



# Spoke 'n Piston

March/April 2003

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Geagte Klublid/Dear Club member,

Dit is vir my 'n voorreg om vanuit die Voorsitterstoel namens die nuutverkose komitee al die lede van die Pretoria BMW Motorfietsklub te bedank vir die vertroue in ons gestel om na julle belange in die klub om te sien. Vir my persoonlik was die klub tot nou toe 'n leerskool en is dit my voorneme om al die ervaring wat ek die afgelope paar jaar uit die klub en sy lede kon put, terug te ploeg tot voordeel van 'n ieder en 'n elk.

Not only did our membership increase constantly over the last few years but the composition of club members has also changed. I am happy to report that more family members and also female riders have joined the club recently. It has therefore become necessary for the committee to reconsider the portfolios in the committee in order to provide for the ever-growing needs of our club. The committee has therefore been partially restructured to provide for the following portfolios:

|                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| Road runs        | : | Richard Hussey and myself                            |
| GS runs          | : | Adriaan Scheepers, Pieter de Koker and André Henrico |
| Run co-ordinator | : | Izak Geldenhuys                                      |
| Treasurer        | : | Mike Hennessy  |
| Communications   | : | Brian Cannoo   |
| Training         | : | James McClelland                                     |
| Secretary        | : | Basiliki Gericke                                     |

There is a need to co-ordinate the Road and GS events in order for the two groups to spend more time together during the runs, for instance at overnight venues and lunch stops. Izak Geldenhuys who is becoming more involved in GS activities, will continue doing road runs and will be responsible for this portfolio. You will recall that, especially during the last year, the club has emphasised the importance of training. We are fortunate to have obtained the expertise of James McClelland in this regard and he has offered to deal with this important mission of our club. Welcome James, for a second stint on the committee. We know that we can rely on you to give your best as usual.

With best wishes and happy riding,  
Deon Gericke,  
Chairman.

Techno speak for the not-so-technical

## Part 5. Diesel-engined bikes on the way?

(Questions by Henri Heyns with answers by Bruce Meyers)

**D**iesels here, diesels there, diesels almost everywhere. The tongue-in-the-cheek rhyme above is symptomatic of what is happening on our roads today. Hardly any manufacturer, be it of heavy, medium or light vehicles of whatever type, does not offer something 'diesel' in his lineup somewhere. Most of course are turbo-driven types for more punch, with exceptions being the relatively low-revving engines used in heavy industrial and marine applications.

But what about motorcycles? Occasionally one reads of someone somewhere producing or riding a diesel-powered bike. In India, Enfield manufactures a 5 Kw single cylinder 325 cc 'Taurus' bike for a reason one can only assume to be providing cheap and economical transport for the masses on roads in the hinterland particularly suited to single-tracked vehicles. University students in Esslingen, Germany, are supposedly fiddling with a revolutionary design of their own. Every now and then some genius fits an antiquated Lister or whatsisname diesel power unit into a two-wheeled frame whilst receiving accolades in a motoring/bike magazine for his ingenuity and troubles. But serious dieseling on bikes? No way!

However, the question arises as to whether diesel is or can become a really serious contender in the present-day state-of-the-art petrol-burning bike stakes. Bruce Meyers has the answers...

Q1. Most people know the basic difference between diesel and petrol engines, and how they work, but what, in essence, would militate against the serious use of diesels in bikes?

A. Size and mass. Diesels burn fuel oil and as they have no spark plugs, run on the compression ignition principle. This means that in order to ignite the diesel fuel oil, a compression ratio of 20:1 has to be achieved so that the heat generated thereby is enough to ignite the fuel/air mixture. This is about twice that of a petrol engine, with the result that diesels have to be made much more robust, naturally bringing about greater size and as a corollary, greater mass.

Q2. But many smaller makes of cars today also have a diesel option on offer, with a seemingly acceptable power to weight ratio. How can that be?

A. A diesel engine, being an oil burner, is characteristically 'lazy' and moreover, has a limited rev range. This is because fuel oil does not burn as energetically as petrol. For example, a twin cylinder 1000 cc motorcycle engine easily delivers 70 Kw plus of power, whilst the same engine in diesel form is hard put to generate 20 Kw. But in order to boost power, just about every truck and car diesel engine is fitted with a turbo charger. This attachment

works by using exhaust gases liberated by the engine, to drive an impeller which forces a greater amount of the fuel/air mixture into the combustion chamber, which in turn improves power output.

Q3. Presumably there is, as always, a price to pay for it?

A. Of course. Turbo charging can easily add upward of R30 000 to the cost of a car so driven (this also applies to petrol-driven turbo chargers.) There is also, as has been explained, the added bulk and mass. But in a car, howsoever small, one can usually find a place for this extra equipment. On a bike however, with a critical lack of space, the problem can become a headache.

Q4. In the light of what was said above, what then is in a diesel that can make it preferable to motorists?

A. Used within its rev. range, the diesel runs more economically and combined with the customary lower price of its fuel, makes an attractive combination. Bikers on the other hand, do not have a special qualm about fuel consumption and love the thrill of winding their engines up to even 11 000 rpm, as is possible on some bikes. This no diesel power plant can ever do. It has been said that some men prefer the mother, whilst others prefer the daughter. But as far as motorcycles are concerned, there is no research evidence yet that bikers will go for diesel.

