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Vintage & Classic Register News

ISSUE 4/2001



2001

VINTAGE DIARY

Sunday 22nd July 2001 V.M.CC.
Founder's Day Rally. Club stand and 'Concours'. 3 Classes – Pre '55, '55 – '69, '70 – '80. A great day out in a relaxed atmosphere. Auto jumble, Motorcycle Museum, Country House and dozens of vintage and classic bikes.

Sunday 29th July Support BMW Day at the Ace Café, London. Vintage Register Meet. More details from Steve Taylor 01509 829454 (Mercia Section)

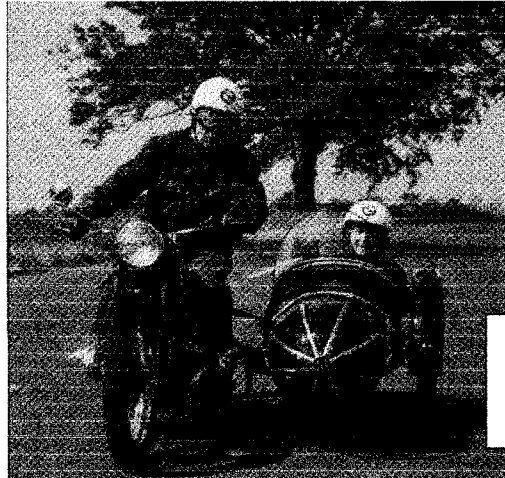
BMW Club 50th Anniversary
17/18/19th August 2001

Three Counties Show Ground, Malvern. The Vintage Register will be well represented with two Vintage and Classic Technical Surgeries, Riding skills, Ride-Out, Concours Awards etc.

Aston Martin Lagonda Visit 2001
(Date TBA.)

Sammy Miller Museum

Sunday 9th September 2001 – BMW Club Day. From 10.00 am. All members welcome no matter what the age your machine.



Taken in 1990, Honory Member
Cliff Washington and wife Cath
on their 1938 R51 and Steib S500

Edited by: -
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I must start this issue with an appeal for pre-'80 Journals, workshop manuals, brochures etc. for the Club archives. You are probably not aware, but now that I have taken over as Vintage Register Secretary, the Club no longer has access to a technical and archives library of its own. I have therefore started collecting for the archives but it will take a long time to accumulate all we need; in fact it will be never ending. Photocopies are better than nothing so please give me a call if you think you have information that may be useful. Hopefully, the Club should never find itself in the position again; the archives belong to you all, so, eventually I hope to get everything onto CD-ROM making it available to everyone.

Alastair Lauchland, from Ayrshire, has kindly sent me a number of articles from earlier Club magazines, this included a complete list of Club members and their machines from 1968. This has allowed me to trace the first owner of my present machine and gather information on its early life. It is fascinating to track back the history of a machine; for example, I appealed for news on the whereabouts of an R60 I owned back in the sixties. Well, 22 SMD left me and eventually went to Holland, but in the seventies reappeared back in this Country, and by amazing coincidence...over

Contributors to this issue are

Eric Rance
Gerry Douglas-Sherwood
David Stephenson
Gerry Wakeman
Phillip H. Jordan

Many thanks to them all

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was bought by Alastair Lauchland!

I now have photos of it thanks to Alastair, and my, how it had changed since my ownership and attempts at mild customising. Gone was the headlamp conversion with the combined speedo and rev counter nacelle that I mentioned in the last newsletter, and it now sported a large Churchgate tank, Peel fairing and Craven panniers; all in white. Alistair eventually parted with it and it has disappeared into the wilds of Scotland; does anyone know its whereabouts? If you are trying to trace the history of your machine give me a call, it may be on the '68 list.

On mentioning Churchgate petrol tanks, I've recently bought one for the R50; thanks to Terry Bradshaw. I've always admired the large Heinrichs and this is a British made fibre glass copy, right down to having a reduced depth on the right hand side to allow for fitting a chair on the Continental side.

Obviously, it is necessary to proceed with caution when using a forty-year-old tank so a number of measures will be taken. It was my intention to incorporate a tool tray in the top of the tank, but there is insufficient depth to do so without weakening the construction. In fact with the tank off the machine there is a certain amount of spring in the sides. It is essential that the metal mounting straps underneath be used to avoid flexing when in use.

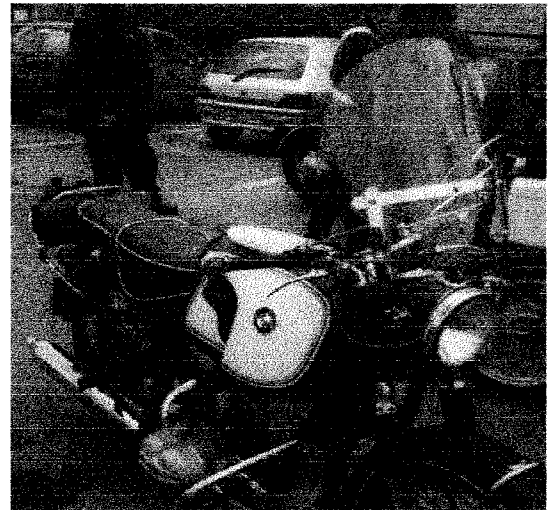
The entire underside is to receive a layer of fibreglass mat and the inside will be swilled with an epoxy based tank sealer. An etching primer will be used before applying the cellulose under and top coats.

