



MEMBER:
BMW Clubs Africa 

Spoke 'n Piston

January/February 2002

Volume 7 No.1



FROM THE CHAIR...

Dear Fellow Members,

Happy and Prosperous New Year 2002

To start off I wish all our members, families and friends a wonderfully prosperous and rewarding New Year. May it be filled with loads of good times of riding fellowship with our loved ones in many new parts of our beautiful country.

With the advent of the New Year your Club will look to adding “new blood” to your committee. This brings fresh approaches and new ideas to the experience of the existing elected committee to tend to the needs and enjoyment of 112+ members. The Annual General Meeting of your Club is to be held on the evening of 1 March at our social meeting and requires you, the members, to elect a committee to take your Club into the New Year. **This is an appeal to take time to consider the affairs of your Club. Be bold in coming forward with your ideas and to offer your talents in areas needed to run your Club in an effective and efficient way. Current needs include: the office of Secretary, events planning, organising, and training co-ordination.**

May this year see our Club work towards achieving a closer alignment to the Vision and Mission Statement that was adopted in 2001 and which will need to be re-confirmed by your new committee when they take office following the Annual General Meeting.

With wishes for shared riding pleasure in 2002,
Regards, Mike.

All is not gold that glitters...

(Henri Heyns)



More and more young people are turning hungry eyes to foreign shores in an attempt to escape from the supposed harsh realities of living in South Africa with its lack of employment opportunities, rampant crime, corruption, gross inefficiency, and the rapidly dwindling value of the Rand, quoted as the most important reasons. To them, being able to work and live in just about any country overseas is a godsend that is almost too good to be true and for which they would be prepared to do anything or almost anything.

I have a good friend, whom I will call Don, who is a BMW fanatic and a professional bike mechanic who decided some time ago to test the water on the other side to see what things are like and whether he too should pull out his roots from our fair shores and settle elsewhere. Being unencumbered he decided to take a few month's working holiday and see the (mainly English speaking) countries of his choice so that he could make up his mind where to settle across the great blue yonder, if at all.

Don's only form of transport was an eighties-vintage R100 RS BMW bike which he carefully overhauled to give him the reliable freedom of movement on his travels in search of a new home. As he only had the two panniers, a tank bag and a rucksack in which to carry his earthly possessions, deciding what to take along and what to leave behind turned out to be quite a problem. After consulting with the authorities of the different countries he intended to visit, and having been given the assurance that a working holiday would be in order provided that he didn't stay in any one country for

longer than four months, he finalised his itinerary.

Like so many other travellers, Don experienced drama in getting his paper work done. The renewal of the passport wasn't so bad, but getting visas and other bits and pieces for the various countries he intended to visit, together with enough cash to tide him over, various inoculations and injections and a clearance certificate to take his motorcycle abroad, ate into his time and patience, and more so into his pocket at an unimaginable rate. The bike had to be sent by sea as Don couldn't afford the airfreight rate. This meant that the bike had to be prepared and crated several weeks before he was scheduled to leave South Africa.

At long last Don arrived in England and after having fetched his bike from the forwarding agents, set out to find a job at a bike shop where he was guaranteed, work would be plentiful for a man with his skills. The strange thing was that he had many offers of employment at a good wage, but every potential employer wanted him to have his own bike tools and equipment. Don of course balked at the idea of equipping himself with the necessary, obviously because of the high cost involved but because of the impracticality of having to lumber tools around with one on a bike tour of the world. The tools issue in essence put paid to his idea of continuing with his ideal and after falling around in Britain doing odd jobs here and there for a wage that didn't bring him all the pleasures that he had anticipated, decided to call it a day and within weeks was back in the RSA.

The moral behind the story is to make quite sure what you're about before embarking on a tour of this nature. Too many people fall victim to hearsay accounts of working holiday schemes that are supposed to bring enormous benefits. Do your homework well before embarking on an overseas visit and above all never burn your bridges behind you.

As I see it... **Road safety training for children**

(Henri Heyns)

Corny Crack

A young woman and mother of four school-going children asked a question at a social function the other day. It set me thinking. The question? Do scholars receive (sufficient) training on road safety matters? She then went on to relate how a school girl aged ten was killed in a Pretoria street a short while ago. Seemingly the girl wanted to cross a street at an intersection, standing in the roadway (and not on the pavement), waiting for the traffic light to change. A long-wheelbase truck (with a wide turning circle) turned left in front of her and she was struck by the rear end of the truck, pulling her in under the truck's rear wheels and killing her instantly. Her school friend standing next to her was fortunate enough to have stepped back onto the pavement just in time to escape by a hair's breadth the same fate that had befallen her friend.