Q5. So, you do not see any possibility of introducing diesel-engined motorcycles in the near future?

A. Never say never! Motor engineers all over the world are continuously experimenting with new ideas to make machines even more efficient in the service of mankind. No one can say that perhaps in the near future scientists will not produce something capable of matching or even surpassing the petrol engine of today. We know that the possibility of having hydrogen-powered cars on our roads in the next few years is not a figment of someone's imagination. But with the technology as it stands today, diesel is not a realistic option for motorcycles. It just doesn't possess the get-up-and-go characteristics that modern day bikers demand and that present engines are capable of delivering. But who knows what tomorrow may bring?

## Definitely the Safest Thing on 2 Wheels

(James McClelland)

**R**ecently I was fortunate enough to test this statement to the limit. Some of you will know that I'm involved in motorcycle rider training in the Gauteng area. Some two and a half years ago BMW S.A. imported the first C1s into the country to supplement its already dominant range of motorcycles. Many people do not know what the C1 was designed to do. It's not a scooter, it's not a motorcycle with a roof, but in fact it's really a two-wheeled 'commuter vehicle' designed to be used to get you safely and economically to work and back every day.

The most common statement is that the C1 is top heavy, but this is because of a misunderstanding as to where the machine's centre of balance (COB) is situated. On a motorcycle the COB is normally situated at the waistline. The C1's COB is much higher nearer to the mid chest area. This is what causes new untrained C1 riders to make this statement. The C1 is sensitive to the rider's use of the handle bars (wide handle bars and small front wheel equals quick response to any action by the handle bars). It is therefore wise to be alert to this fact as overreaction will always seem more dangerous than what it actually is. Wind or turbulence from heavy vehicles may cause the C1 to wobble, but with a relaxed handgrip the machine reacts quickly to the situation and straightening up on its own.

Many first time riders of the C1 appear to be intimidated by the experience, but with correct instruction the machine is easy to ride, if one applies what is taught in training. Circles and figure eights within normal road width are not difficult to execute on a C1. In emergency situations the C1 responds to swerving very quickly, with radical lean angles achievable without any danger whatsoever. Handling misgivings in respect of this vehicle are all in the mind and with a little practice one can easily feel comfortable with it.

But to return to my opening statement, what happened to me shows that BMW's crash testing programme for the manufacture of this vehicle makes this small machine very safe to ride under most conditions but especially in traffic.

One Friday morning early, I was on my way to work, using the Hans Strijdom Road towards Centurion when I was an innocent victim in the wrong place at the wrong time. The road in the area just south of Blaauhaak Street is always very busy on Friday mornings as it is on a major school route and has two uphill lanes, the direction in which I was riding. One lane runs in the opposite direction. The hill in this area is steep so the C1 (mine has the 125 cc motor) only maintains around 70-75 km/h uphill.

I had just pulled away from the robot at the bottom of the hill behind a large truck carrying sand. (Can anyone explain why they use the road at peak traffic times?) I was in the left lane to allow for my slower speed up the hill, so as not to hinder the right lane traffic which moves at a faster pace. The large truck was dropping sand and bellowing heavy black smoke, so I decided to drop back to give myself more of a safety envelope. I was now moving at 35-40 km/h.

The right lane traffic was speeding as usual, I estimate 80-90 km/h. A white Corsa in the right lane about 40m ahead of us suddenly braked, seemingly for no reason, locking up the wheels with smoke coming from the tyres. Of course every one behind was caught up in the concertina effect, smashing into one another. As I had a safety envelope to my immediate front, I moved over to the left, actually crossing the yellow line. Then came a heavy impact on my right in the blind spot and I was hit hard on

that side of the C1 at about a 45° angle. The C1 swung violently to the left. As is to be expected, the C1 is averse to moving sideways to the intended path of travel, with the result that it flipped over hard left, the first point of ground contact being the overhead protection bar above my head.

The initial impact caused my left leg to come out of the foot well, which has a protection area. The machine then slammed down onto my leg about 30 mm above the ankle, causing a compound open tibia/fibula fracture. My leg and foot were now between the side of the machine and the road. I was fully aware of what we teach our students during C1 instruction: KEEP YOUR HANDS ON THE BARS AND YOUR FEET IN THE SAFETY CELL. I slid along the tar for about 10-15 m, ending up in the storm water drain almost upside down. Definitely a bad day at the office!

Whilst lying there waiting for an ambulance, what had happened to me became evident. The white Corsa did not even stop and no one at the scene could explain why it had braked so fiercely. Three cars had collided because of this, the middle vehicle a 1400 cc Nissan LDV had lightly touched the front vehicle, resulting in minor damage. It's front wheels were now turned towards me in the left lane and the heavy impact I heard earlier on was that of the LDV being hit by a Toyota Cressida from behind at about 90 kph. This pushed the LDV left, resulting in the collision with my C1 at about 75-80 kph. The Cressida contained eight people, with no one wearing a seat belt.