I use 'Brushing Belco' cellulose, cutting back each coat with wet-and-dry paper before using a fine cutting compound. The white coach lines will be applied using 'Fine line' tape, in filling with "Sign Painters 1- Shot" lettering paint applied with a camel hair brush.

I've used this method on my standard tank and the only down side to the lining is a slightly raised edge, which you do not get with professional hand lining. It can, with care, be cut down with compound, but knowing when to stop is the dilemma.

The result may not reach the professional standards but is very acceptable, and it gives me a lot of satisfaction.

A word of warning on the choice of paint if you use an acrylic, which seems to be the trend nowadays, be aware that any petrol spillage will take the paint off. A good polish with Autoglym should keep a cellulose finish stain free.



My request for suggestions on the right screen to fit to an Earles fork machine, bought in two suggestions. One from Gerry Douglas-Sherwood (see separate article) and the other from David Stephenson who's R69S is shown above. David's is very similar to a design manufactured in the U.S.A. in the sixties and features the typically American horizontal and vertically braces. It came from MPS (tel. 01626 -835835 for a catalogue) and is their No.3 design for a Kawasaki 1100, price 79.99. All fittings are in stainless and the only additions required for fitting were two small stainless brackets to mount under the headlamp bolts.

Out of interest, the large tank shown on David's BM, is a genuine Heinrich with the filler cap and tool compartment under a lid on the top of the tank.

Replacement Mudguards

Is there a demand for fibreglass replicas of the original Earles fork mudguards? If so please get in touch and I'll make further enquiries.

A few years ago fibreglass replacements were available, and they were very good, the only way to identify them when fitted, was to tap them or to feel them to see if there was a rolled over edge. A mould is available for the front but not the rear at the moment. I realise that new items are available from Mobile Tradition but unless you are a purist with a fairly deep pocket, maybe new fibreglass ones would be a good alternative. Let me know.



VINTAGE MALLORY

15th APRIL 2001 By Eric Rance

Our newly elected Vintage Register Secretary, Malcolm Mc Nair had requested attendance at the V.M.C.C. spring meeting by as many Register members as could be assembled for several laps of Mallory Park during the interval in the racing programme. With a cavalier disregard for the time of the year, I said I would go on the R50.

I have always had fond memories of Mallory Park. The friendly circuit, they call it, set in the leafy lanes of the South Midlands: a small circuit with a plan layout not unlike Brooklands with a testing hairpin added on. The sign posting is sparse, but you can hear the machines circulating long before you actually arrive at the gates. A cheery welcome from the marshal as our tickets is checked and we rode to a holding position under the direction of Malcolm and Wendy, awaiting our entry to the inside of the circuit.

The ride down the M1 and A447 had been in bright sunshine, brisk and very pleasant on the R50, stopping only at Wooley Edge Services for coffee and a chat with a Suzuki rider who was on his way to Ireland. His ferry departure time required him to cover the distance at just over twice my maximum speed. He appeared to have no anxiety over his impending journey, and as he stubbed out his spindly roll-up on the sole of his technicolour racing boots, his multi-cylinder engine burst into life and with a wave he was gone leaving a stripe of rubber across the car park. I hope he got there.

The weather forecast had been bad and it was no surprise that the attendance of Vintage Register members was not as high as hoped for, but well considering the outlook. Malcolm and Wendy had experienced a rear wheel puncture, a sobering event if you have experienced it, causing them to return to base and try again on four wheels. Riding down from the North had been much more pleasant than expected; cold but dry and sunny, with thin traffic allowing 60-65 mph all the way down to the circuit. The 500cc motor will run all day at this speed and never fails to impress on shutting down the throttle, to tick over at a speed sufficiently slow to be able to count the firing strokes.

We were kept waiting for some time before being allowed into the circuit, and it was not until Malcolm found an ACU official who was also a BMW club member, that the gates were opened for us to ride into the paddock. We were scrutineered more carefully than I had expected and all of us were given plastic cable ties to secure our centre stands and a number to identify our machines. Then the R50 threw a tantrum and refused a hot start, which is often resolved by changing the sparking plugs.

