

Your Letters

Contributed by BMWVCA NEWS
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Your Letters

I currently own two BMW motorcycles, a 1954 R68 and a 1974 R90S.

The R68 was purchased on March 18, 1959 from my friend's dad, who purchased it new on May 19, 1954.

My interest in BMW was always keen, as I was born and raised for the first thirteen years of my life in Germany where a BMW motorcycle was every kid's dream.

Then in 1952 I saw an R68 flash past me as I was walking to school. It was easily recognizable by its long, low lines attributed to its slim front fender, elongated two fin valve covers and that slim pillion pad attached to the saddle. It instantly became my wish bike for the distant future.

Fortunately, it wasn't to be too distant, for seven years later, after my family immigrated to the United States, my R68 came along. With money earned from a paper route and an apprentice machinist job, plus a little help from my dad, that wish bike became mine for the stately sum of \$550.00

Just like the bike, I still have the receipts from the seller.

In those early days, BMWs were few and far between. The R68 was ridiculed by my riding buddies who were riding mostly American and British bikes, as being too quiet, too slow on acceleration and with those cylinders on each side, which they thought were way. I bet they wouldn't think so today!

Anyway, more than forty-five years later, I still treat her like a modern machine and do 400-500 mile weekends. I believe in riding them as opposed to hiding them.

The R90S was purchased in September, 1974. At present it has 313,000 plus miles. Over the past two years, it has been undergoing a 100% restoration. I am retaining the modifications added over the years, which are a thirteen gallon Heinrich tank, five quart Fallert magnesium oil sump, two "Cibie" Super Oscar driving lamps, stiffened San Jose swing arm and top fork yoke, fork braces, Krauser air foil mirrors and a four gauge dash.

Upon completion of the restoration, I hope to rack up many more miles...soon! It's been too long!

Karl Duffner
Bristol, PA

From a New Member:

I have been riding old BMWs since the '60s. Even back then, there was something special about them. For me, it was the realization that long distance and reliability was possible with a motorcycle.

Ten or so previous American and Japanese makes set a perception that was shattered when I saw my first BMW.

I collect and restore post war up to 1969 BMWs. Last year, I put my first sidecar rig on the road. It is a 1966 R60/2 and Steib S500.

This winter my projects are a 1966 R27 and a 1961 R69S. Two of my favorite riders are a 1958 R50 and a 1954 R51/3.

After work. Nothing is better than a country ride on one of these old BMWs.

Jim Reinert
Owosso, MI

Hello Richard,

Please find enclosed a check for \$50.00—half for my annual VMCA membership and the other half, please donate to a

young person who might benefit from the use of a free subscription to the VMCA organization. Since I do not know who this will be going to, consider this a random act of kindness. My wife Teri and I do this every time we go across the Mackinaw bridge. We always pay the bridge toll fee for any vehicle that is behind us.

If you need to tell the person receiving the membership where it came from, you can say it is a "scholarship from" "www.project356.com"

Also, thank you very much for loaning me the tool for my 1966 R60/2 awhile back. I sent the tool back and neglected to include a note. The tool worked fine, but felt bad for neglecting to put a note of appreciation in with it.

Teri and I look forward to meeting you and others at some vintage BMW meets this year. I have two very good digital cameras, you can plan on us to provide you with more digital pictures than you could ask for.

Teri and I are both new to motorcycles, as the '66 R60/2 I picked up about a year ago is the first motorcycle I have been on for more than a quick blast down a trail and through the woods.

If 2006 goes as well for us as did 2005, we hope to get a second /2 with a sidecar. Teri enjoys riding in a sidecar, but has stated she will not be doing any motorcycle driving. From my perspective, I think it takes more guts to ride in the sidecar.

I hope all is well with you and your family.
Tom and Teri Hudson
Corunna, MI

Richard,

I received your sample magazine and application the other day....WOW!!! I may not be the sharpest pencil in the box, but I'm no stooge (nyuk nyuk nyuk). My application will be mailed Friday on my way home from work.