The C1 was so badly damaged that it was written off by the insurance. The protective cell around me ensured that I did not even have a single mark or scratch anywhere else on my body. In conclusion, the impact area on the C1 was where my right leg would have been if I had ridden my bike. I shudder to think of the possible consequence, although the 'what if' is a never-ending series of questions.

It is my opinion that the safety features on the C1 resulted in my sustaining a lesser injury than what it could have been on any other form of two-wheeled machine.

*Editor's comment: We are very sorry to learn about your mishap James and wish you a speedy and complete recovery. It must be particularly distressing to you in the knowledge that the events leading to your accident and subsequent injury were precipitated by other road users and that your only 'fault' was being there at all. Perhaps your experience will motivate our readers to attend a rider training course offered by you people and to take a second look at the C1 when shopping around for a two-wheeler. We have had excellent reports from this interesting little commuter. (See also the Jan/Feb 2003 edition of Spoke 'n Piston.)*

## Buffing Around

(Henri Heyns, with inputs from the rest of the group)

If there is one thing I've always wanted to do before departing this earth, it is attending a Buffalo Rally, said to be the greatest, roughest, noisiest, yet most exciting of all bike rallies held in this country. Many people have said that such gatherings are a roughhouse, a den of iniquity, organised by the devil himself and frequented only by the lower echelons of society and pseudo criminals. I was led to believe that it was a gathering where all sorts of nasties hang out, altogether devoid of morals and everyone usually completely or at least half-intoxicated, with fistfights, stabbings and sometimes shootings ensuing under the slightest pretext, and truly something which no decent person should ever contemplate casting an eye upon. I was going to see for myself whether these attributions are true or only the figment of detractors' warped but vivid imaginations.

Having taken place towards the end of March in Port Elizabeth, the Buff again attracted some four thousand attendees who arrived there on anything that runs on two and occasionally, three wheels. Our Webmaster, Brian Cannoo, accompanied by his thirteen-year-old daughter Nicole, led a small group from this club enabling us to experience for ourselves what antics the Rallyists could get up to, all in good clean fun of course. But he warned, to really get into the swing of things, camping on site would be imperative with self-catering obvious. Also, we weren't to rely on being able to get much sleep because the 'Buffers' are at it all day and for most part of the night too. Pubs and take-a-ways are open twenty four hours and there is always plenty of activity all over. Asked how 'rough' the gathering really would be, in order to prepare oneself for any eventuality, Brian retorted that the media, in general not particularly partial to bikes and bikers, are apt to exaggerate the little incidents that sometimes do happen at such gatherings, but that the 'roughness' would vary from person to person, depending of course on one's point of view. Merely observing what goes on around one is adequate compensation for attending, and a lot of fun. As he was taking his own daughter along on the pillion, enthusiasts who wished to bring wives/girlfriends, were welcome to do so, safe in the knowledge that civilised behaviour and common decency would prevail.

Upon leaving at 06:30 on Wednesday morning from the south-bound Ultra City facility in Midrand, we were immediately smothered in an unimaginable

volume of traffic heading towards Johannesburg. To make headway we had to pass between vehicles, a dangerous technique at best if done at anything but a crawling speed. Fortunately most motorists gave way a little, allowing us adequate space to pass at a fair pace. Once we had reached the Durban turn-off, traffic became bearable. We encountered one toll toad upon nearing Villiers and it irked me to have to pay R21, the same as for a motorcar towing a caravan, to cover a short stretch of road. If ever there was unfair discrimination against bikers, this is it! After breakfast in Villiers, we hit rain from Bethlehem onwards, all the way down to Aliwal North. Of course, all riders were equipped with rain gear, so the rain and crosswinds didn't dampen our enthusiasm and good spirits.

We stopped for lunch at the Poor Boys restaurant in Ladybrand, which I am told, is the usual stop on the down trip to the Buffalo Rally. Next day the rain was onto us again for most of the way but fortunately, upon arriving at our destination, we could pitch our tents in dry weather.

### Organisation

Nothing wrong in this department as the application to attend form was downloaded from the Internet, filled in, payment done by money transfer through a bank, and both pieces of paper faxed to the organisers. With the booking confirmation ticket posted back in quick time, everything was set. Upon arriving there, you had to show your ticket at the check point, had a non-removable silver plastic ID band slapped onto your left wrist with a small 'Buff' sticker attached to your headlamp glass, were given your previously ordered T-shirt, badge, etc. and you were in! Fortunately group leader Brian Cannoo had a member of the PE BMW Motorcycle Club mark off a camping area for us beforehand and we only had to find it to settle in. It was in an excellent position, on high ground and with a beautiful sea view.

### Outsiders

One of the Buff organisers told me that the little trouble that occurred was mostly caused by outsiders in the form of day visitors and therefore not part of the Rally. In order to curtail their entry, the full fee is charged as if they were Rallyists staying for the entire period. This measure seemingly has a salutary effect as no disturbances came to my knowledge and if there were, they were speedily resolved.

### The Weather

During the last few years, every rally that I had been to involved inclement weather at some time or other.

