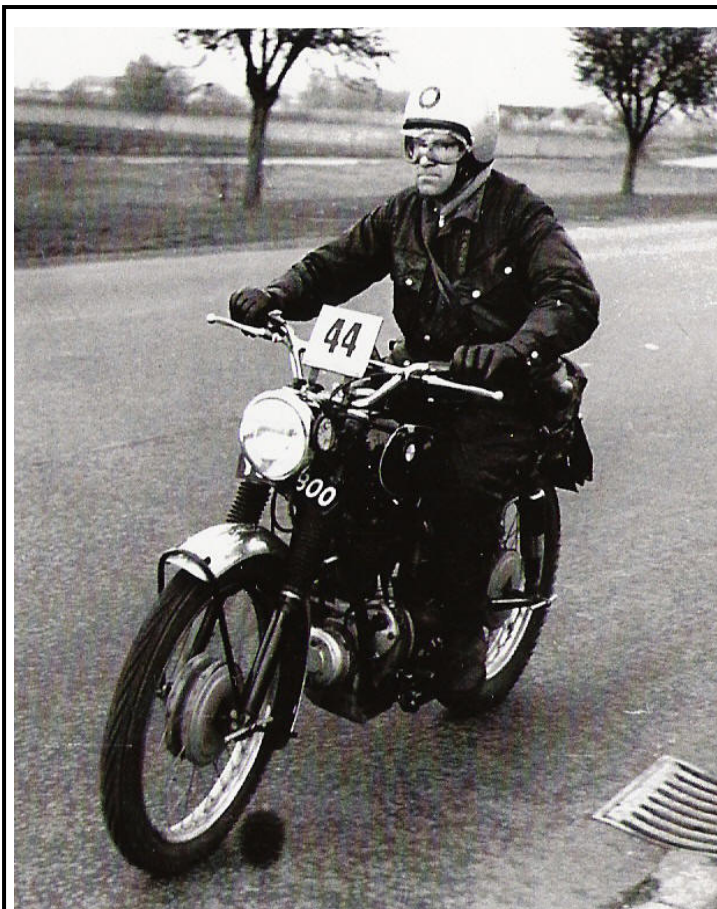
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PORECHA

A GERIATRIC WHO LOVES R26'S

By Vic Doswell



VIC IS SEEN HERE RIDING YUC 800 THE WORKS SPECIAL. (If you can find this machine you've probably hit gold!)

I found Issue 20/08 of the Vintage and Classic News more than usually interesting - partly because it dealt with several matters of maintenance and problem solving on different topics, but the item which most interested me was that about BMW post-war singles by 'The Amateur Mechanic', a man of wide experience but some views which I must comment upon.

I have, since 1953, had continuous membership of the BMW Club and I am now over 84 years old, so 55 years on BMW's- twins and singles - but none made later than 1962 ie the 'Good Ones! Almost half of these were 250 singles, which have carried me all over the U.K. and nearly all of Western Europe.

Out of at least twelve BMW's I have most loved two models - the Earles Forked R60 twins and the singles, chiefly the R26's. The only one still in my stable is a 1956 R26 which is just about indestructible having been to many countries and many mountainous regions and subjected to rocky tracks which were most undesirable on a heavy twin.

My first R26, bought from MLG's of Shepherds Bush in 1955, was SXB 552 and one of the first batch of this model to reach England.'The Amateur Mechanic' believes it to be 'the least desirable' of the post-war singles and refers to 'little or no respite from vibration throughout the rev range'. I have never found this. There is a vibration band in the range which feels a lot, but I always found it between 37-45 mph in top gear; below that it was not very noticeable and you learnt to drive through it on these extremely rideable bikes. Beyond that the faster you went, through to 70 mph plus, it just became smoother all the way unlike most British bikes of a similar type where it gets worse all the way.

