

# Spoke

'n

# Piston



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## From the Committee...

**R**ecent events (some untoward spills) have led to a lot of debate among the committee about rider safety and training. Three areas have been identified that need attention to ensure the improved safety of our members during long trips as well as on breakfast runs. These are rider training, protective clothing, and support vehicles.

### Rider Training

The club is offering a day of training by the BMW Rider Academy on 19 October, at very low cost. Off road training is also available at Jan du Toit's farm near Amersfoort. (See the address details and contact numbers on page 10 of this newsletter.) All regular and GS riders are earnestly encouraged to attend at least one course.

### Protective clothing

The issue of protective clothing will be addressed at forthcoming Noggins. Protective clothing may be expensive, but can save you very painful and perhaps extensive injury. There are also cheaper options available than those offered by your favourite BMW dealer, if cost is a problem, like it is for most of us. Be careful though that price is not the only consideration, as there is no substitute for quality. But seek and ye shall find, as the age-old saying goes. The very minimum in protective clothing should include a helmet (of course), some kind of appropriate arm and chest protection, gloves, riding trousers (jeans are pretty useless) and proper riding boots.

### Support vehicles

Finally, the availability of a support vehicle on all rides pays off enormously in terms of rapid response as well as reduced inconvenience for all involved. Even if you are not the one with a problem, the thought of leaving a fallen or stranded comrade at the side of the road is reprehensible. After all, we travel as a group for fun and companionship and therefore have the obligation to stay together, no matter what. This means that even a minor spill on a breakfast run can spoil your whole day. We need, therefore, to put together a list of available support vehicle drivers whom ride organisers can contact when needed. While 4X4 vehicles are desirable, they are not always necessary. Those interested should, however, have a tow bar and be willing to pull a bike trailer. Also, you should ideally be reasonably comfortable driving on gravel roads. If you would like to volunteer as a Support Driver, please contact Brian Cannoo (see page 10) as soon as possible. You do not always have to be available, and none of the requirements should stop you from volunteering. Even a small car can save a life by taking a rider to hospital. By way of compensation, the club will pay fuel costs, meals and accommodation for all support vehicles. We will think of more ways to encourage and reward these angels of mercy. If you would like to join this exclusive club-within-a-club, please make contact.

## Techno speak for the not so technical

### Part 7.

# Wheeling Around

(Henri Heyns, Bruce Meyers and technical team.)

It is not known when the wheel was invented, by whom or where. It is generally believed however, that the idea of wheeled transportation may have come from the use of logs for rollers. Described as a circular frame of hard material that may be solid, partly solid or spoked and that is capable of turning on an axle, the oldest known wheels were wooden discs consisting of three carved planks clamped together by transverse struts. Spoked wheels appeared about 2000 B.C. when they were in use on chariots in Asia Minor. Later developments included iron hubs (centre pieces) turning on greased axles, and the introduction of a tyre in the form of an iron ring that was expanded by heat and dropped over the rim and that, on cooling, shrank and drew the members tightly together.

The above is obviously a far cry from the wheels we use today. Yet, we often take them for granted to the extent that we assume that they will always and unfailingly serve our requirements in the manner for which they were designed. This thinking is fallacious in the sense that they can and do let one down at the most inopportune times, often with dire, and sometimes even tragic consequences, as many of us have first hand information of. This is especially true when we use the type of wheel surrounded by a pneumatic shroud called a tyre. Man has come a long way since the first wheel saw the light of day but perfection has yet to be achieved. Let us try to find answers to the following questions:

*Q1. Most motorcycle tyres are imported. Why is this so?*

A. The answer lies in demand. Single-tracked vehicles here in South Africa come in tyre sizes from 10" –21" (25,4 cm – 53,3 cm). Add to this the different tyre widths, types and the three speed ratings, namely race, sport and road, that motorcycle manufacturers specify, and one can easily see that because of small demand volume, tyre makers cannot find production locally to be a viable proposition.

*Q2. Tyres are not made of pure rubber anymore. Why is this so?*

A. They consist of 10% rubber. The rest is made up of silicon, carbon and other compounds. The reason is for the tyre to better withstand the cold/hot/cold cycles generated during normal use. The air inside the tyre contains water vapour and a trace of other gases, which expand and contract all the time during use. The compounds used help the tyre withstand these effects and thus prolong tyre life.