It was the same this time. We experienced quite a bit of rain on our way to PE after the overnight stop at Aliwal North. A lucky break saw us pitch our tents in sunny weather but clouds were forming! After that we had rain on and off until Saturday morning when glorious weather saw us undertake the Grand Parade. It was Saturday evening that the heavens opened up. My tent's pegs were pulled from the ground by the wind in the soft, wet soil and most of the night I physically had to hold the tent upright from the inside to prevent being swamped altogether!

### **Dinner with the PE Club**

Friday night we regrettably had to miss a quasi strip show by some PE lovelies in favour of attending an equally important get-together organised by the PE BMW Motorcycle Club and held in a lodge near the university. It was a delightful evening with some sixty people attending, the weather fair and the company entertaining. We agreed that closer links with other BMW motorcycle clubs country-wide should be established.

### **Modern camping equipment**

As the venue of the Rally was at Beach View, some twenty kms. from the City itself, the only practical accommodation was camping. My abode consisted of a pup tent some thirty years old with rope anchors tied to stakes driven into the ground. The soil was sandy and one could press the stakes in with the foot. This turned out to be a problem later on when the rain started. Regular campers have modern equipment and it is surprising how much can be loaded onto a bike. This includes amenities such as tables, straight-back chairs, and so on, all of the folding variety obviously. Those of us not so endowed, looked upon our more fortunate compatriots with pleading eyes, but they didn't seem to care a hoot! So, those of you who would venture the camping way, acquire the modern stuff. It pays in the long run.

### **CMA Tent**

Being unable to sleep the first night because of the noise, I got dressed just before 03:00 and walked to the all-night-open tent of the Christian Motorcyclists Association (CMA), where for a small donation, hot coffee may be had. We have quite a few CMA members in our Club, so I know what these good people stand for and how they go about conducting their affairs. They say they are there at the Buff for whomsoever is in need of their presence and I was surprised to see how many people came to the tent even at that late hour, perhaps to get away from the

noisy music in the main tent and to catch their breath, or perhaps just to chat to someone who wasn't carried away by all the action outside.

### **Impromptu Singing**

The music played at the Buff is not of my liking, but then I am of the older set and should, strictly speaking, have been sitting at home in my gown and slippers, ready to go to bed after listening to the early evening news. Emanating from a series of 2000 Watt speakers came a cacophony of sound that made swallowing one's drink difficult. This noise could only be appreciated by the most wayward among us (by far the majority) and those sufficiently hard of hearing to whom it didn't matter anyway. Yet the huge crowd of a few thousand voices sang the words of the songs together, trance-like, swinging and swaying to the magic of the moment as if nothing else in the world mattered. This was memorable and in a way beautiful for seldom have I heard 'togetherness' manifested in such a splendid manner.

### **Bike Parade**

What an experience it was Saturday morning, in glorious weather, to be part of the some kilometres-long procession of some four thousand bikes (some non-rallyists also joining in) for the ride from the staging area in the centre of PE, back to the camping site. Also what a pleasure to have other traffic held up for motorcycles to proceed, speed cops even forcing a slight smile as we passed by, with riders not having to pay attention to traffic lights, stop streets, etc. Would that the next world could one day be so for all motorcyclists! And the thousands of spectators lining the streets to clap hands, making friendly



comments and gestures, extending hands to touch those of the bikers/pillion riders as we drove slowly by.

*Bringing the Buffalo idiom to the Grand Parade*

### **Prizes**

Saturday evening was of course the height of the proceedings with awards made to the winner(s) of the Miss Rally, Concourse d' Elegance, the oldest guy at the Rally (which I missed by two years!), the longest distance travelled, the tiniest two-wheeler used to come to the Rally, and other competitions.

But the main reason for everyone's presence was the draw for the four cash prizes. You didn't have to do anything to qualify. Your entrance ticket (with a number printed on it) was sufficient qualification, but unless you could produce it there and then and within four minutes upon your number being called, you forfeited your right to the prize. Needless to say, with a lot of shouting, cheering, barging and making way, not one winner failed to produce within the time specified and four extremely happy people walked away with R60 000, R30 000, R15 000 and R10 000 each. What excitement!

### **Ablution Facilities**

As the camping ground at Beach View is not equipped to deal with some four thousand people at one time, the washroom and toilet facilities obviously left something to be desired. But young people do not seem to mind such inconvenience very much and everyone queuing to do his/her thing did so stoically and in good sprits. After all, what other option was there?

### **The Funniest Thing**

What was hilarious entertainment was a competition in which riders had to ride a small two-stroke bike with off-set wheels. Each wheel had a different off-set characteristic so that riding the bike had a bucking effect similar to breaking in a wild horse. Each rider had to travel a short distance on a lawn, turn around an return, with the quickest effort earning a



prize. What a spectacle! Sitting in the saddle was obviously not an option and every contestant had to ride standing up. There were quite a few spills of course but coming off on grass softened things a bit. Needless to say no world speed records were broken on that bucking bronco!