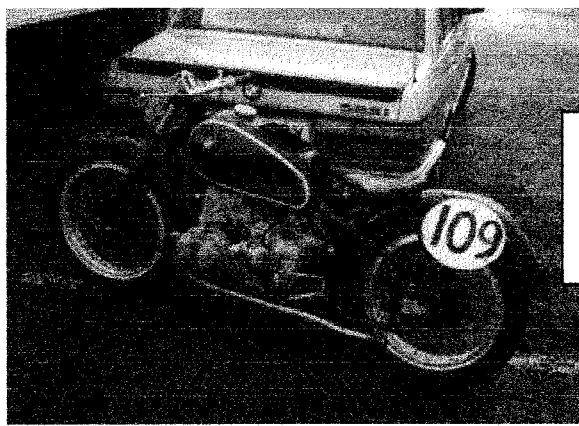
Soon we were asked to get started and proceed on to the circuit, which I did, only to find that the replacement plugs were worse than the originals and I had three rather slow laps running on one cylinder. There was no opportunity to change the plugs again as we only had three laps so I limped off having failed to impress the spectators.

It was good to see a variety of older machines present. Among those on the circuit were Dave Woolveridge, R60/2, from London, David Stephenson, R69S, Huddersfield, Brian Thomas, '27 R42, from Birmingham, Arthur Lawrence, R69S, Nottinghamshire, Nick and Sue Franklin, R69/90S/Watsonian, Warwickshire, Howard Galloway, R90s, Market Raisin, Roy Booth, R100CS, Mick Hirons, R69S US, Staffordshire, Paul Lohr, and myself from Ilkley, West Yorkshire.

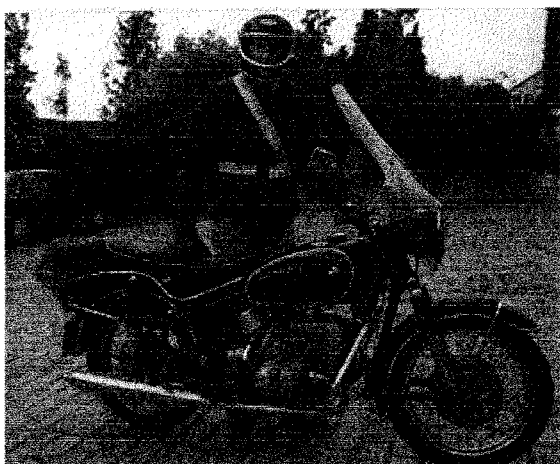
David Stephenson's impressive R69S was on its first official outing and very fine it looked too with Heinrich tank, beautifully painted, full touring screen, and a clever lifting handle formed from a Harley Davidson footrest. Arthur Lawrence was comparing notes with others before commencing a plan of improvements, although I thought his 69S looked very fine as it was.

By far the oldest machine present, and for me the most interesting, was Brian Thomas's pre-war side valve R42. A magnificent restoration neither skimped nor overdone. A delight to see.

The ride home had been preying on my mind and after swapping a few telephone numbers, I set off for Yorkshire and home. As I joined the M1 North, the rain started. It drizzled, rained, poured and fell in buckets. I began to think of damp ignition, skidding at roundabouts, water in my boots and goggles steaming. I felt sure the BM must let me down in these conditions, but it didn't miss a beat. I arrived home tired and wet but it had been worth while attending, I hope others thought so too. What's next Malcolm?



THE ONLY BMW COMPETING AT MALLORY PARK ON THE 15TH WAS THIS R67 RIDDEN BY FRASER BUCHANAN FROM SUFFOLK.



HINTS AND TIPS

From Gerry Douglas-Sherwood

Following on from my request for suggestions on screens, Gerry makes note of his findings using a *Speed 7*..... and much, much more.

Screens

Don't hesitate for a second to buy a screen for your R50. When my wife was studying at St. Andrew's I used to commute the 400 miles there from Norfolk on my R75/6, but only made the mistake of riding the bike that distance without a screen once. I soon purchased a *Speed 7* screen from Bob Porecha on a return run to Eastbourne, and from then on praised that day. It increased the sheer enjoyment of riding the BM' a thousand-fold; and when the R75 eventually became surplus to requirement I simply transferred the screen on to my R50, where it has remained ever since, summer and winter.

The *Speed 7* screen is tough, generous, optically correct (no distortion), light in weight, and has no effect on handling; plus, being clear, does not detract from the look of the machine. It is mounted by means of four screws, which makes its removal for cleaning a doddle. I am now on the second screen: the first was destroyed in two phases. Firstly, the bike was knocked over by a reversing Trabant, which cracked the right hand side, and then a pheasant careered into the left side before wheeling over a hedge in a cloud of feathers. Repairs were easily effected, even if they looked unsightly. Thus I continued, until the opportunity presented itself of bringing a replacement screen back from Holland, following a particularly successful trip to Hungary.

The only modification I have made to the screen has been an extension of about 3 inches to accommodate my 6' 1" frame. The extension is easily cut from a standard Bob Heath wrap-round visor, secured by three small nuts and bolts.

For serious, long distance motor cycling a screen is essential if you value your health. I used to commute to East Kent, then to South Wales, every month on the R50, through the foulest of weather and heaviest of traffic. With the addition of a set of hand-muffs bought at a local car boot sale for two pounds, the worst of the cold, wind, rain, snow and summer bugs were effectively kept at bay, with the screen parrying a number of heavy missiles thrown up by lorry tyres. A screen can literally be a life-saver.

