



THE DOUGLAS VESPA 232L2 IN DETAIL

One of the most obscure Vespas, this 125cc model was produced in very small numbers in 1962. The previous year, Kingswood had switched its line over from the 125cc 152L2 to the 150cc engined Sportique. This left a significant market sector unfilled, though it is possible that there were still a few 152L2s hanging around still to shift. When it emerged, the new 125cc 232L2 was more or less the preceding 152L2 model with a rotary valve engine. It still had the split headset made out of pressed steel, and only three gears.

It has long been assumed that the 232L2 was no more than an imported VNB fitted with Douglas' usual German-made dual seat. In fact the Eric Brockway book clearly suggests that it was imported. However Bill Drake has had the opportunity to look at a couple, and reports that they show every sign of being actual Douglas production. In particular the chassis number is of the typical Douglas riveted plate type with a "4" prefix (as opposed to a "5" for a Sportique).

One of the very few photographs of this model is shown here, together with a Pontedera made VNB2 for comparison. Obvious differences are the seat and that the Italian machine has brake light - though the Douglas version does have a round hole in the frame behind the brake pedal to facilitate the fitting of a brake light switch. Less obvious is the omission of a steering lock on the 232L2, and the wheels being finished in silver rather than the body colour.

Very few 232L2s were made. Hardly any attempt seems to have been made to market this model, and it disappeared during 1963. Why this should be so is something of a mystery. There was clearly still a demand for a basic 125cc scooter as evidenced by Lambretta continuing to market such a machine, and by 1966 Douglas were importing 125cc Vespas from Pontadera. Because the vast majority of components were shared with the Sportique, the 232L2 cannot have been much of a drain on Douglas' resources even if demand was low. All in all, something of an enigma.