### **Lack of safety measures for spectators**

What worries me is that not sufficient, if any, steps are taken to protect the health and safety of the thousands of rallyist-spectators. There are suitable tracks for the daredevils to do their thing, but not

sufficient control over the crowd that comes to watch. A guy doing a wheelie for instance has to pick up a lot of speed to get the front wheel off the ground for any appreciable length of time. Whilst in this position he also has no steering control over his machine and is travelling upward of 80 km/h. Yet people will walk all over the place, ignore the demarcation banners (where they existed), cross the road, turn their backs to look at something else, and so on. I was astounded! Also, with a burn-out taking place, spectators will stand right around and close to the machine spinning the wheel. Should control be lost by the 'rider' (some of them stand next to the machine whilst 'burning') there's not enough time or space to do anything to prevent a catastrophe. For the same reason, 'dicing' between bikes is also hair-raising. The main reason why we haven't had more accidents in my opinion, is because most of the show riders handle their machines efficiently. These tricks are not for amateurs and the way in which these show-people do their thing with ease and confidence is not inspired by recklessness or having had too much to drink. They really know how to do their thing! However, I do not know what kind of insurance the organisers have, but if something serious should happen, someone is in for the high jump for sure.

### **Conclusion.**

The Buff and similar rallies are not everyone's cup of tea, but unless you've been there, you don't know what it's like. Compared to the mundane BMW motorcycle rallies at the coast in five-star hotels with drinks around the pool or in the lounge before dinner, the runs up or down coast for a few kms. until it's time for tea, and so on, the Buff's a blast! But horses for courses, as the old saying goes. That there is plenty of activity coupled with terrific noise almost all the time, with little sleep as a result, goes unchallenged. That's the Buff, organised for people essentially young at heart with a zest for living and experiencing things.

I had a lot of fun travelling with my three other companions and was disappointed in having to break up this touring arrangement after the Buff. They are good riders and I had my time cut out keeping up with them in rain and shine. But as always, I learnt a thing or two from them for which I am very grateful and look forward to another trip if they'll have me.

Would I do the Buff again? Perhaps, perhaps not, but frankly, compared to some other forms of sedate, pain-in-the-bottom, yawn-inducing (rally) entertainment, I'd rather be Buffing!

## As I see it... The speed question

(Henri Heyns)

It is sad that the recent end-of-year festivities were marred by one of the worst ever road accident occurrences in this country's history. Although there are many reasons for the slaughter, speed would undoubtedly be mentioned as one of the main culprits for the carnage of more than thirty people killed and dozens injured each day on our roads during December. However, it is not speed on its own that kills! It is whatever goes with it that causes the trouble.

But let us look at this vexing question more closely.

According to motoring historians the first person to be killed by a motor vehicle happened in London in 1896 when a man crossing a street, landed in front of a steam-driven car doing only ten miles per hour. Traffic authorities at that time possibly described the cause of that mishap as being the fault of the driver because he was speeding! So the matter of speed arose as one of the main reasons why so many people are killed in traffic accidents on roads world wide. (Drink came a little later as a second favorite fiddle string to play in trying to find a reason for this phenomenon.) The Arrive Alive people here are again clamouring for stricter control on vehicle speeds, and in their quest for garnering public support, are using a well thought-out campaign slogan 'Don't fool yourself. Speed kills'. True, so it does under certain circumstances and this club has always supported by whatever means, any effort aimed at making our roads safer in order to prevent, or at least reduce, the enormous loss of life, maiming and accident costs.

However, there is a flip side to this coin and an imaginative competitor bike manufacturer has captured the essence of it by declaring in an advertisement 'Don't fool yourself. Speed thrills'. True again, and what human free spirit will deny that 'pushing the (speed) envelope' is an experience for which there is really no substitute anywhere in the world. There is hardly a human being anywhere who does not find speed of whatever nature exhilarating, albeit scary at times, and this phenomenon does not only apply to covering (road) distances quickly. Speed for speed's sake is also a tonic *par excellence*.

But looking at it seriously, one can ponder whether speed thrills because it kills or is it the other way round? Is it not possible that speed kills because it thrills? A serious reader may ask where the difference lies in the above statements. It may be subtle but it is there. However, please be aware that this is not a supercilious bit of word play in 'clever' journalism to denigrate the important work the road safety authorities are doing in trying to combat the scourge of traffic accidents and their horrible aftermath. My guess is that to the uninitiated, speed kills because it thrills but to the experienced wide-awake rider it thrills because it kills (or can do so). Does the reader agree?

Let's face it, anything that offers a thrill as reward also contains the prospect of anxiety and loss as a penalty. And the greater the thrill the greater the loss potential. The gambler who backs a favoured horse stands to lose his money if the animal fails to win, the bungee jumper stands a chance of being injured or even killed should anything go wrong, the poker player could lose his stake should he misjudge his opponent's hand. Why then, do people continue to try beating the odds? It is human nature to take a chance, as even the most astute person will readily admit. But even the most inordinate among us would cry off when it comes to taking a blind chance, or in professional parlance, running a 'pure' as opposed to 'calculated' risk. In other words, what are the odds of winning or losing when following a certain course of action, plus if I win, what do I get for it and if I lose, what must I sacrifice?