My present R26 is 1956 SXB 587, has been used on the road. On long-distance trials, at MCC Silverstone meetings, at Brands Hatch, and for over 25 years on the Stella Alpine and Moto-Piston Rallies in the Alps and in Spain. It has been mercilessly pushed for most of its life with minimal maintenance and few renewals. If you loo after the battery it never fails to start.

I liked several R25/3's as well and an R27 which had endured much in Kenya with missionaries for a decade but still came back for more, but my R26's were the best and the longest owned which must say something.

With the first one, when I lived in Reading, I went to Devizes one Sunday morning along the A4 (before the motorways) through Newbury, Hungerford and so to the turnoff for Devizes; 53 miles in the hour dead to the town centre on a 250 single. I could not do that now with any vehicle without breaking the law. I saw 75 on the clock several times.

Once on returning from the West Country after Easter, I was in fairly heavy traffic on the A303 for a long way and depending on the possible gaps which occurred, I was aware of a Norton Dominator sometimes behind me, sometimes ahead. We both stopped at a cafe before Stonehenge and the rider said to me 'I didn't know BMW made a 500 single'.

'They don't' I said, 'bend down and look through the finning; it's a 250'.

He was amazed - 'It doesn't hang about does it', No', I said, 'use the gearbox and press on and many people can't believe it'.

It of course consumes less fuel than a twin although it is heavy for a 250; make no mistake

though it is NOT, as many Club members say 'Half a bike'.

The secret is - give it stick and use the gearbox - (which by the way is IDENTICALLY the same as that in the contemporary 500-600 twins) - same gears, same ratios, same everything; the only difference is the ratio in the rear drive bevel box. Unburstable!

Take big handfuls after 15-20 minutes on the road into a long run when it is good and hot and it will eat the miles tirelessly; DON'T THINK 250 SINGLE- THINK GO! And it does.

Year after year, leaving Newquay the morning after the Lands End, I followed the reverse way of the course to Lynton for the Beggars Roost Trial. Up and down all the 1 in 4 hills and twisty roads; 112 miles in 2¼ hours - 50 mph average. Oh man!

You get FUN in capital letters when you use an R26 as it was intended. OK, it is not as comfortable as an Earles Fork R60 twin, my other love, but it is startlingly DIFFERENT.

It is now 52 years old and will never die (I will, but not yet!) The vibration I have experienced is as I have said, really not a problem. Drive through it, it will go away. Keep the revs up.

The most exotic of my 250's was a BMW Works special, YUC 800. Long teles, a one-off swinging arm conversion at the rear that was too high off the ground for me to foot in a hard trials section, so I found that I didn't need to and lost no marks! A year or two ago Hans Meier was looking for it. I don't know where it might be now, alas; last seen in London. Charlie Lock doesn't know either.

It is no good just having the odd ride on one - of course it is not a twin - you must own it for years and use it hard all the time; it will not let you down and it will go anywhere.

At the end of his article 'The Amateur Mechanic' does say 'If you've never ridden one, please try Half -a -Bike if you get a chance.

Good advice! I am the living (though ancient!) proof of the pudding. It is in the eating.

Vic Doswell - S.W.Section

R75/5 – THE PERFECT CLASSIC ALL-ROUNDER?

BY MIKE SILVERWOOD

We've all had one of those magical rides, when everything comes together. It's early evening, the weather has been beautiful all day and still there's not a cloud in the sky. You don't have to share your favourite winding country lanes with anyone else — apart from you they are deserted. The bike is running perfectly and you're at peace with the world.

I was out enjoying myself on my R75/5 under just these conditions when a thought popped into my head. (as they do from time to time) - if they still made these bikes today, I for one would definitely buy one. Compared to today's big and heavy machines, they are an absolute joy to ride. On that particular ride. I was in heaven.