Pistons

Most of us with older BMWs have experienced piston troubles, more so now R50 pistons - especially - are becoming so scarce. If you want to keep your bike on the road you will have to think around the strict specifications set out by BMW in an ideal world. The difference in oversizes is so little in reality you can afford to mix and match. Balance is far more important than a few millimeters in diameter. For example, for years I ran two different pistons, one a five-ringer, the other a three-ringer, together in my R50. It was smooth and quiet and a joy to ride. Each piston crown had a different profile, so there was a discrepancy in compression ratios, but that made not a scrap of difference on a day-to-day basis. What was most important was to match their weights as near as possible. The best way to do that is to utilise a set of digital scales, such as may be found at your local friendly Post Office. Note the difference in piston weights with rings, but without their gudgeon pins. Select an appropriate set of pins to equalise the weights, the more accurate the better. While the external gudgeon pin diameter on any particular range of engines is constant, the internal diameter can vary a great deal, allowing a scale of several grams leeway when matching. Fine tuning by the removal of surplus metal on the inside diameter at either end is most effective, and can result in perfectly balanced reciprocating masses and a smooth running engine.

Clocks

No need to spend more than two pounds on a clock. Buy a cheapy digital wristwatch from any garage and loop it over your throttle cables at the twistgrip. I have used this method for years, with the added advantage they can be removed in seconds and taken with you when you park.

Luggage

Don't you find with Earles and plunger framed BMWs the rear suspension struts get in the way? Handling can be frightening with too much weight behind the rear axle - I have experienced heart-stopping shimmy at walking pace because of a few ounces packed in the wrong place. The best solution when riding solo is to strap your luggage on the pillion seat: it keeps the weight well forward over the rear wheel, can be piled up to shoulder high, and provides some comfy protection for your back. Strangely though, a bag on the pillion seat seems to induce an updraught in the rider's jacket.

To accommodate a pillion rider is not so straightforward as we all know. One of the neatest solutions has been carried out by Mike Nobbs of the East Anglian Section. He has a R69S fitted with a RIOO engine. To complete the ensemble he constructed a framework to carry a set of standard Krauser panniers. The panniers sit well forward and suit the bike perfectly.

Tyres

With the deletion of so many good 3.50 x 18 tyres, owners of Earles-framed BMWs are not exactly spoiled for choice in the tyre department any more. Nevertheless, a winning combination can still be found for long life and superb performance - if you are not too worried about aesthetics. A 4.00 x 18 Avon SM Mk.11 rear combined with a Metzler ME33 front are a perfect match. Inflate to 24psi front, 28psi rear. The downside is that a 4.00 rear always looks overblown, and need deflating to squeeze it past the final drive hub, and the slimline Metzler looks more suited to a 250 single. However, I cannot fault either for outstanding performance in all weather, and I expect around 6,000 miles from the Avon, and 12,000 miles from the Metzler. They are both readily available, so shop around for the best prices. And don't forget, a new tyre requires a new tube!

Fuel

I have been asked so many times about what fuel to use in an older BM. Since the introduction of unleaded petrol, I have made it a policy to fill up alternately with leaded then unleaded at each fuel stop. My bike still runs on original soft seats with no apparent effect - the tappets never seem to need adjusting and the Bosch W4AC plugs last for years. I have to admit the engine is never as smooth on four star as it is on three star unleaded; in fact two star used to suit the R50 perfectly until it was sadly withdrawn.

Lights

Riding with a 6v 35w-headlight bulb after dark against a flow of blinding modern car headlights can be a scary business, especially if the roads are wet. When the opportunity arises, grab a 40/45w bulb instead. They are a bit difficult to find, but sometimes surface at motor cycle auto jumbles and cost around 5.00 pounds. The location flange is identical to the original so slots straight into the reflector. A few extra watts makes a world of difference, with a standard 60w generator being quite man enough to compensate for the addition current demand.

Batteries

The days of archaic lead/acid batteries are over. A friend was able to supply three 2v dry cells as used in miniature submarines. Although time-expired they were in AI condition. I soldered their contacts in series, popped them in an old, cut-down baby's plastic sterilizing container, carefully wrapped black PVC tape round the outside, et voila!... a black-cased battery, guaranteed spill- proof, maintenance-free and always ready to give maximum current. As a worry-free component I rate it second only to a stainless exhaust system. Keeps that 45w headlight bright too!

Advice

Now my 15-year stint as Pre-/5 Tool Hire Secretary has drawn to a satisfactory close (refer in future to **Peter Dunn** - address and telephone number in the Journal), it doesn't mean I've suddenly joined a silent order of hermits. I still welcome any enquiries with regard to BMW motor cycles, old and new, and will continue to provide a candid answer. I have a large reference library on older BM's, so can tackle most questions.