The occupational accident prevention people have long ago realised that appealing to a worker to work safely so that he may have a long and happy life in one piece and all that blah, is only minimally effective. After all, what point is there in a worker wanting to work safely but not knowing how to do so?

So the emphasis is on training and retraining right there at the coal face and by making him aware of the difference between right and wrong, the right way is so inculcated in him that it becomes second nature. Of course accidents do still happen in spite of all the effort put into their prevention, and will probably never be eradicated. But with all the emphasis placed on risk management these days, we know that the pro rata score today is but a fraction of the fatalities, serious and minor injuries, the loss of man hours, damage to plant and equipment, etc. that occurred during the industrial revolution.

Accidents happen for a variety of reasons that we do not have to dwell upon here. Suffice it to say that human beings are fallible with the main culprit arguably being their inability to visualise any unplanned or unintended outcome of their actions. For instance, millions of people cross streets daily without mishap because they assess the calculated risk (of tripping, slipping, colliding with people, being run over, etc.), and act accordingly. Yet thousands are killed and injured annually by crossing roads and streets because of not taking the necessary precautions. For that there are many reasons, but to discuss even some of them will take us too far away from the point I wish to make.

The other day I saw a cartoon in a newspaper that reminded me of the folly of not seeing things in perspective. Two snails wanted to cross a busy road but weren't sure of the timing. The one advised the other to attempt crossing when the road seemed clear but to remember that speed kills! Hopefully this attempt at wry humour will not only serve to show that speed in itself is sometimes not a killer, but essential in avoiding being killed!

The media reported recently that a highly placed government official severely criticised a magistrate for fining a Ducati rider R1500 for travelling on a freeway at 201 Km/h. According to this learned gentleman, a much stiffer penalty should have been imposed for endangering life and limb of the public. Yes, and again yes, the national speed limit is 120 Km/h and the law should be obeyed, but is travelling for instance at 200 plus Km/h on the freeway through the Karoo in daytime on a motorcycle such a big deal as to warrant suspending the speedster's licence, having him incarcerated, or even worse? Why do the authorities continue to regard people who exceed the speed limit as lepers, to be ostracised and removed from society? (The 'easy money' theory has entered my mind but it would be unwise to dwell on this sensitive issue.)

No, let us begin by tackling unroadworthy vehicles, falsified driving permits, corruption at licence testing facilities, poor road surfaces, intoxicated, impatient and fatigued drivers, the fitting of sub standard parts like brake linings, tyres and steering mechanisms, and above all, the training of drivers to be able to cope with extraordinary circumstances. Until a serious view is taken of these factors, the killing and maiming on our roads will continue, no matter where the speed limit is set. There is no easy answer to the problem of traffic accidents and the people charged therewith, as well as each road user, will have to do some soul searching as well as apply strict discipline to come up with a meaningful solution.

As a last word, please don't kill the thrill of opening up a little when conditions allow, but refrain from doing so on public roads. There are speedways and private roads specially provided for 'having a go', and the Kyalami track near Johannesburg immediately springs to mind. But even then, do so circumspectly and remember that when things go wrong, they tend to go terribly so. Also remember that, with the sometimes unrealistic blanket speed limits imposed on us of late and with the blatant enthusiasm that the authorities are dedicating themselves to this aspect of their work, opening up on a public road can hurt one's cheque book and even land one in the can for a night or two!

## The 'S' Cup – Can you bring it home?

(Henri Heyns)

There they sit on the starting grid, all thirty four of them, fully kitted out and ready, adrenalin pumping like mad. Everything is in place, every muscle tense and eyes straining to catch the downward movement of the starter's flag announcing that the big moment has come. After what seems an interminable time the piece of rag is lowered with a rapid sweeping motion and with revs way up to produce the required power for a quick start, all would-be champions let in their clutches, sharply yet carefully, to prevent wheel spin. They are off in an eye wink, tyres squealing and engines roaring, with each competitor jockeying for prime position. Just to make it through the first corner is already an achievement. And after that? Just take each wheel turn one at a time...

In Europe the Boxer Cup, sponsored by a major industrial role player, is a popular race run for Boxer 1100 'S' bikes, similar to the Polo Cup offered here for that make of car. There has, up to now, been nothing like it in South Africa for two-wheeler enthusiasts, but things have changed. In response to popular demand, Bavarian Motorcycles, in conjunction with Michelin Tyres, have moved in to fill the gap. They have kicked off with a 'S'-Cup competition, a series for enthusiasts who ride R1100 S motorcycles.

The first event took place on 22 March this year, with further races being run on 3 May, 19 July, 6 September, and 5 December. Each heat is run over 10 laps @ 2,4 kms/lap to determine who can really sit tight in the saddle. The venue is the Swartkops race track, Pretoria, in Gauteng. This facility is centrally placed, modern, with all amenities and can accommodate up to 30 000 spectators. There is also a full bike race programme featured for each day. An interesting touch is that Bavarian Motorcycles has supplied a new police-specification BMW R 850 R bike, specially painted (white & orange), which will be available for use by the Chief Marshall and Clerk of the Course.