The point is that road sense, on which road safety is based, is not inbred in a person. It is taught and instilled in a child through years of coaching and training. The school girl referred to may be said to have been 'stupid' to stand in the roadway, but unless the folly of such action is inculcated in a child, he or she is likely to fall victim to this kind of 'stupidity' every time. Just think of the number of times that one encounters the same kind of action by pedestrians wanting to cross a street.

Young children are impulsive little people and are sometimes prone to doing the exact opposite to what is expected in a given situation. That is all the more reason why road safety education and training should form an important part of the preparatory and primary school curriculum, with teachers trained and skilled to undertake such an important task.

If such a curriculum exists and I don't doubt that it does, is there enough emphasis on it and are the teachers qualified to teach it? When I was at school many, many years ago, I remember my school principal-father complaining that teachers who had fallen behind in their school work, used periods such as that set aside for road safety education to catch up, to the extreme detriment of the little boys and girls who one day must brave the hazards of the streets and having been short-changed by some irresponsible teacher way back when.

It is high time that parents look into what type of road safety training is given to their children at school.



During the Crusades in the Middle Ages, a doughty warrior, called upon to do duty against the infidels, was worried about leaving his beautiful wife at home. He fitted her out with a chastity belt and padlock and spoke earnestly with a friend whom he knew he could trust. "Jonathan" he said, you've been my closest friend for twenty years and as I suspect that I will not be coming back from this tour of duty, you must please do me this favour. I entrust this key to you in the knowledge that you won't ever let me down. If something should happen to me, Catherine must be free to get someone else in her life and this key will make it possible for her to find new happiness with him."

Jonathan took the key and gave his solemn promise to the crusader who then left for the battlefield. A day's ride away from home, a rear guard spotted a cloud of dust made by a horse rider coming from the town they had left. Catching up with the column the warrior recognised the rider as being Jonathan. Breathless from the hard riding Jonathan slid from his horse and said to the warrior: "There must be some mistake. The key doesn't fit!"

Important Announcement

We are trying our best to give you **Spoke 'n Piston** in electronic format as promised, but are not quite ready for this jump. In all probability the March/April edition will go this way and members who wish to receive our newsletter on their PCs will have to offload **Acrobat Reader** from the website. This is not a hassle as all you have to do is type:
www.tucows.co.za/files2/ar500env.exe
This won't cost you anything as the Reader is free.

Go for it and let us know what you think

Clarens toe vir die pret

(Dirk Alberts)

Ek het enkele naweke gelede iets rustigs gesoek om te doen en het toe besluit om saam met 'n klomp motorfietsryers Clarens toe te ry. Net drie van die twintig motorfietse het op die mindergebruikte grondpaaie gery. Ek was een van hulle want my F650 is natuurlik ideaal geskik daarvoor. Ons het sommer vroeg al van die hoofpad afgedraai en het sowat 300 km op die grondpad en plaaspaadjies gery. Soos dit maar gewoonlik gaan het ons natuurlik 'n paar keer verdwaal want meeste padkaarte wys net die hoof en sekondêre roetes aan. Maar so sien mens die wereld en het ons nooit die manne wat die teerpad gevat het, beny nie. Ten spyte van die slegte paaie plek-plek, is grondpadry 'n pragtige avontuur wat mens nie kan beseef as hy dit nog nooit beproef het nie. Ons het elke oomblik daarvan geniet, so saam met die amperse val hier en daar.

Omdat ons natuurlik baie stadiger ry as die ouens op die teerpad het ons natuurlik baie tyd om die natuurskoon te bewonder, en het ek weer tot die beseef gekom hoe mooi ons land is en hoe geseënd ons fietsers is om die pragtigste dele daarvan te sien teen minimum koste en organisasie. En omdat mens nie binne in 'n voertuig sit met ruite toe, lugreëling aan en die radio wat blêr nie, drink die fietser elke kleur en geur van die omgewing in. En so sien, hoor, ruik en gewaar hy dinge om hom heen, deur die Transvaal se vlaktes, die Vrystaat se grasvelde tot by Lesotho se berge, iets wat vir die motoris nie beskore is nie.