All the best and I hope to see you on the rally circuit again this year. - Gerry Douglas-Sherwood

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PANNIERS, LEGSHIELD & GS MODELS

From Phillip H. Jordan

There are a few items in the last Vintage and Classic News to which I would like to respond.

Panniers

I obtained a new pair of Denfeld leather panniers and frames for my R75/5 three years ago. They cost about 200 pounds Sterling. I do not know if the panniers would be suitable for older models, but they came from Heinz QuooB, Am Leversbach 52, 52372 Kreuzau, Germany.

Legshields

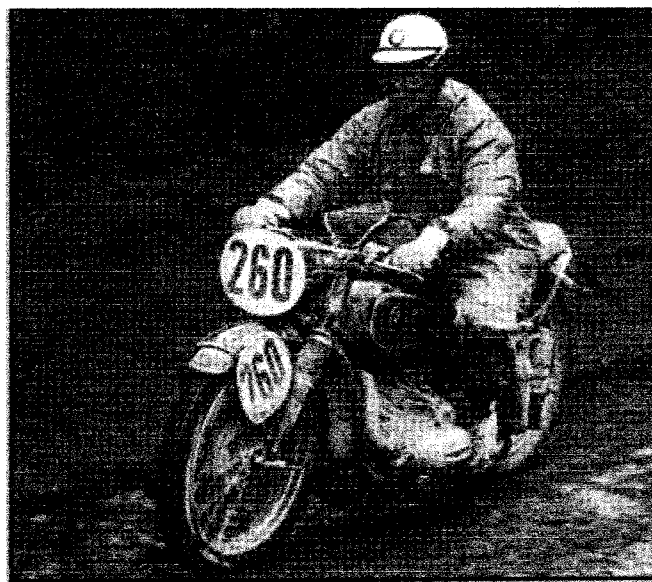
I bought a pair of Heinrich legshields last October at Veterama, again for my R75/5. They clamp onto the down tubes of the frame, and there are no straps over the tank. Mine were secondhand, but they can still be obtained from Theofried Jeckel, SchutzensstraBe Ila, 65510 Idstein. There are versions for the R50 to R69S, and most of the later 2 valve boxers. He also produces foot flaps, and many other parts.

GS Models

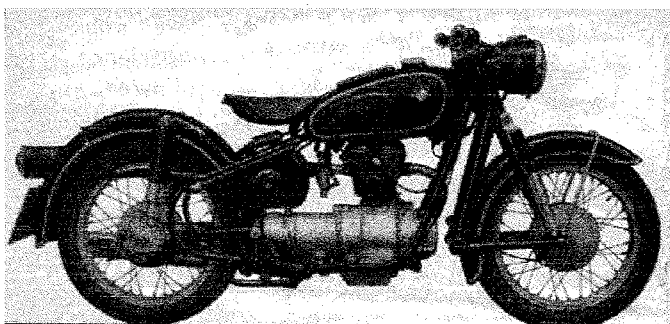
You showed a sort of 1960's GS model on the last page of the News, and stated that "it is understandable why BMW eventually introduced their GS models when machines like these were being put together by individuals".

I enclose 2 copies from the pages of a 1934 sales brochure that I have, which demonstrates that they were producing off-road (Geländesport, i.e. GS) models as early as this, and perhaps before. There were many works models produced with upswept pipes, of course, since BMW has a long history of competing in off-road events, including ISDT'S.

I wonder if the Japanese manufacturers actually realise what "GS" means'. To attribute such letters to a normal road bike is clearly stupid!



Of course Phillip is quite correct when he indicates that BMW have produced off-road machines since before the Second W.W. Unfortunately the two photocopies Phillip sent me would not scan clearly but I'll contact him for clearer copies and for any other material that may be useful for the archives. Instead the photograph above shows Georg Meier competing in the 1952 International Six Days Trial where he won a gold medal and the German team finished second to the Czechs.



This Edited Road Test was written by Vice President Bruce Preston in 1969 and appeared in MCS of that year.

The Forgotten BMW? **A Look at the R27 250**

The tester, faced with the job of assessing a 250 BMW, has to consider whether to report on it as 'just another 250' or as a BMW product. Its price encourages one to judge it by the standards of other BMW's. With this in mind, we have drawn

comparison with other BMW's where the situation has demanded it. Of course, everyone knows that a 'proper' BMW has a cylinder poking out either side. When the 250 BMW is discussed in select circles it is, at worst, dismissed as never having been heard of and, at best, as 'half a bike'. And yet, it is a BMW, with the blue and white badge on the tank and most of the features of the bigger BMW's – except that it hasn't got those famous cylinders pointing out at the sides. The suspension is the same, the seat is the same, the lights, controls, cycle parts, are the same. Both have the same shaft drive, engine-speed clutch, fore and aft crankshaft, clunky (if you are careless!) gearbox, and of course, the same peerless workmanship.

The heritage of the R27 goes right back to pre-war days, when it was sold as the R23 and was considered one of the best two-fifties on the market. Steady development produced the first post-war version, the R25, with the R26 being introduced in 1955. When the R27 was first available you had to peer very closely at the engine to discern that there was a difference from the earlier bikes. There wasn't much to see...but what an improvement!

