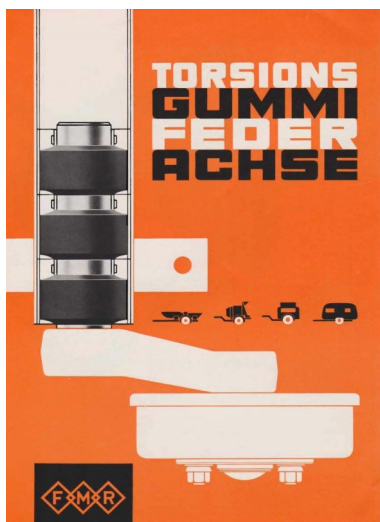


The end of Messerschmitt production in Regensburg

A peak of Messerschmitts registered as roadworthy came in 1960 with 15,378 recorded at the KBA (German equivalent of DVLA in UK or DMV in the USA). A sharp downturn came soon afterwards that ended Tg500 production in 1962 with many Tg body parts and engines left unsold. Meanwhile, the British market remained strong even though the Austin Mini presented stiff competition priced not much higher than a Messerschmitt. One reason for that was the driving licence system that allowed many former motorcyclists to move to covered transport with a familiar gear-change and two-stroke engine. Road tax was also less than half the cost compared to conventional cars and allied with low fuel consumption, was an attractive proposition.

In Germany, a fast growing economy brought a sudden end to the post-war austerity that was very harsh indeed for the defeated nation. Messerschmitts were seen as part of that austerity period and quickly fell out of favour as cars like the four-seater Goggomobil came to the market from 1957 with a small engine that could be driven on a motorcycle licence. By 1962 improved earnings and a wide range of conventional small cars made it almost impossible to sell Messerschmitts that were perceived as rather old fashioned. Production numbers fell to less than 100 a month and the assembly line was adapted to build not just vehicles such as the Mokuli and Kultimax, but also drink vending machines and washing machines. This flexibility allowed Messerschmitt production to continue much longer than it might otherwise have done. On 24. February 1964, Director Valentin Knott notified the remaining dealer network that Fritz Fend had already left FMR. In announcing that Messerschmitt production was coming to an end, Knott invited dealers to place their final orders. Sweden and the U.K. network placed orders for the final cars with chassis numbers in the series 80XXX series with final deliveries to Cabin Scooters in London completed by the end of May 1964 with the last documented import numbered 80277. Documentary evidence identifies at least 3,500 Messerschmitts imported to the U.K. making it the largest export market. The final production car number is confirmed in the Jens Kron book (which is extremely well researched), as being 80287 in August 1964.

FMR remained in operation at the Lilientahlstrasse factory until 1978 as a subsidiary of MKE making axle and trailer components. (*MKE is the symbol on the Messerschmitt wheel hub – Maschinbau Knott Eggstaet*).



Mokuli production continued for a time as it could be easily assembled on the former KR200 production line