Ons het na sowat ses uur se ry by die kampeerplek by Golden Gate aangekom en dadelik ons tente opgeslaan en die kampplek reggekry vir

die aand. Die ander (teerpad) lede van die toergroep het toe ook begin arriveer. Die vyf veldfietsryers het toe besluit om nog bietjie te gaan ry. Ons was op soek na 'n grondpadroete wat hulle daar het, maar kon dit nie kry nie. Ons het toe maar die berge ingery tot op 'n mooi plek en daar in die gras gaan lê en die natuurskoon bewonder tot sononder. Na die lang dag op die pad was ons uiteraard moeg en het ons maar vroeg ingekruip en ons heel stigtelik gedra soos dit ordentlike fietsers betaam.

Net na sonop het ons weer die pad gevat en in die reën na Witzieshoek in die Drakensberge gery, waar ons koffie gedrink en weer eens die



natuurskoon bewonder het. Nogal 'n interessante pas, die Witzieshoekpas, want dit is 'n doodlooppas. Bo in die berg stop die pad skielik en dan is dit net voetslaan verder. Ons moes hier amper oornag as gevolg van digte mis en reën. Gelukkig het ons darem veilig afgekom van die berg en op pad terug weer by Clarens gestop vir 'n heerlike

bord sop. Van Clarens af het ons die lang pad terug Pretoria toe aangepak. Dié keer het ons maar met die teerpad gery omdat ons na die oggend se verdragings met die weer nie in die donker by die huis wou aankom nie.

Dit is net jammer dat die naweek ook so gou op 'n einde moes kom. Die van julle wat nog nie Clarens en die omgewing ervaar het nie, kan gerus 'n plan maak. Dit is 'n belewenis, en dit is ook nie meer as 'n maklike dagry van Pretoria af nie. Die lewe is kort. Klim op en ry!

Geocaching with GPS

(Brian Cheyne)

It's all the club's fault. You see, when the BMW club of Pretoria put on an excellent presentation on GPS, I realised that there were other people with more toys than me. And that, frankly, had to be rectified. So off I went into the weird and wonderful world of GPS, along with a brand new dictionary of jargon that goes with it.

It goes further back than that though. I once got hopelessly lost in Magoebaskloof trying to get a fellow hiker with a severely sprained ankle back to the hut where we started from. After that I decided that I would need a GPS for future hikes. I bought a nice handheld unit by Garmin called the eTrex. But as in life, the expenses don't stop there. I bought a handlebar mount for the unit and soon found that to find a perfect placement on my F650, some ingenuity was called for. So I set to Klox Engineering in Silverton to order a custom made handlebar mount. The result is quite ingenious and can be left on the bike at all times without intruding on the day-to-day use of the bike.

But what is a GPS good for, besides looking pretty on your bike's handlebar? Accurate route planning is to be had, especially if you tend to ride off the beaten track. I once went to Magaliesburg using gravel roads as far as possible. The route was planned beforehand and loaded into the eTrex and all I had to do was to follow the arrows. Furthermore the unit logs the road travelled, and back home this information can be transferred to a PC. I now have a record of all the routes I have travelled since. Good to prove to the wife that no stops were made at the local tavern!

Well the best thing I have yet discovered is Geocaching. The concept is simple : Hide a container with a few toys in the middle of nowhere, make a note of the co-ordinates and publish them on www.geocaching.com. More than 10 000 caches are hidden all over the world and the list is growing daily. You can do searches on their site for a cache near you, get on your bike and off you go. Or if you want to involve the family, even better. The only rule is that if you take anything from the cache, you replace it with something else and make a note in the logbook. In other words, it's treasure hunting for big kids! It's fun and the added bonus is that these caches are normally hidden in picturesque places.

Now that I have a proper mount for my GPS, the hunt beckons. I will keep you posted.



Handlebar mount without GPS



Handlebar mount with GPS

Young woman on a GS

(Henri Heyns)



Oh, what a beautiful world, especially when viewed from the saddle of a bike deep in the mountains!” These words were spoken by an attractive young lady as an introductory remark to her love for biking, and especially GS-ing, during an interview conducted recently. The person was **Jade Pretorius**, a member of our club, and we were sitting at a coffee table in a Brooklyn shopping centre, where she works as a hairdresser.

Jade’s love for biking stems from the age of fourteen when her dad, also a BMW bike owner, then living in Bethal in the Eastern Transvaal, took her for regular pillion rides early in the morning before starting his day’s activities. She became so enamoured of two-wheeled motoring that it became part of her adult make-up, and now uses her bike to work and back every day, as well as during weekends.