What had they done? Why, rubber mounted the engine. And I bet you thought that the Norton Commando was the first! In the same way that the rubber mounting transformed the Norton, so it transformed the R27 – but more about that later; first let's tell you something about what makes the bike tick.

The engine is 'square' (68/68mm) of 245cc. with pushrod-operated valves. As already stated, it is unusual in having the crankshaft running 'the wrong way'. This means that the single-plate, disc-spring pressured clutch is running across the frame, transmitting power to a four-speed gearbox. From there the power is taken by shaft to the rear bevels. All these parts run in oil. This inevitably means that the slow BMW gearchange is retained. It also means that the clutch is well nigh unburstable. So, for that matter is the bottom half of the engine. This is hardly surprising when you consider that the bearings and the crankpin used are of the same dimensions as those on the 500 twin. The wet sump oil system is, if anything, an improvement on that of the twins, with the oilways drilled in the crankshaft to allow oil to pass right through. On the twins the oilways in the crankshaft are blind and, inevitably, get bunged up with sludge. Oil is delivered by gear-type pump under pressure. All these are reasons why you will rarely see a 250 BMW owner (when you see one at all!) with bottom end trouble.

The R27 was, until recently, the only modern BMW to use a chain - to drive the camshaft. With adjustment by tensioner, it is noiseless and efficient. The engine, with a compression of 8.2 to 1, revs to 7400 rpm. and develops maximum torque at 6300.

Disasters of my youth have left me unreasonably prejudiced against coil ignition and I have always tended to regard it as a fault that the 250 should use this system. Yet with power supplied by a Bosch 90-watt generator there shouldn't be trouble, and on the model tested the system behaved faultlessly.

The cycle parts on the R27 differ little from those of the twins. The frame is the familiar duplex cradle type, of slightly lighter manufacture, with the swinging-arm rear suspension identical to that of the bigger model. Earles-type front forks are fitted, again of a slightly lighter construction. Eighteen-inch wheels, 3.3-gallon petrol tank and well-balanced steel mudguards complete the picture of a very well made lightweight. Though the term 'light-weight' is more a description of its capacity class than its build, for the BMW turns the scales at 356lb, laden with petrol and oil.

The whole model gives an air of solidity and longevity. Indeed, they must be more confident of the sturdiness of the BM in Munich, for the instruction book positively encourages the owner to fit a sidecar, with literature on fitting and alignment and special gearing available. I can vouch that this is no idle boast for I have a friend with the earlier R26 attached to a S350 Stieb, and it has hauled this sidecar / *see over*

without fuss these last five years or more. Mind you, he's nearly gone mad having to be satisfied with a top speed of 55mph.

On the road, the rider who expects to get the dynamo-smooth power of the twins is going to be disappointed. The first impression is of lightness, especially at the steering. Maybe the bike does turn the scales at over 3 cwt. But, like the buxom beauties of yesteryear, it carries its weight well.

The fat spark supplied by the coil makes starting child's play and the engine immediately settles down to a steady muffled, plonk, plonk, plonk. You think the twins are quiet? You should hear the R27. Stationary and on the move, noise is just a dirty word. Mechanical 'off' noises are just audible if you listen intently, and the large silencer absorbs the exhaust noise so well that one almost feels that the phones (*that's a new word to me, but correct. Ed*) are being strangled. On the move you notice that the loudest noise comes from the induction.

First impressions of the motor are that it is 'gutless'. A very slow-action throttle combines with the very efficient silencing to make the engine *seem* very sluggish. A more determined grip on the throttle soon dispels this illusion and, provided the rider watches the speedo rather than listens to the exhaust note, the impression of speed is re-established. Vibration is non-existent all the way up the rev range. Those engine rubbers absorb all the shake. Only when the bike is on tickover does some vibration show itself by gentle juddering of the rear number plate. The merest whiff of throttle clears this.

This is not to say, of course, that the engine is as silky smooth as the flat twin. Most riders judge vibration by the effect it has on them, and if none reaches them they are not going to be bothered by the theories connected with the problem. That the engine itself is far from vibration free is readily apparent to anyone who has ridden the R26. Of course, there is no point in rubber mounting the engine if you leave various bits undamped, and BMW have avoided this by completely rubber mounting the engine/gearbox unit and the exhaust system. Nothing is allowed to pass from the engine to the frame without generous layers of rubber. It is recommended that the rubbers be inspected for wear every 10,000 miles, and it would be a wise rider who did so, although their active life should be considerably more for the test bike has done over 17,000 miles on the original rubbers with no deterioration.

Gearchange on the R27 is typically BMW. Silent changes are easy *if you have the knack*. Some riders learn it immediately, others never. Briefly it means that on upward changes a dwell must be allowed between gears then the lever is 'felt' in. Like double de-clutching on a car, but without the extra clutch movements. On downward changes a gentle pressure coupled with a slight roll of the throttle does the trick. The clutch plays little part in this operation, for quiet changes can be achieved with or without the clutch.