It is hoped that other BMW dealers will follow suit by sponsoring 'S'-Cup race meetings in their own areas.

### Eligibility:

1. BMW R1100 S motorcycles only
2. Produce medical certificate of fitness to ride (Application form obtainable from Bavarian Motorcycles)
3. Day licence to race @ R65.00 (as per Motorsport SA)
4. Entry fee @ R275.00
5. The competition is open to anyone complying with the above. Overseas contestants especially welcome
6. Not more than 34 entries.

### Rules:

1. Standard engines, wheels, brake pads
2. Standard or BMW sports suspension
3. Any factory exhaust + chip, e.g. Laser, Remus, Sebring, Van der Linde, etc.
4. Michelin Pilot race tyres only: Front-soft, Rear-medium
5. Compulsory headlight-and-flicker safety cover with competition no., supplied on entry by Bavarian
6. Body kits and cosmetic changes allowed
7. Timed practice for Heat one grid positions; reverse order for Heat two, i.e. winner starts last, last starts first.

Please direct all enquiries to Bruce Meyers or Braam Smit at Bavarian Motorcycles Tel (012) 323-4865/6, Fax (012) 323-1630, E-mail [bavarian@mweb.co.za](mailto:bavarian@mweb.co.za)

### Overall results of the first meeting:

Braam Smit 60, Pikkie Smit 50, Dewald Dempers 39, André vd Walt 38, Derek Du Toit 36, and Peter Bezuidenhout 35

For a full report on the race visit the website at <http://www.bmwmotorrad.co.za/bikes/news>

*The organisers look forward to not only seeing you there, but having you there... on the starting grid!*

## Riding impressions on the R1150 RT

(Udo Skawran)

Riding impressions are always difficult to write about as they are all about one person's perception of the event. Everybody might not agree with what is said, but here goes.

I had the good fortune to be able to cover a 1000 km in one day on a new R1150 RT. At first glance the RT is a big machine compared to something like a F650. This is an impression that does not quite leave you as the kilos pile on, but the RT is ideally suited for trips such as the one we, that is my wife Alida as passenger and I, undertook. The bike is quite a bit smaller than the K1200 LT though, and 100 Kg or so lighter, so one could term it a middle-range machine, size-wise. Power and torque-wise one can use the term Rolls Royce uses - sufficient.

The route we followed is fairly well-known. We left Pretoria for Mpumalanga on the N4 up to Belfast. From there we took the road through Dullstroom to Lydenburg and on the Orighstad road up to the Pelgrim's Rust turnoff. We then proceeded through the Robber's Pass on to Graskop. Then on to Orighstad and from there to Nelspruit, from where we followed the Schoemanskloof road up to the N4, and then back home. Our route gave me ample opportunity to put the RT through its paces, bearing in mind of course that the bike was brand new and a little stiff, which was to be expected. Because of this, there is every reason to believe that as the bike runs in, better pulling, handling, braking and fuel consumption will result.

Let us look at how much bang for your buck you will be getting. You have: 1150 cc; 70 Kw of power; 100 Nm of torque; 278 Kg fuelled up and ready for the road. Standard equipment sports a full fairing with an electronically controlled screen, 2x panniers, adjustable damping on the rear suspension, and a very comfortable seat for driver and passenger. The full fairing is a pleasure, with lights that are just the best that I have ever used. All in all, a very competent and price-worthy package.

Now on to the important things. How does this boney shape up on the road? Very, very nice thank you. For long distances it is just the bee's knees. Should you want to go tappet cover-scraping you will probably be better off getting yourself a GS, S or plain R. However, let this not convey the impression that the RT is a donkey. Quite the opposite in fact, as the bike handles sweetly. Once you have chosen your line, the bike corners as if on rails. But you have to take the RT's weight into account. It will probably not take too kindly to your trying to haul it down from speed too late and then jamming it into a corner. Also, it will not be the brightest idea to try and change your line all of a sudden, as the RT might just try and straighten the corner for you. If you take into account that the RT is a long distance cruiser, it handles well, really well. There is no wobbling or wallowing in corners or bumpy roads. The bike does respond well to a smooth

riding style. If you are rough on the controls you will set up a slight rocking effect as the power comes on or goes off. This is however quite understandable as the RT is set up for touring rather than track handling.

The next point of interest is the electronic fully integrated braking (Evo) system. Love them or hate them, they do stop the RT in short order. Personally I think this type of system works well on a tourer. I am not mad about the system if you want to adopt a more sporting style of riding. Where the system was however caught out was going down the road from Pilgrim's Rest towards Graskop. Feathering the brakes on an uneven surface catches out the ABS which seems to release for a split second or so. Very unsettling when you want to slow down not speed up. If you are a bit harsher on the brakes this seems not to be an issue.

This bike is a mile eater supreme. You can easily ride from one fill-up to the next with no pain at all, and 4000 rpm will give you an indicated 130 Km/h. This is a very comfortable speed. The RT is virtually vibration free at this rpm and just eats the kilos effortlessly. Fuel consumption at this speed is just over 5 l/100 Km.

In summary all I can say is that this is a very sweet and desirable machine.