For years she dreamt of buying her own bike which finally came to fruition in March 1999 when she became the proud owner of a BMW F650 Funduro. At first she hadn’t dared to ride in the streets because there was no one to show her how, but gradually, after hours of practice, she finally got to grips with the essentialia of what controls have to be pushed, twisted, pulled, turned, and so on to get the bike to do her bidding. Riding skill didn’t come easy but her experience as a passenger on her father’s machine bore fruit and soon she became competent to try the streets. For the first week Jade’s riding experience did not extend farther than travelling around the block when no one was

watching so she could master the techniques of pulling away, stopping, turning left and right, and so on to gain self confidence. Soon she and friends were tearing through the countryside and by the time she bought the GS 1100, which she describes as her dream bike, the Funduro had 32000 km on the clock.

For the GS to become this amazing woman’s property, she had to sell her motor car to drum up the necessary wherewithal as she could not see her way clear to part with the Funduro. This all happened in May 2000 and Jade has since done 50 000 km on the GS. (Of course, she is quick to point out that not all of this is off-road travelling as her mother, whom she visits regularly, still resides in Bethal.) But nevertheless it is an astounding fact that Jade has travelled no less than 80 000 km on her two bikes since March 1999!

Of course, GS-ing is not always a path of roses as many an off-road wanderer will be quick to attest to. Jade has had her share of small mishaps, with the most recent one being a short while ago when she hit a sandy patch and came off. Jade was not injured (unlike what usually happens when a rider comes off on the tar), and apart from damage to the rear indicators and panniers, it wasn’t too bad. Asked what made her part company with the bike at that spot she replied that lack of skill was the culprit because when she hit the patch she should have opened up instead of tapping off.

What kind of girl rides a GS?

This is a question that could have the ‘GS’ replaced with the collective noun ‘motorcycle’ and would interest members of both sexes because not many girls ride bikes other than on the pillion. Jade had no qualms about answering this one and she made a case for the typical female rider being halfway between a lady and a tomboy. Asked to elaborate Jade replied that insistence on refinement, cleanliness, orderliness and correctness are valuable attributes at places where sophistication prevails, but have no place where being able to ‘rough it’ is required, such as with GS-ing. It does not mean that good manners, consideration, sensitivity to others’ needs and so on be thrown overboard, but a rough environment requires rough treatment and a

woman in the rough must be able to give as much as what she has to take, always bearing in mind though that reputations are formed on perceptions. This is why a tomboy should always be ladylike, for as far as these two seemingly contradictory concepts can be joined.

Would she like to participate in the events like the recently concluded Paris to Dakar competition? No, said Jade, it's a wise person who knows his/her limitations, and like golf's Ernie Els, Retief Goosen, the more recent Tim Clark or some such person, to get to the top is not everybody's forte. She doesn't pretend to be a good GS rider but likes it so much that riding forms an important part of her daily existence.

Formal training

On the question of formal training, Jade expressed the need therefor and has budgeted for this to happen this year some time, adding: "No matter how good you are or think you are, there is always something you can learn from another guy. Despite the fact that I have quite a bit of experience riding off-road, I don't profess to be a good rider, but my interest in GS-ing is big, not for GS-ing's sake, but for the freedom that it gives to go where, when and how one likes to go, and I want to improve my skills."

Why an 1100?

Jade is well built, of medium height and weight, with everything in the right places, but she's certainly not a big person. This means that with her build, one would tend to think that a GS 1100 would be too big for her to handle comfortably, especially in off-road conditions where, with all the slipping and sliding, a tall rider with longish legs would seem to fit better. Asked about this and why she doesn't ride the F650 Funduro instead, she said that the GS 1100 is better suited to her particular (camping) needs as she and her friend Lau Hearn often go camping and with a tent, bed rolls, cooking utensils, clothing and other paraphernalia to take along, the F650 just doesn't cut it. The GS is heavier and bulkier, but you get so much more motorcycle to do things with in the bundu and on tar, should the need arise, that any comparison is unfair.

Golden Rules

According to Jade, just about every rule to ensure bike and rider safety is a golden rule and there are dozens. But a few came to mind and are listed here in no particular order:

1. Ensure that your bike is always in good working order by having it serviced regularly. (This advice is particularly appropriate as Jade often travels alone when visiting her mother in Bethal.)
2. Be considerate on the road as courtesy begets courtesy, but without being intimidated by pushy drivers.
3. Always look over your shoulder first for traffic coming up from behind, before commencing either a lane change or altering your line of travel in any way. Do not rely exclusively on a one-off glance into your rear view mirrors. (On freeways it is advisable to check your mirrors at least twice in quick succession to determine the speed and distance from you of rapidly oncoming traffic from behind.)
4. Wear the correct clothing because soft landings if one comes off is the exception, not the rule.
5. When riding, stay far away from anything that can affect your riding ability. This means, booze, drugs (legal or illegal), lack of sleep, mental or physical stress, and so on.

