



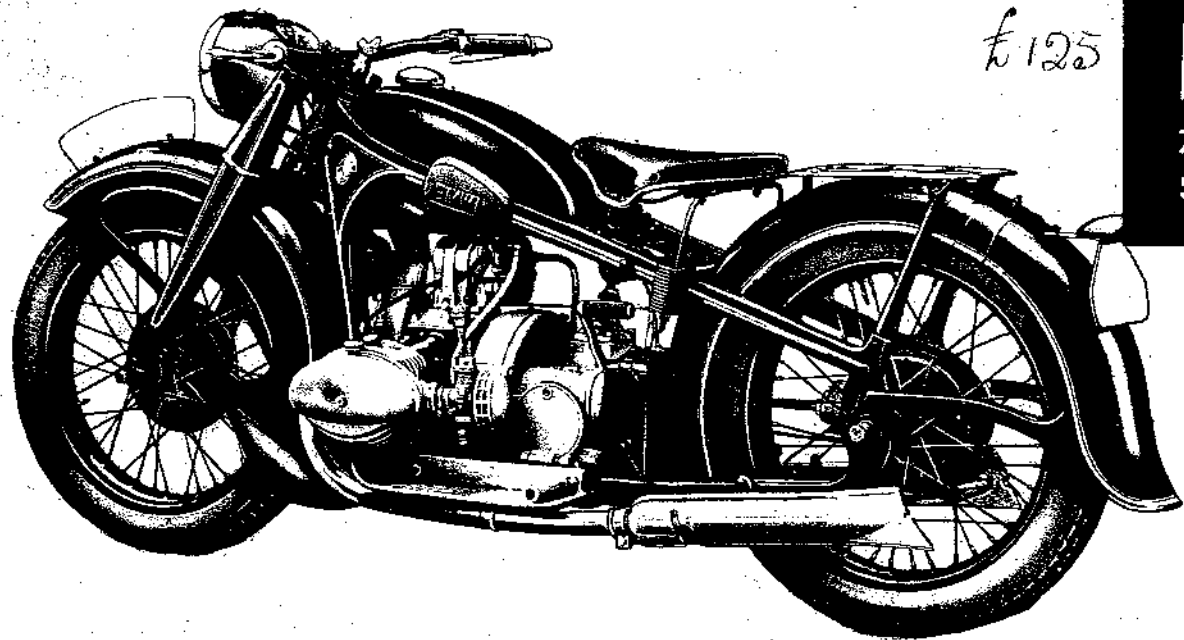
Deutsches Motorrad Register

THE Vintage German Motorcycle Owner's Association

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U.S.A.



£125

R17

750 c.c. 33 b.h.p.
Sports model.

The sports machine
to satisfy the most
exacting
requirements

Cover Art: From 1936 BMW Brochure – The BMW R17

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accomplishment, because there were still serious mechanical problems to sort out. When I saw it again at a BMWMOA national rally in 1989, the R17 was all restored.

For the first few years that it was gone, I didn't think about the R17 all that much, but as the years started to pass, I realized that the R17 was one of a very few bikes I regretted selling. So in the spring of 2000 when I heard Bruce say that he was thinking about selling the R17, I let him know that I'd like to get it back. It took about six months for the sale to take place, but at long last the R17 is "back home". I'm very glad to have it again!

Now if I could just track down my old R5 ...

The 750cc o.h.v. Transverse Twin BMW — First Test of an Interesting Job — Road Tests of 1935 Models from *Motor Cycling*, June 12, 1935

B.M.W. is a marque to conjure with, and certainly not without reason. The world's speed record for motorcycles stands in its name, and the concern responsible for Henne's wonderful motorcycle produce a standard model which is not so very different, fundamentally, from the actual 750cc machine which holds the coveted title. *Motor Cycling* has just completed a test of the twin carburetor o.h.v. super-sports model, which is the most expensive of the range, and it proved to be a machine possessed of many

outstanding features.

It is no exaggeration to say that the BMW created a stir whenever it was taken out of the garage. When it was parked by the roadside, for even a short space of time, the rider, when he returned, would be sure to find it the center of a crowd of interested spectators.

The BMW concern has not been content merely to turn out an unusual engine layout and frame design. Accessibility has not been sacrificed in any way to achieve the clean lines, in fact in this respect the BMW can more than hold its own.

The machine has been designed primarily as a fast road mount, and it was on these lines that the test was carried out. Starting, even from cold, was, with rare exception, a first-kick affair. Here it would not be out of place to mention that the only criticism arising when using the kick starter is that it is mounted "across the frame" and is operated from the near side of the machine - awkward to anyone used to cranks situated on the off side. This necessitates standing in the road when using the starter and not astride, as is the usual method with an English machine. Even when cold the tick-over was something at which to marvel; the engine would just "tick-tock" so slowly than one constantly expected it to stall, but it never did.

In all the gears the acceleration was of the variety which necessitates holding on firmly to the bars to prevent being left behind, and while on the road very few machines were encountered

which could live with it in this respect. The twist-grip was not of the quick-acting type, or the results of opening the throttle would no doubt have been even more breath-taking.

The riding position is typically continental, and does not conform to the average English rider's idea of what is required for speed work. The wide handlebars and big saddle savour rather of the "sit up-and-beg attitude. Nevertheless, without bothering to crouch over the tank, the speedometer would go round to 140 kph (approximately 88 mph), at which speed the engine seemed perfectly happy. With the rider really getting down to it another 8 kph could be registered, and this gives a speed of 93 mph. This represents 5,300 rpm with a top-gear ratio of 4.4 to 1.