Thank you Bruce Meyers of Bavarian Motorcycles for the opportunity of taking a closer look at this prestigious machine. If any one is looking for a powerful, comfortable, long distance mile-eater for one person or two-up, this would be the way to go. The R1150 RT has it all.

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**Spoke`n Piston** also appears on our website at [www.bmwclubs.co.za](http://www.bmwclubs.co.za) Visit us there and become acquainted with the comings and goings of our club, together with newsy bits, information on new products, what is happening on the motorcycling scene, etc.

Please send all articles, pics, comments, etc. to: The Editor, P.O. Box 40422, Arcadia 0007, or E-Mail to: [henrih@netactive.co.za](mailto:henrih@netactive.co.za)

### **Indemnity**

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**For sale.** White Nolan full face helmet. Size 60. As new. R800 or offer. Tel Dries vd. Merwe at 082-558-5244.

**PRETORIA BMW MOTORCYCLE CLUB**  
**2003 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**  
**MONTHLY & LONG WEEKEND-AWAY RIDES**

| NO. | MONTH     | Date/ Day     | ROUTE/DESTINATION   | Kms  | ORGANISERS                    |
|-----|-----------|---------------|---|------|-------------------------------|
| 1   | January   | 5 Sun         | Nkwe  | 30   | Richard                       |
| 2   | February  | 9 Sun         | Bronkhorstspuit, Roxy's Café (Road & GS)                                | 150  | Richard, Andre H/Hubert vd W. |
| 3   | February  | 14-16         | Country Trax, GS training weekend                                       | -    | Izak                          |
| 4   | March     | 7 Fri         | Club Annual General Meeting   | -    | Committee                     |
| 5   | March     | 9 Sun         | 3 Dams, Magaliesburg (Road & GS)  | 300  | Richard, Adriaan              |
| 6   | March     | 19-23         | Buffalo Rally (Road only)   | 2500 | Brian                         |
| 7   | March     | 19-23         | GS Camp-out (local)   | 1000 | Adriaan/Pieter de K           |
| 8   | April     | 6 Sun         | Bramley Childrens' Home,  | 150  | Mike, Pieter de K.            |
| 9   | April     | 18-21         | Ivory route (GS only) including most northerly point – Pontdrif         | 1500 | Adriaan/Pieter de K.          |
| 10  | April     | 26-28 Sat-Mon | Motor GP Pahkisa, camping weekend (overnight 26th at Allemanskraal Dam) | 800  | Mike/Izak                     |
| 11  | May       | 1 Thu         | Cullifest, Cullinan (family outing)                                     | 150  | Deon                          |
| 12  | May       | 4 Sun         | Warmbaths/Nylstroom (Road & GS)   | 250  | Deon, Izak/Pieter de K.       |
| 13  | June      | 8 Sun         | Treasure Hunt   | 100  | Adriaan/Allie                 |
| 14  | June      | 4-16          | Winter Chill-out Run-Volksrust & N.KwaZulu/Natal (Road & GS)            | 1200 | Izak, Pieter de K.            |
| 15  | July      | 6 Sun         | Loskop Dam  | 360  | Deon, Andre H/Pieter de K.    |
| 16  | July      | 23-28         | BMW Owners' Rally Port Elizabeth  | 3000 | Committee                     |
| 17  | August    | 3 Sun         | Cars in the Park  | 50   | Richard, Pieter de K.         |
| 18  | August    | 29 Aug-7 Sep  | Most Westerly point – Alexander Bay & Namaqualand wild flowers          | 3500 | Mike, Pieter de K.            |
| 19  | September | 7 Sun         | Rustenburg (Road & GS)  | 200  | Brian, Pieter de K.           |
| 20  | September | 24-28 Wed-Sun | Ride around (and through) Lesotho (Road & GS)                           | 2000 | Brian, Pieter de K.           |
| 21  | October   | 5 Sun         | Heidelberg Transport Museum (Road only)                                 | 200  | Mike de W, Pieter de K.       |
| 22  | November  | 9 Sun         | Broederstroom, Hartebeesport Dam (Road & GS)                            | 150  | Brian, Pieter de K.           |
| 23  | November  | 22 Sat        | Annual Club Lunch   | 50   | Committee                     |
| 24  | December  | 5-7 Fri -Sun  | Golden Gate/Clarens (Road & GS)   | 1200 | Deon, Pieter de K.            |
| 25  | December  | 7 Sun         | TBA - TBA   |      |                               |
| 26  | December  | 13-16 Sat-Tue | Mpumalanga  | 1500 | Mike, Pieter de K.            |

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Recommended training: GS – Country Trax (beginners and advanced) Road - BMW Rider Academy (beginners through the full spectrum of riding experience) Issue 1/2003

This events calendar also appears on our web page, and to make it easier for readers of Spoke 'n Piston to plan their rides far in advance without their having to page backwards and forwards through the Web, will in future be attached to the last page of our newsletter. Please note that as the schedule is updated throughout the year, readers are advised to rely only on the latest information.

*"Shared riding pleasure whilst fostering fellowship by the safe, supportive, responsible and courteous enjoyment of BMW motorcycles"*