Then the thought progressed. It seems that many of the enthusiasts that I've met over the years own more than one 'classic bike' and on any particular day have a choice of machines and decide on one particular mount for a specific ride out. Yet, if you were to be restricted to one machine only, out of the range of BMW models that are regarded as classics. which would you choose? If you consider the earlier /2 sports model. you have the heavier steering and the inconvenience of no electric start' the R90S sports machine is super for flying along but not so good at pottering. My choice as the best all-rounder, a machine that you could use on a daily basis would be the R75/5 Here's how I came to that decision.

For a start. they look absolutely stunning. Chunky and solid in appearance. they are instantly recognisable, retaining that separate headlamp and with the engine and gearbox filling all of the space under the tank. In fact they look similar to the previous models with the addition of a big tank, reminiscent in fact of the Hoske touring tanks of an earlier time.

I think they are such capable machines. In the time that I've had mine, it has carried me several times to the Isle of Man, loaded "up to the gunnels", (whatever they are) let me chase around the sweeping roads of Derbyshire and can be used on a daily basis — at all times fuss free. The handling is excellent and you can pretend you are Helmut Dahne racing around the Island. happy in the knowledge that the bike won't do anything unexpected. Today. thirty-nine years after they were announced, I think they are vastly under-rated.

One of the things that appeals to me is the relatively low weight of the machine and the ease which they can be put onto the stand. The pivot point for the stand must be well placed, to aid this operation

For people who don't feel the need to be forever using spanners, the bike is ideal. Maintenance is easy. but one job worth spending time on is setting up the carbs. The Gunson's Carbalancer and Colourtune products make this job much easier.

If you were to compare a 75/5 to some of the bikes from the same era, a Bonneville for example, the machine is sewing machine smooth and has plenty of "go". The overall quality of the machine is apparent: all the parts still work and the years haven't dulled the overall appearance. Nothing falls off. Don't get me wrong, I don't think they are perfect, but then, is any motorcycle? However. some of the problems are easily surmountable. For example, should the battery be low. you will have to use the kick-start. If you can reach it that is: I personally find it very high. The answer is to park at the side of a kerb and in effect kick downhill. On early models, the speedometer and rev counter needles can sometimes be erratic. If you have the short flat handlebars fitted, there's a chance that you will not be able to see the instruments anyway, as the face will probably be obscured by the cables anyway.

Still with the early, "short wheel-base" models, the battery is quite small due to the small amount of space that was available, which can lead to starting difficulties if the battery isn't in top condition. Also, the clutch operation can be quite sharp

When they were first introduced to this country they were wickedly expensive. but that wasn't the case in their home-land. At the time when the retail price was twelve hundred pounds over here, the bike would first have been transported to the concessionaire. and import duty of 18.5% would have been added. then after the concessionaire added his profit. the Chancellor have had "another bite of the cherry" when 25% purchase tax was added. After the dealer subsequently sold the machine, he would have then added his profit. Crikey, they must have been nearly free in Germany!

They aren't expensive these days though. A really good one will cost you roughly the same as any mediocre home grown product in average condition To my way of thinking, it's "no contest", but "you pays your money and take's your choice".

These days, getting a 75/5 in the first place could be the biggest problem, as they don't appear to come up for sale very often. Is this because there aren't many in the country, or is it that those people that do have one have no desire to part with them?

If you were looking for one, what would you need to consider? Basically, it depends on what you want from it. If you were after one to enter in shows, it would pay for you to search out one in as good a condition as you could find to start with as restoration of any motorcycle costs a packet. Then ideally all of the original fittings should be in place, as these could end up costing you a lot of money to replace. For instance. the alloy bodies for the indicators are around forty pounds each. It definitely pays to do your homework as to what an original bike in standard condition should look like Yet if you want a bike lust for the pleasure of riding, then it will not matter to you that the seat is unoriginal and that the switchgear on the handlebars is from a later model. It should be reflected in the price though. I would think

Originally you would have had the choice of a range of colours, starting with black, white and silver; which then expanded to include a wide range of more modern colours, including metallics. Be aware though that the colour of the machine definitely alters the appearance and character of the machine immensely. If you want one now, you will have to be lucky or patient to get a specific colour