*Q3. Is there no solid inner substance that can be used in motorcycle tyres to eliminate under or over inflation and the risk of punctures and blowouts?*

A. Yes, there is, but regrettably not suitable for the ordinary bike user. Used in events like the trans-Africa Paris-Dakar Rallies where ordinary tyres would never make it, Bib Mousse is a compound sprayed into the tyre that then hardens to form a foam 'tube' impervious to the imperfections of the normal tubed or tubeless tyre. But it comes at a price. Injecting this mixture is a specialised operation. Also, it forms part of the wheel when set, so that when replacing the tyre it has to be cut off the rim. Another problem is that the tyre 'pressure' is constant, with the attendant disadvantages. Therefore, solid tyres are not really an option for the ordinary biker.

*Q4. Is it true that as long as a tyre has the minimum required 1 mm tread, is inflated correctly and appears to be in good condition generally, it is all right for road use?*

A. Not necessarily. The cold/hot/cold syndrome mentioned above takes its toll by gradually weakening the tyre wall. This would make high speed riding risky. Whereas the ordinary rider could in all probability get away with it, the super bike and competition rider should look at replacing tyres at least every 8000 km or so, to be on the safe side, irrespective of tyre appearance. Many GS riders even, follow this routine.

*Q5. Are racing tyres for motorcycles different from ordinary ones?*

A. Decidedly. Every biker knows that ordinary tyres usually come in different compounds, from hard to soft, depending on the use to which it is to be put. Some bikers prefer a soft compound for better grip in exchange for a high mileage whereas others would prefer a hard compound to achieve the opposite, or usually,

something in between. Racing tyres sometimes have different compounds on the same tyre, depending on how they are to be used. For instance, if a track has more left hand turns than right, the tyre is made with a harder compound on the left side and vice versa. Where serious rallying is undertaken, tyres could have a hard compound in the centre with soft sides for extra grip when cornering. Real racing tyres could have up to six strips of varying hardness.

*Q6. Why are tyre pressures critical?*

A. There are an upper and lower limit for pneumatic tyres that should not be exceeded. Below the minimum recommended pressure, the tyre flexes much more than it should, resulting in heat build-up of the casing that could cause a blow out in extreme cases. It is also possible that the tyre can come off the rim, especially around corners, in the case of a tubeless tyre, because it's only the air pressure that keeps it in position. Furthermore, tyre wear is uneven and more pronounced on the sides. Overpressure is also undesirable because the heat build-up of the air in the tyre when running can reach a critical stage and can cause the tyre to blow out. Over inflated tyres cause an uncomfortable ride and wear down unevenly in the centre.

*Q7. Why should a tubeless tyre never be fitted with a tube?*

A. The tyre rim is made to form a perfect seal for the tubeless tyre. When a tube is fitted, air is trapped between the outside of the tube and the inside of the tyre, causing pockets which could lead to premature failure of the tube, with a high risk of tyre blow out.

*Q8. Can spoke wheels be equipped with tubeless tyres?*

A. Yes, but only if the spokes are on the outside of the tyre on the rim. With traditional rims the spokes are fitted within the area occupied by the wheel and sealing against air leaks is impossible.

*Q9. Why are tubed tyres not popular anymore?*

A. Tubes are not as effective in sealing air in the wheel as a tyre itself. Tubeless tyres run for weeks before having to have the pressure adjusted. When a tube bursts, the wheel deflates immediately, with a risk of one losing control over the vehicle. Also, when one gets a flat on the road, repairing a tubeless tyre is done in a jiffy without even having to remove the wheel, whereas repairing a puncture on a tube, is an involved process. Some tyres now have a 'drive flat' facility which, as its name implies, allows the tyre to be driven (at reduced speed of course) to the nearest repair station. It has a membrane positioned between the tyre and the inside of the rim to prevent the air from escaping rapidly should a puncture occur.