You have been so helpful and encouraging. Thanks, again, and again.

With Great Respect,
Karl Meisenhelder

Hello Karl,

My hat size changes with letters like yours. Thanks for your kind words.

Best Regards,
Richard

Richard,

Thank you for the copy of your magazine BMW VMCA. I read it from cover and as much as I enjoyed it at this point I do not want to subscribe. I think it is more for collectors and people that like to chat and I'm more interested in maintaining what I have, BMW ON " seems to be having some internal problems and I think too much print is being wasted on it, too many pictures of places I never go or want to and too many articles on the latest fashions. Again I wish more tech info. I think BMW makes a fine motorcycle but think some of their replacement parts like oil, filters etc. when need replacing " can be replaced with a better product for the money. I was hoping to find more of that kind of material."

Again Thank you. " Good " Health " and ride safe.

Fred Dugan

Hello Fred,

I really don't know how to respond to your letter.

I wish you good health and a long life.

Richard

I really did not expect you to respond. Sometimes I speak in Leprechaun. Basically all I was trying to say was thank you for sending a copy of BMW VMCA it is a fine publication but I'm not interested in joining at this point. Please don't read anything negative in it. Sometimes I think out loud. Again thanks and good health (and that's about the best I can wish for anyone) Å Fred Dugan

Hello Fred,

Thank you for your reply. I can accept that you'd rather not join us at this time.

I was confused by your earlier message. I believed the club we formed and the newsletter we published was for the purpose of helping educate people so everyone could maintain their own bikes.

Cheers,
Richard

Follow-up note to club members and readers:

Fred has a point: Are we covering the subjects and material that interest you?

I realize that much of the material I write about reflects my own interests and projects I am working on. I share it with you, because I hope you will find it interesting and useful.

I sometimes wish I were clairvoyant and could read your thoughts, but as an old timer once told me, "elf wishes were kings, then beggars would ride."

I haven't figured that one out yet, and it's been nearly forty years since he gave me that riddle. Here, I think it means that you want to read about something centered around your interests, you will need to tell me what you want.

You are encouraged to contribute articles about what you are doing.

You may find contact information on the membership information page of this issue.

Best Regards,
Richard

Father and Son Project

My father and I were collecting parts for an "exotic" bike to fix up. Sure, we did a couple of American bikes, but never European/British. We decided to use the internet to find a project bike from a reputable dealer. We were burned. Our 100 % complete engine was empty cases, badly damaged barrels, beautiful set of heads and carbs, and a decent magneto.

So much for Matt Jansens of Vintage Imports. (Formerly known as Matt Janquitto)

A guy named "Vech" answered our e-mail and said he had "some" stuff, and gave us some names of people in contact. We were leery to do business after our bad experience, but we did. They were of great help, honest, decent people who went out of their way to help find parts for us. We were beginning to find other sources of parts when Pop suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. The magnitude of the loss was more than I could stand. At first, the project came to an abrupt halt. I left it unchanged to remind me of my Pop.

Now, I want to take that ride that he cannot.

After contact with you, I have yet another trustworthy connection for parts. It has helped inspire me to continue forward.

Karl Meisenhelder
Whittier, CA

Cliff Washington

Dear Richard,

We read the memorials to Cliff Washington in the January, 2006 issue with fond remembrance of our friendship with him and Kath. In 1989, I was a teacher based at RAF Upper Heyford in England with my wife, Deborah. I taught with Department of Defense Schools teaching automotive technology and drivers education. We had the great pleasure to meet Cliff and Kath Washington through our BMW interests (cars and motorcycles). They were so gracious to both of us and Cliff was very generous with his time and enjoyed showing off his wonderful motorcycles.

We attended their Open Day on the green in Upper Heyford and I have pictures of that event. There was a Black Prince Vincent, Sunbeam and assorted single and twin British manufacturers mixed with many pre-war and /3 and /2 BMWs. There was a quiz on BMW history with practice on removing a crankshaft from the engine block.