Shod or long wheel base is available and refers to the fact that the later model had about two inches added to the swinging arm. (Nineteen sixty-nine models up to the nineteen seventy three models were the short ones, with the long running to the end of the model production). Is it worth differentiating? It's definitely a case of 'swings and roundabouts'. Owners of the shorts will tell you that theirs will turn into a corner both easier and sharper. owners of the long ones point to the fact that they have a bigger battery and therefore easier starting, plus they are a bit quicker in accelerating due to the revision to the gearing. (There's also the chance of burning your boots on the exhaust of the short model, until you learn to angle your foot). Be aware that some parts will not interchange between each model. For instance, some types of pannier frames. (the one's that have the support that extends forward towards the passenger footrest bracket), do not fit both of the bikes.

One factor that I've found that alters the steering is which handlebars are fitted. There will be the choice of the short, flat type. the higher, pulled back type and then the type fitted to American spec bikes. These are as high as the ones mentioned previously and also pull back slightly, but then twist your wrists in slightly. Obviously these can be changed to suit yourself.

Options that were offered that you might see on the '72 model were a smaller tank that had chrome sides and chrome side panels that covered the battery. These are a matter of personal taste.



If after reading my own personal views you do decide to track one down for yourself, good luck. However, if I haven't sold you on the idea of R75/5 ownership, which would be your ideal 'one only' classic BMW motorcycle?

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This shows the items that are supplied with the MZ electronic ignition and 12v system for pre-69 machines. Many other BMW models are catered for.

BODGE IT, SCARPER, AND MORE – Part 2 by Patrick Howell

With the engine back at my engineer's for modifications to the oil breather system, now was the time to have repainted the frame and other parts scratched in the off-road excursion. Fortunately, the bike was insured for damage only. Unfortunately, the insurers and their assessors proved entirely negative. Having invited them to find a restorer ready, willing and able to refurbish the bike, silence prevailed. Frustrated by their lack of action, I decided to do the work myself, and gave them an estimate which included my own labour, based on an estimated fifty hours repair time. This stirred them into action, with a counter-suggestion that a 'professional' restorer would take only eighteen hours to strip and reassemble after painting. In the event, it took me well over sixty hours by the time I had removed layers of powder coating which were preventing a proper fit of the parts. I rather suspect that the reason that the assessors had gone quiet on me was that they were simply unable to find anyone willing to undertake the job on their terms.

The petrol tank of a bike is usually the centrepiece of the machine, and ideally should be the very last item to go in place, in order to avoid wear and tear during testing. Thus, with the bike nearly complete, and fitted with a tank from a lawnmower, it was taken to an old airfield for testing. The engine was eventually made to fire (a faulty magneto earth contact being removed), and was found to be fairly oil tight after its breather modifications. The gearbox was however losing some oil through a porous casing. After a series of adjustments to brakes, clutch and carburation, the bike was running quite nicely until all the gears were lost, excepting the one I was stuck in. The lid of the R62 gearbox comes off in about five minutes, and when the oil was drained, we found a broken gear selector yoke in the bottom of the gearbox. It had previously been welded, but the repairer had then machined off most of the weld. So now the gearbox had to come out, and was returned to my engineer.

With the selector arm repaired, he turned his attention to the porous casing. This had to be sandblasted clear of oil, and coated with a special sealant called Glyptal, which proved effective. Now it was time to replace the control cables.

All the old cables were fitted with solder less nipples, and the reason for this was that none of the adjusters or stops were fitted with slots. Hence any cable would

have to be made up in situ – not a good idea if you needed to replace one by the roadside. Moreover, screw-on nipples on the front brake would be a definite MoT fail point. Hence the cable stops were modified to ensure easy removal of the cables.