*Q10. What is the attitude of insurance companies towards worn or otherwise defective tyres?*

A. Remember that if you are involved in an accident and it is found that your tyre tread is not within the legally prescribed minimum of 1mm over 80% of the circumference limit, or that the tyres generally are not in a good condition, your insurance company will probably reject a claim against it. They are very strict in this matter.

*Q11. Sometimes tyres are inflated with nitrogen. Why is it used?*

A. Some 70% of the air that we breathe consists of nitrogen, a relatively inactive gas. When used, tyre pressures do not increase/decrease significantly with heat build-up and cooling down, thereby reducing tyre flexing. It has some advantage in use but is fairly expensive to extract from the air and therefore not a commercial proposition for supplying at service stations.

*Q12. Is there a special recommendation that could be made to the reader?*

A. Yes. Apart from the common sense precautions that have to be taken, always give your tyres time to warm up before settling down to normal riding. This particularly applies to tyres with hard compounds. They warm up reasonably quickly, but when cold, are slippery under hard cornering and accelerating/braking conditions.

*Q 13. What advice would you give for preserving tyres when storing a motorcycle over a long period?*

A. Put the bike on blocks if the tyres are not removed and stored separately. Cover the bike so that heat and light do not penetrate the storage area. If storage is for a long period, like a few years, for instance, rather fit new and avoid the risk of a perished tyre blow-out.

*Q 14. Motorcycle tyres usually have an arrow printed on the casing to show the direction of rotation when fitting to the rim. This is not found on car/truck tyres. Why is it so?*

A. Motorcycle tyres are specifically designed to facilitate leaning, accelerating and decelerating forces. The rear tyre, sometimes smaller than the front but wider, has a tread pattern that takes care of acceleration. It is designed to work better in a certain position, hence the arrow showing the direction of rotation. The front tyre provides the steering and braking capability and also has a specific pattern with an arrow showing how it should rotate. Occasionally one comes across a motorcycle using the same size tyres on the back and front. They would then have arrows pointing in opposite directions, depending on whether fitted to the front or rear.

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## Rider Impressions of the new BMW Cruiser

(Udo Skawran)



**W**ell, where does one start? My word!!!, &#5@ what is that or something in that line seems to be the first thought that crosses peoples mind the first time they see BMW R 1200CL. This thing is really ugly or man do I dig this machine! To summarise, the CL seems to be a machine of extreme reactions. Luke warm approaches do not

seem to work because you either like the looks or you do not.

The R1200 CL is not quite the typical BMW as we have come to know them. I would think that even the 1200 C has now come to be accepted by the normal BMW riders` circle.

Let us look briefly at some technical aspects of the CL:

1. 1200 cc Boxer Motor
2. 98 Nm at 3000 RPM
3. 45 Kw (61 Hp) at 5000 RPM
4. 17.5 Litre usable tank capacity *including* reserve
5. 307 Kg, ready for the road.

As with the 1200C, which basic power plant it shares, the main character of this motor can be seen as profiled for cruising, not for racing. If you look carefully at the figures you will see that although down on horsepower, the torque is the same as for the other Boxers. There is the old saying that torque does the walk/talk. This is then also the case with the Cruiser. Sure, you do not have the top speed or searing acceleration but more than enough of those to satisfy your basic needs and then some. Once on the move the weight disappears and the bike becomes quite nimble. Town traffic poses no problem at all. You might not be able to weave through the traffic but this is no town bike. It is a cruiser, a bike to ponder all those little roads out in the countryside. The top speed of approximately 168 Km/h will also not rattle windows but heck how fast do you want to cruise? Remember this is Cruiser and not a Fireblade.

When assessing the Cruiser, the above then has to be your mindset. Cruising is not just an activity, it is a mindset. This is where this machine then also excels. This bike is a Lazy Boy on wheels and the video that you are watching is the countryside wafting past with background music from your favourite CD.

When I started commenting in a positive fashion on the bike some people seemed to think that I suffer from some form of dementia. Having said that I have had the good fortune to own and ride a wide spectrum of machines from the sporting to the staid. Each has its own characteristics, that it is both positive and negative. Each motorcycle was designed for a specific purpose. Some are more dual purpose than others, the GS being a good example. This is what makes the Cruiser special. It was designed to cruise and this it does admirably.