Cliff competed in the annual Banbury Run with his R42 which you had pictured in the News. We have an 8mm film of that event which shows Cliff's bike leaving and returning to the school site. Cliff's bike was the earliest BMW entered there were also a lot of other very nice vintage bikes.

I also have a two hour presentation on the History of BMW (2 DVD's) which was prepared and presented by Cliff Washington in a pub setting with questions from the audience. It begins with the evolution of BMW in the 30's goes over their design and manufacture. WWII is covered showing the BMW products, the destruction of the factory and the struggle back after the war. I would be glad to make these available to you if you are interested. Cliff tried several times to provide information to BMW Vintage Owners Club but his offer was never accepted. I hope this group might benefit from his knowledge and skills. If you are interested in these materials, please contact me at 503-668-5188 or via email at d.kaechele@verizon.net.

Sincerely,
Dave Kaechele

When the News arrives

Well, Sheckler, now you have gone and done it.

Like so many other enthusiasts, I subscribe to all things BMW, and particularly BMW motorcycle. As you know, there are many publications out there, and among them are the good, the bad, and the others. Many of them, upon arrival, I tear into their wrappers and breeze through them. On occasion, I stop to look at the pictures, but my main goal is to get to the "Buy, Sell or Flog" section as quickly as possible to see if there is perhaps another Rennsport for sale at about the price of a tank full of gasoline, which is not so cheap these days.

Upon finding nothing that I want or can afford, I lay the publication aside for later perusal at something less than Mach One, after which, it will take its place in the stack of earlier editions, already taking up precious space.

This procedure was always the same, with one exception: When the DMR (Deutsches Motorrad Register) arrived, I looked at the cover, started on page one and without skipping a single page, read the entire magazine from front to back. I sometimes even read it twice.

Although that publication no longer graces my mail box, you have stepped up and done the same thing that Conway Link used to do with the DMR. That is, put together a very interesting motorcycle magazine that I read from the first page to the last without skipping about looking for the "deal of the century."

So, having said all this, congratulations on a great job, and many thanks to all of our fellow BMW motorcycle folks who keep sending in so many wonderful articles and stories.

I can say that, "This is what it's all about."

Many Thanks!
Dave Percival

More about the News

Hi Richard,

Got all the newsletters.....read 'em all.....probably burned the print off of the pages, too!! These were great, I miss this stuff! I truly wish you well with this venture & hope it's around for a very, very long time. At some point, & I don't know how, but if I can contribute anything like stories or photo's or both, I will. I have a few projects going & may....'er WILL add more. I just have to get started on them!

Thanks again for everything & I am looking forward to the next newsletter.

My best regards,
Glenn Eisenberg 271
Orange, CT

Open Letters from the Internet

(These messages are part of an ongoing thread comparing the two vintage clubs, their services and newsletters. Some of our members believe these comparisons are unnecessary, while others consider them noteworthy issues)

My view is that the dues to both clubs are a relatively minor expense in a relatively expensive hobby. I belong to both, I have written articles for both and I plan to continue to do so.

I am a relative newcomer to this hobby so I probably do not have the same level of frustration with the VBMWMO as many others, but it has been disappointing and I hope change is at hand.

My hat is off to Richard et. al. for creating VMCA and I am happy to have been a very small part of that effort. I am also delighted that Hans (Rosenstein) and others have stepped up and are trying to remake VBMWMO into a viable organization and I will support that effort, too. At the proverbial end of the day, I LIKE VINTAGE BMW MOTORCYCLES.

For me, that is what it is all about.
Ciao,
Bruce Frey #31

I agree that the expense for yearly dues is minimal. But let's look at an analogy: What if you ordered 4 new valves for your vintage bike, and paid the dealer for four valves, but he only sent you two valves. Would this be acceptable? Or what if you received the four valves, but it took 2 years to get them?