Invitation to ladies

Although there are several lady club members who are riders in their own right, few have dared to savour the pleasures and excitement of going off-road and being in control of a machine and making things happen. Jade invites all those who wish to move from the mundane existence of either waving their husbands goodbye when he pulls off on his bike trip, or is content to ride pillion with him and watch things happen. Of course, you don't have to be a club member to go off-road, but being able to use club facilities is useful and membership does not cost an arm and a leg. Jade is eager to hear from ladies who also want to do the off-road rider's training course. She may be contacted through the club, the number of which appears elsewhere in this publication.

Die verskil tussen Aunties en Cherries

(Ina Louw)

Ons was hierdie jaar op die Toy Run gewees
en was dit nou 'n absolute fees
ons was 6 fietse in ons mini-konvooi
en het die pad sewe-uur al begin looi
vir ons was Menlyn gans te naby
en daarom het ons na Boksborg gery
saam met 'n paar duisend ander by East Rand-
sentrum
het ons om 8:30 in die pad gespring
ons vorder voorspoedig tot by Swartkop
waar my oë uit my kop wou pop
soveel "weird and wonderful" karakters bymekaar...
al was dit maar my eerste keer daar

Dis toe dat die dames in ons groep
die manne tot verantwoording moes roep
want ons het stil en ongemerk
'n baie interessante verskynsel opgemerk
die dames-motorfietsryers wat ingery kom
word liefies in twee klasse opgesom
dit is: "Kyk daai F650 met die **Auntie** op"
of "Hou daai **Cherrie** op die Suzi dop"

Op ons navraag oor die saak
het hulle dit as toevallig afgemaak
ons het toe reeds snuf in die neus gekry
en het net summier op hulle case gebly
ons het teen die einde van die oggend bevind
ons mans is nog lank nie blind.

'n **Auntie** is iemand wie se fiets jy eerste sien
dis ook 'n fiets wat 'n tweede kyk verdien
die auntie self kry nie tien uit tien
'n **Cherrie** is 'n ander saak
dáár sien jy glad nie eers die motorfiets raak
en die Cherrie sal 'n nege uit tien kan maak.

Die saak wat ons toe erg pla
en wat ons huiwer om te vra
waar pas ons nou op die meetsnoer in?
is ons daar waar Cherries ophou...of waar Aunties
begin?
ter wille van selfbehoud en vrede
het ons nou tot op hede
dié vraag in ons binnestes gekoester
maar die onsekerheid word al woester.

Genadiglik bring Richard Hussey toe die antwoord
en ons gaan daarmee volledig akkoord
daar is definitief Aunties wat Cherries ook is
en daarmee is ons gemoedere vir eers gesus.

Members' Address List

People move around as their circumstances
and preferences change and unless they let
us know about it, an address list can undergo
so many alterations so as to make it quite
useless in a few years. Recently I had
occasion to contact a member at an e-mail
address only to discover that she could not
be reached because the address had been
closed down. I tried another with the same
frustrating result, and only after a third
attempt did I (hopefully) succeed in making
contact.

Please people! The club requires the
following information from members:

Surname; First name; e-mail address;
home telephone number; work telephone
number; cell telephone number; fax
number; membership type; and the
number and makes of motorcycles
owned.

If you've changed any of the above
particulars since completing the application
for membership form, please let the
secretary know so that our records can be
updated. By the way, if you've not already
come on to e-mail, please don't wait too long
before doing so. The Spoke 'n Piston
newsletter will be appearing on e-mail from
now on and without it, you don't want to be
left wondering what's going on in the club. Go
for it!

INDEMNITY

Although reasonable care has been taken to ensure the
correctness of all material contained herein, the publisher
cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that may occur
or damage/loss sustained as a result of advice given.

CLUB ADDRESS:

Bavarian Motorcycles & Accessories cc,
7 Ockerse St., ARCADIA 0083
P.O.Box 23848, INNESDALE 0031 Tel. (012) 323-4865/6
Fax (012) 323-1630 E-mail: Bavarian@mweb.co.za