The old R26 was infamous for its ultra-low bottom gear and, although the gearing on the later model seems to have been raised slightly, it is still too low. Perhaps the prospect of it being used for sidecar work influenced the choice? Once the jump to second has been made the remainder of the gears are ideally spaced, with no great leap to the next gear. To all intents and purposes, top gear can be used by the lazy rider for all speeds above 15mph, but if anything approaching snappy acceleration is to be achieved the gearbox must play its part.

For town work the R27 was just the job, light to steer, narrow, flexible and economical (between 70-80mpg, or more can be expected.). And on the open road the BMW could reach 80mph. The engine at full throttle is still vibration free and burbling happily. This engine has shown itself over the years to be as tough as they come, and has been, cruised at 70mph. all day long. The owner of this machine (*OWP 181E if its still out there in the Club Ed.*) treats his bike this way and expects it to do 300+ mile trips whenever the mood takes him.

The motor was completely oil-tight, the only oil that was visible coming from the clutch cable. Although this R27 is two years old and is given no more than the average grooming it is still in very good condition, with all chrome work un-blemished and paintwork equally so.

The *little* BMW was a most comfortable bike to ride, the suspension effectively ironing out all road surface blemishes. The dual seat was extremely comfortable, although in theory, at 33 1/2 inches was a bit high. In practice it didn't present any problems. The impression given by such a robustly built machine is that of riding something much larger than a 250, with the 3.3-gallon petrol tank contributing to this. The 35/35W light is in character with this view, giving a beam that is the envy of machines of twice the capacity. The rear light, large and bright, is superb and the horn was excellent, loud and clear.

Handling of the R27 was a little 'soft' with the rear end tending to drift a little at speed on bumpy bends. For everyday use it presented no problems. Controls, by Magura, are well made but suffered a little *cont. over*

from the owner's preference for down turned handlebars. They were not to my taste.

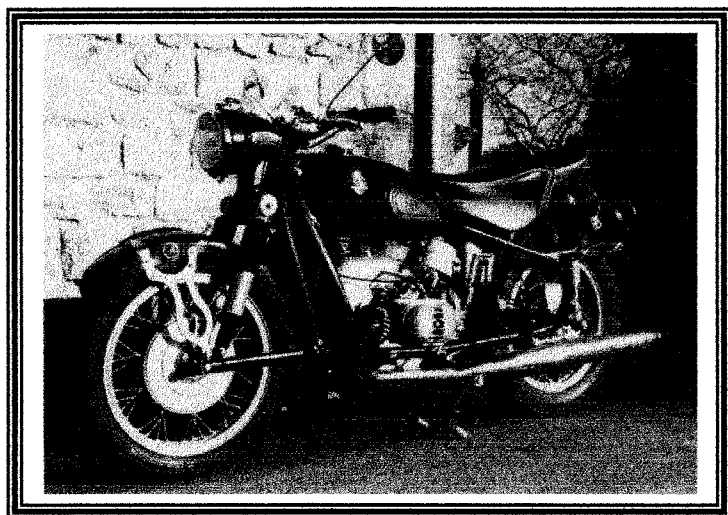
The brakes were probably considered good when the model was introduced, but the improvements in brakes these last few years has been tremendous and the R27, lacking the twin-leading-shoe front brake of the rest of the range, suffers by comparison.

I liked the little R27. It offers a fuss free, civilised sort of motorcycling that few other lightweights can equal, but at a price of 500.00 one would expect it to.

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Well, having read this report through a number of times, I'm almost convinced that I need one. There's no doubt they offer many advantages over other lightweights... ask Vic Doswell, he's got a collection of BMW 250's.

'The Pikie Wagon' *Jerry Wakeman's R60*



I recently achieved an ambition of mine which was to own a BMW R60 with Earles forks. I have owned a Sunbeam S7 De Luxe since 1956 and have always thought shaft drive to be a superior system. As the S7 was modeled to some extent on the BMW design I took an interest. I hankered after an R60 but could never afford to buy one and didn't 'need' another bike. Anyway, last year I was left a small amount of money and decided to use it on an R60, if I could find one.

The bike you see in the photograph is the one I bought. The unusual front and rear mudguard stays are just some of the stainless steel 'modifications' a previous owner has made; all

excellent workmanship but some of it a bit over the top. The bike is known locally as the 'Gypsy Caravan' or 'Pikie Wagon', presumably due to its embellishments. The curvaceous mudguard brackets have now been replaced along with the stainless steel rear brake pedal that weighed several pounds.

If the gent who did all this work sees this I would be interested to speak to him. The solid stainless damper knob is a work of art in itself. Most of the other modifications will stay and I'm getting round to organising a paint job as the person who painted it black over blue didn't do a very good job.