New cables now exposed weaknesses in the system. The clutch actuating arm was worn and twisted, so a friend machined a new one. Worse, the front brake was dragging, and had to come out. It was then it was found that one shoe had broken across its middle, and was only held together by its (new) brake lining. As this was the second shoe which had broken (the other had happened during the relining process, and was then welded), I decided that my neck, and that of anybody else who came to ride the bike in future, was just too valuable to risk the front wheel locking up in the event of a future breakage. I therefore commissioned new shoes to be made up, and these were then fitted with bonded linings. Although the inferiority of early glues may once have been the reason for the use of rivets, I cannot think of a good reason to use them today. They weaken both shoe and lining, and present the risk of scoring the brake drum if not replaced in good time. Anyway, in contrast to their predecessors, the brake lining people (Saftek) were magnificent, and turned the job round in 24 hours.

The front brake cam was also worn, and the return springs home-made, so both of these were replaced. Again, the spring manufacturers excelled, producing the required pair in two days, together with four extra springs at no additional cost. The whole assembly was then returned to my engineer for final grinding.

Throughout the rebuild, I had the unstinting support of two Brians. Brian Davis, who had bought an R27 I had once owned, machined a number of small items in record time, without accepting a penny in payment. Brian Thomas, who owns a 1927 BMW, was a constant source of advice and help. When I was at the Festival of 1000 bikes, I crawled under his bike to get the dimensions of the rear brake adjuster, only to get as well a sleeve full of oil down my brand-new fluorescent yellow motorcycle jacket. This was a wasted exercise on my part, as he appeared the next day, waving a spare adjuster, and promptly gave it to me. I hadn't the heart to tell him about my jacket.

By now, what I had spent on the bike, unscheduled, amounted to almost as much as it had cost me in the first place, and so it had to go, but at what price? Into that cost had to be factored indirect cost, such as insurance, and running around. The mileage alone that I had covered taking parts hither and thither amounted to over 2300, equivalent to a trip to the south of Spain and back. A leading auction house called B*****s initially gave a very jaundiced view on value. It later

proved they were talking a load of B*****s, as they later sold a very similar model for greatly in excess of that. What was so extraordinary about that sale is that they could not even tell me if the bike was running! With that figure in mind, I advertised my bike, which *did* run, and *did* have a documented restoration record, for a little bit more; it sold to the first person to inspect.

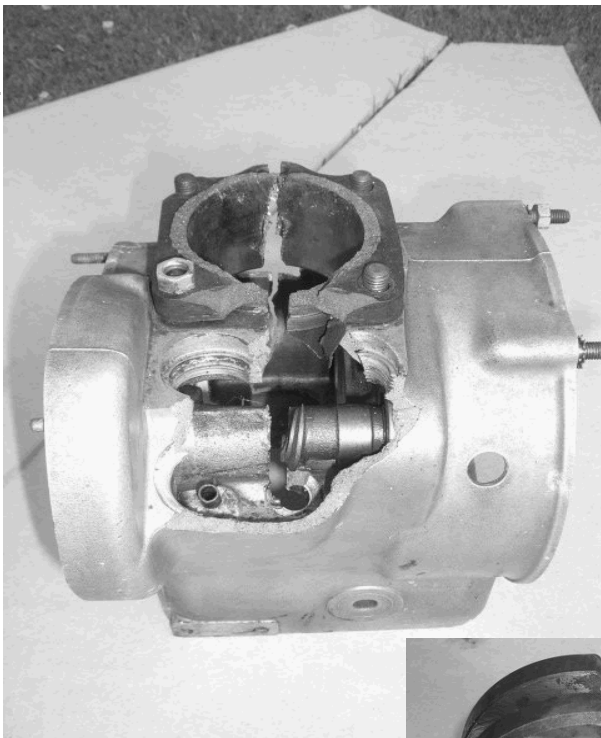
Would I do it again? Not if I had known the internal condition. Even in retrospect, there were very few external indications of that. I have, however, learnt a lot in the process. What really puzzles me is why anybody should have spent a great deal of money bringing a bike up to museum presentation, but without tackling the internals first. In a reverse sense, it is a bit like decorating a house, without first fixing the roof. I don't know what satisfaction they got out of that, but I am sure that even though there was in it no profit, the result was much more gratifying to me, and hopefully to my purchaser too.