The CL is big with a GROOOT fairing to keep the wind, rain, goggas and other goeters from your body. Fatigue after a day`s riding? What`s that? Heated grips



to keep your tootsies warm as toast. Lekker fat tekkies front and rear soak up all those ugly little bumps that can spoil your cruising pleasure. In a straight line on the highway this bike actually gets boring to the extent that you could literally fall asleep. Hello, this is a Cruiser you are supposed to cruise with on interesting roads, not a boring highway. The Cruiser's tyres and suspension come into their own on these types of surfaces. You can engage the cruise control, sit back and enjoy the scenery and yes, the music as well. The speed control does however seem to allow a bit more leeway than similar systems in the BMW range. I can already hear a comment of ja, well, no, fine boet but I don't want to dawdle all day long. Believe me if I say if you want to cover distance, you can. (Pta to Belfast 1 hour 15 minutes.) Not too bad, I would say.

A very important aspect of this type of machine is the fact that you will often be sharing this experience with somebody of the opposite sex. Now this is where this bike really shines. Oodles of baggage space, as mommy wants to take along all those little bottles with whatever in them. If she wants her hairdryer along, no problem. Just load it in. A throne for a pillion seat, no complaints after 400 km non stop. Some might say that it is a disadvantage that you cannot remove the panniers. Well, I suppose if you like messing around on your bike, you're welcome. It would be a problem for me though. The sturdy construction and usable space by far outweighs this possible negative.

So China, that thing must handle like a drunken rhino on a skidpan. As mentioned earlier, this is no 'Blade'. If you want to go and enjoy a track day this is not the tool. It is a cruiser. Having said that, the bike actually handles very nicely. Going up Long Tom Pass at 110 – 120 Km/h is not a problem. Once again, how fast do you want to cruise? In sweepers you can easily achieve speeds of up to 140 Km/h. The bike is agile for what it is. Keep in mind that it does not have the paralever rear suspension. Where you do notice the absence is when you hit a depression or a bump in a corner. The bike will then wallow a bit.

In summary, what do I think of the CL? My wife and I had the good fortune to enjoy the bike for a Saturday afternoon and a Sunday. So where does one go? The ET of course! My wife loved it and wants one now, and is even happy that I sell the car. My two-year old just wants to ride on the motorbike. I really enjoyed the bike and would really like one. It is a special machine, one to be savoured on those balmy days when nothing in the world matters but to go and cruise. Ask Bruce for a test ride and go and experience it yourself. Remember however, your mindset is a very important part of what this machine represents. The wrong approach could lead to a unfavourable evaluation.

## Your Greatest Fear

(Henri Heyns)

The Collins English Dictionary defines the noun fear as 'a feeling of distress, apprehension or alarm caused by impending danger, pain, etc.'

It is not for me to take challenge with the venerated ladies and gentlemen of many words, but 'impending' means 'about to happen', or 'imminent', and we all know that an anticipated occurrence (although it may never happen) can also instill fear in a person which he or she must try to overcome or find a solution for. However, for the purpose of this discussion fear could rather be defined as 'being afraid of something unpleasant happening'. If we were to use one word only, 'threat' comes readily to mind.

Naturally, we all experience fear from time to time. Some fears are major, some minor, they can be short term, long term, be related to the present, or the future, stand alone or in combination with other fears, and so on. Of course, fear is also very subjective as can be seen from the way different people behave when faced with a threat.

From a biking perspective, we also have fears, some being with us all the time whilst others, depending on the prevailing circumstances, advance and recede as the situation changes.

Having said that, the thought came to me to try to determine what bikers fear most and during discussions, quite a few varying versions have surfaced. Hereunder follows a number of them. Remember, to keep the discussion within limits, only the **one** most important fear is listed. Note also that there is no ranking order in this list.