I'm thoroughly enjoying riding it and can see me keeping it for the foreseeable future. I still very much enjoy the Sunbeam but the R60 has just that bit more guts and go, and of course 'handles'.

I'm looking now to put a larger tank on it and having seen how nice the Heinrich looks, that will probably be the one. (*Jerry has now bought a Churchgate copy of a Heinrich to fit. ED.*)

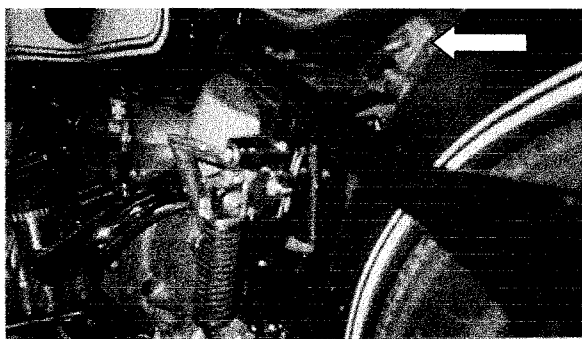
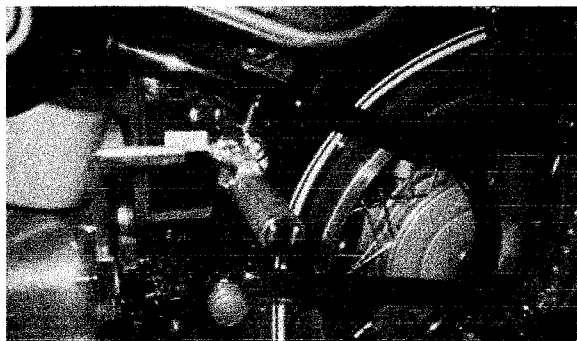
Having now received my 'Journal' as a new member, and having seen several old copies, I am struck by how little there is for those of us who are interested in the old bikes. I wonder what the proportion of membership is? So keep up the good work with the Vintage and Classic Newsletter.

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It's very difficult to answer Jerry's question on the proportion of members with 'old' bikes compared to those with more modern machines. Not all owners of older machines are on the Register, for whatever reason, and also it is not compulsory to list your machines on the membership form. Even if you add bike details they go nowhere to be recorded. This is a sad situation for the vintage and classic machines that really need to be recorded somewhere for the future.

There comes a time in life, when, body parts may not exactly fall off, but they may not function quite so efficiently. I fancy that many owners of the older BM's have returned to them because they are more manageable, especially when maneuvering them in the garage or when parking. Even so, four hundred pounds plus of metal, can still be a handful. I know, having progressively worked my way down from machines weighing in at seven cwt. Where it will end I don't know, I can't see myself on BSA Bantam yet.

David Stephenson has made a useful addition to his R69S as shown in the photographs below. As an aid to putting his machine on the centre-stand David has utilised a Harley Sportster pillion footrest to enable him to apply extra purchase. It is shown in the extended and closed positions.



If you may be wondering what the function is of the alloy box that's arrowed, it's a 12volt converting gizmo!

I've been asked what strobe-light I use when timing the engine. Well it's a Gunson Timestrobe bought from Halfords for, if I can remember 16.00 or so. It uses a Xenon timing light that shows the "S" mark very well. It is simplicity itself to use. Clip the positive and negative leads to a 12 volt battery (I park the bike next to the car and run from that battery) then slip the inductive pick-up

over the high tension cable when the engine has been started. Simplicity itself, it's just getting those bl.... points set correctly without burning my wrist on the exhaust pipe when it's hot!

In the last newsletter I mentioned the Vintage BMW Motorcycle Owners Club Ltd. of America and warned about sending money without being aware of the risk. Well, Roger Newark has at last made contact with them and confirms that their new Secretary is:- Christopher Betjemann, PO Box 592, Barrington, NH 03825-0592. USA. The problems may have been resolved, but only time will tell.

VMCC Founders Day Rally - Stanford Hall **22nd July**

I've 'plugged' this get-together a number of times over the past months and now it's almost upon us. If you haven't attended before, do try and get along for the day. It is probably the best gathering of old BM's there is at the moment, excepting of course the 50th Anniversary bash.

Eric Rance informs me that a 1/9th scale model of the 1954 Rennsport BMW is available from Model Motorcycles, PO Box 31613, London, SW24FE. The kit costs 26.00 plus 3.00 postage. The ref. No. is 22324. The firm also sell a model of Max Deubal's Sidecar Outfit (ref.No. 11318) As Eric points out, just right for Christmas!

STOP PRESS

High quality Stainless Steel wheel spindles are now available for Earles fork machines. Manufactured for us by a highly reputable British supplier, they are priced at 30.00 for the front and 35.00 for the rear. This price is lower than those available from the Continent. The first batch consists of ten of each. If you are interested in purchasing please get in touch with me.

Register lapel badges will shortly be available. The price has not yet been determined but they will be on sale at Stanford Hall.

If you are unable to attend the meeting on the 22nd, give me a call and I'll tell you the price and post one on.