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FEED BACK

Broken 250!!

I have had a quick browse through the CDs of previous newsletters and one item in particular caught my eye. On page 9 of NL 18/2007 there was an article by Gerry Douglas-Sherwood about the damage resulting from a broken conrod in an R27 engine. I suffered a similar failure, with more dramatic destruction, some 15 or so years ago. A few photos are attached which show similar holes in the crankcase and severed camshaft. Unfortunately, the flailing end of the rod also managed to break the main part of the barrel up and away from its base flange.... Needless to say, a major rebuild in a secondhand case was required so I no longer have matching engine & frame numbers. At least I have the remains of the original engine.



David Appleton

MANNHEIM 2008

by 'The Amateur Mechanic'

Early October found us once again on our annual pilgrimage to Veterama, billed by the organisers as 'The largest event of its type in Europe'. With a 25km walk to visit every stand, who am I to argue with their claim?

Some surprises were in store for us this year. Rumours before the event led us to believe that several of the major German BMW parts suppliers were going to be absent this year. Rumours that subsequently turned out, in fact, to be true. The 'big' news was that long established dealer Martin Kornhas from Karlsruhe has sold his entire stock (some 20+ tonnes!) to Uli's Motorradladen. Martin hasn't been in the best of health for sometime now and finally decided that he'd had enough. Although he didn't have a stand this year he did take the time to come up from Karlsruhe with his wife Karen to our Hotel to say 'hello'. He's still kept a few 'interesting' machines and enough spares to restore and keep them running. I'm sure all of us who have had dealings with Martin over the years will wish him well in his retirement.

Other dealers missing this year included Hans Dieter Petersmeier, another with I believe, health problems, Heinz Quoss who, with his pitch on 'Mercedes Benz Strasse' had, according to Martin Kornhas 'the best location at Mannheim'. Herman Rabenbauer had sub-let his normal pitch to a chap selling a few second hand BMW parts. All Herman had taken was a small display board with a range of chrome silencers and exhaust pipes. These systems, made to the original factory drawings, are the latest parts from the Rabenbauer/ Huggett operation. A high-level R68 system retails at around 1650 Euros.....Perhaps that explains why I'm in the throes of making my own for my R51/3 ISDT replica!

Both Mark Huggett and Herman Rabenbauer were around on Saturday but only for a short time, by Sunday morning they and their display had gone.

As far as bits and pieces are concerned I guess over the years my annual list gets ever shorter and the bits I haven't succeeded in finding over the last 12 years or so become more difficult to find. The current economic downturn doesn't seem to be affecting prices that still seem to be rising somewhat faster than inflation! I searched the site for a standard R51/3 /R 67 petrol tank in any sort of condition but without success. There were a number of 5¼-gallon Meier tanks for plunger models at about £700 needing complete restoration! A new one from Mobile Tradition painted and lined costs little more than this...

We did pick up a few second hand parts but no real bargains, then again God willing we'll be back in 2009.



'The Amateur Mechanic' sent this photo of one item that was at Mannheim. The fairing shown in the photo left had written on it *'BMW Henne Mayer fur record 1937'*. No price shown but..... was it genuine? I can't imagine BMW letting an item of this importance remain if it was the genuine article!



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Well, what do you think? Yes, it's an oil-head in an Earles frame. The machine is located in the U.S.A. /5 or /6 engines were a popular mod some years ago.

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Register Diary for 2009 Continued

June 18-21

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

July

VMCC Festival of 1000
Bikes at Mallory Park
Race Circuit, Leics.
(Register Stand)

July

VMCC Founders Day
Stanford Hall,
Nr. Lutterworth
Leics.
(Register Stand)

September

'Stinkwheel' Show
Beaumanor Hall
Woodhouse, Leics.