When these speeds were put up the machine had covered nearly 3000 miles without any attention whatever. It also was equipped with "soft" plugs and each Amal carburetor was adorned with a large air cleaner. With a "clean" engine, "hotter" plugs and with the air cleaners removed, the maximum speed would no doubt be considerably increased - in fact, it is claimed that the BMW will do 100 mph.

The road-holding and steering both left no room for criticism. The damper was not necessary. In fact, steering was, if anything, slightly better at really high speeds without using it.

It has been suggested in some quarters that a fast-revving transverse twin would produce a perceptible torque reaction when revving hard, but

no trace of this could be noticed at any time throughout the speed range. With this machine stationary, however, and the rider standing astride, quite a definite roll to the right was noticed if the twist-grip was opened up smartly.

The acceleration with which the BMW can reach its maximum goes a long way towards making high averages quite an easy business. The brakes, too, were both extremely powerful, the rear one - now a hub brake - being operated by the right heel. This was a little strange at first after riding English machines, but once one became accustomed to it, it came quite as naturally as the more usual toe operation. From 30 mph the machine could be brought to rest in 47 feet, using the front brake only. With both brakes applied hard, the stopping distance was reduced to 33 ft.

So far as mechanical noise is concerned, there was a perceptible click from the tappets when the engine was turning over at low revs; also, the driving shaft bevels gave out a faint whine. At ordinary speeds, however, the whine disappears and the noise of the engine resembles that of a sewing machine in action. The exhaust is pleasant and more than usually quiet.

The gear change lever is operated through a gate in the off-side pneumatic knee-grip, and this gate is of the car type. To achieve quiet,

quick changes required a certain amount of practice, and even then they could not be made with quite the same speed as with a more orthodox form of transmission. The gearbox itself was very silent on all ratios.

The simplicity of the handlebar controls is another unusual feature, there being no levers whatever with the exception of the small dip switch. The throttle and ignition are both operated by twist-grip and the engine is extremely sensitive to the latter control.

As will be seen from the photographs, the BMW is equipped with large footboards as standard, and it is understood that ordinary footrests cannot be fitted. The rider could not quite get accustomed to this type of accommodation for the feet, particularly as there is not a great deal of room on the off-side one. This is due to the cylinder on that side being slightly in the rear of that on the near side.

Incidentally, fuel consumption taken over a run of 245 miles of fast going worked out to nearly 68 mph.

Oil is carried in the internal sump and a dip-stick is fitted beneath the filler cap. When the machine was delivered, the sump was already filled with oil, and after a test of just over 500 miles, there was no sign of a drop in the level.

The ignition key fitted to the headlamps also controls the lights, and when the machine is parked with the lights on "dim" and the key is removed, it is impossible for anyone to operate the electric horn or alter

the position of the lamp switch.

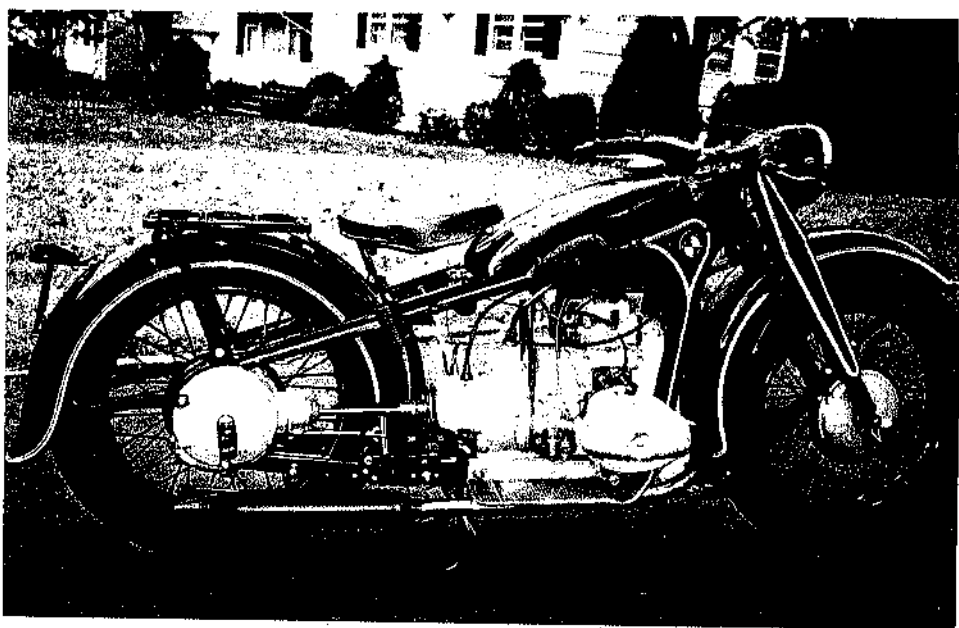
There is one highly ingenious mechanical feature which is of very great importance and which concerns the coil ignition system.

Should by any chance the battery fail, the rider is not stranded by the wayside without any means of generating sufficient "sparks" to run the engine. The dynamo is so cunningly designed that it can be switched over and used as a magneto! A detachable union is provided in the negative lead of the battery so that this component can be disconnected from the circuit.

To avoid any risk of unwanted interference with the machine when it has been left, there is an ingenious locking device. This consists of a hole in the steering head mounting which coincides with a hole in the frame member on the off side when the handlebars are locked over to the right. Through these holes a brass tube is inserted by a key, and when the key is removed, it is impossible to shift the handlebars from the full lock position.

Both wheels are quickly detachable and the rearmost section of the back mudguard can be removed very easily. Both wings are very large and well valanced, and even when riding in the wet, with the protection given by them and the projecting cylinder heads, no mud can find its way on to the rider's legs.

The model tested is, like the rest of the BMW range, now available in this country, and the machines are handled here by A.F.N., Ltd., Falcon Works, London Road, Isleworth, Middlesex.



Another View of BMW's Best