Scott Williams VMCA #170

As a more recent participant in the vintage BMW hobby I can't comment on the history of the VBMWMO. What I can add to this discussion is that in April of 2004 I had the opportunity to attend the BMW VMCA meet at Bench Mark Works. At that time the officers of the club made an effort to introduce themselves and spend time with me. The meet provided me the opportunity to meet and learn from folks like Mark Huggett.

I joined not expecting anything in return but basically to provide support to their effort. In the past year I've received four very helpful, well done quarterly newsletters on a timely basis.

I've taken advantage of their tool loan program which enabled me to rebuild my R26 motor. I've met people who have been extremely helpful in the search for difficult to find parts. I've received more personal assistance in the form of technical advice from Richard Sheckler (who together with Vech must be the BMW versions of the Ever Ready bunny) and others than ever could be expected. Most importantly I've met, in person or through correspondence, some of the best people I've ever met in the motorcycle hobby. It's not just the cumulative knowledge and experience the people in BMW VMCA possess that makes membership valuable, it's the energy, passion and commitment to sharing it with others that make it priceless.

So, to address your proposition of paying for 2 sets of valves and receiving only one..... In my mind membership in the "new" club is rather the equivalent of paying for a set of valves and receiving a brand new R69 motor.

To anyone who has been a member of the VBMWMO, and is disappointed, I suggest you venture the \$25 in dues for one year's membership with the BMW VMCA. Expect no more than what you are receiving now and after a year, let everyone know what your experience has been

As an aside, the meet at Bench Mark Works is again scheduled for this April.

If you can attend it's a great time.
<http://members.aol.com/vechbmw/veteran.html>

Best regards,
Larry in Tucson

Tool Loan Program

Good Morning Richard,

From the Club news letter I take it you are the one to contact regarding tools. Does the Club have the tool used for disassembling the front shocks on a R27? The one I am looking for is the one that pulls down the upper shock cover. I really enjoyed the recent article on rear fender repairs, unfortunately my fender was too far gone to repair so I have to dig deep and buy a new one. Since this is my first try at restoring a pre /5 BMW, I have learned the hard way that you should inspect the sheet metal and make sure the project bike has all the pieces still attached or at least close by in a box before you buy it. Parts for the "old ones" are not cheap. Keep up the great work.

Regards
Eric Lundquist

Hello Eric,

The shock spring compressor is on its way to you, and should be in your hands by this weekend.

Cheers,
Richard

Hi Richard,

Enclosed is the money to cover your shipping costs and a donation to buy more tools. Great Service!

Eric

Note:

The only requirements for taking part in the "tool loan program" are that you be a VMCA member, that you cover shipping both ways, and that you return the tool within a reasonable amount of time so it can be available for the next person.

For those interested in rebuilding crankshafts, we have tentative plans to make up several sets of shop tools required for crankshaft press work and alignment.

The crankshaft shop tools are in the research and planning stages. If you have an interest, or would care to contribute to our efforts, please contact:

rishelaverne@hotmail.com
419 288 3420
Richard

Thanks,
Eric Lundquist

For those of you interested in having your crankshafts rebuilt, I received the following information from Uli's Motorradladen in Germany.

So far as I know, the only option we have regarding crank rebuilds in the US is to send them to Cycle Works in Madison, Wisconsin, and wait!

I later inquired about crankshaft rebuilding for BMW twins. Uli's also offers this service in either exchange or they will rebuild your crankshaft. There is an extra charge for any of the journals which might need to be hard chromed and reground.

The folks at Uli's speak English and they promptly answer their e-mail requests.

Hallo Richard!

Yes, we do offer crankshafts for R25 in exchange. The price is 175,00 Euro if you are sending your old part to us.

Payment can be arranged via VISA Euro-Mastercard.

Greetings,
Volker
Team Uli's Motorradladen
UliMotorradladen@t-online.de