1. Suffering a tyre blow-out at high speed
2. Dropping the bike whilst riding alone, with no one around to help pick it up
3. Being taken out from behind whilst stopped at a robot
4. Whilst riding alone the bike cuts out for no reason at all
5. Running out of petrol in the bundu somewhere
6. Requiring your bike to be towed by a car/bike
7. Being confronted by a car/truck on the wrong side on a blind rise
8. Losing control of your bike at high speed.
9. Skidding or sliding in the wet
10. Being high-jacked whilst riding alone
11. Falling asleep, unconscious or semi-conscious whilst driving
12. Hitting an oil patch whilst riding

13. Riding into a hail storm
14. Riding into a severe dust storm
15. Stalling your bike on a steep hill on a narrow dirt road
16. Having to go onto the dirt with a road bike
17. Whilst riding being hit by a projectile thrown by a trouble-maker
18. Brake failure on a steep downhill
19. Not being able to start your bike after an overnight stop
20. Becoming lost in the bundu
21. Arriving at the scene of an accident with injury and not knowing what to do
22. Losing it in a tightening curve
23. Being smacked from the side by a vehicle skipping a robot or stop street
24. Being struck by lightning in a rain storm
25. Colliding with a person or animal on a dark road at night
26. Colliding with a slow-moving or stationary vehicle travelling in the same direction
27. Someone, whom you don't want to offend, asks to borrow your bike
28. A foot peg breaking off when standing whilst riding
29. The front wheel coming adrift when accelerating hard through a bump
30. Losing your pillion passenger after going through a bump
31. Coming off on a sandy patch of road
32. Breaking an arm or a leg in an accident
33. Suffering a blackout whilst riding
34. Riding behind a car with darkened windows.

Obviously, the list is not complete and not all the above fears apply to everyone. Every reader is certain to be able to add a few more fears to the above, learnt from personal experience.

As we all well know, life is full of risk and, let us not bluff ourselves, so does motorcycling present a special type of risk manifested in the threat of a hundred situations every time we mount up and take to the roadways. We have all had bad riding experiences on the roads at some time or other and are fearful of any of the above unpleasant experiences occurring. But on the positive side, let it be said that fear stimulates the senses like perhaps nothing else. I don't mean blind unreasoning fear that numbs the senses and leads to inaction or inappropriate action by those so inflicted.

I mean the gentle fear of the 'what if...?' kind that keeps the driver on his toes, and which should be the trusty companion of every biker every time he presses the starter until the moment that he switches off again.

Another aspect the biker (all road users for that matter) should consider is that of highway hallucination. This occurs when the rider is tired and as a result begins to lose concentration. And please don't make the mistake to think that bad roads, high traffic volume, speeding, or anything like that will keep you awake. If you are really tired you will gradually lose your senses as sleep overtakes you, and remember that at the speed that bikers normally travel, if things go wrong, they tend to go terribly so.

To sum up, fear is a good thing because it keeps people awake and alert. Of course fear of riding can be reduced or even eliminated by seldom getting on to a bike or not at all. But what use is life without a little excitement? Ride by all means and as often as you like, but beware of overconfidence. As soon as you begin to believe that you're master of every situation, your coming down to earth with a bump is probably just around the corner. But as the saying goes, it takes two to tango and many bangs can be prevented by timeous analysis of a threatening situation and appropriate corrective action. But after all is said and done, and despite all the cons, biking has so many pros that we keep the wheels turning. I am reminded of the thoughts of Persian poet Sadi Gulistan who as long ago as 1258 A.D. summed it up in a few words by saying: "Were the diver to think on the jaws of the shark he would never lay hands on the precious pearl".

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### SALT is not for Blockheads

(Henri Heyns)

**I**n all my travels by car and bike, spanning many years and hundreds of thousands of kilometres, I've visited most towns in South Africa, the old South West Africa and what used to be Southern Rhodesia. I pride myself in being able to challenge anybody to point to a city or town on the S.A. map that I haven't driven through, stopped over at or done business in. That is until recently, when a guy asked me what I thought about Sutherland in the Cape. Apart from knowing that it is situated arguably in the coldest part in the country, and that it houses an observatory comparable to most anything in the world, I must admit to never having been there.

But what has this all to do with the heading? Let me explain. SALT stands for the multi-million rand

South African Large Telescope, recently erected there, in the company of six other star gazing monstrosities with which to enable us to keep our head up high in the astrophysical science field. As a (very much so) amateur astronomer, I thought of perhaps suggesting to the club the organising of a bike tour to the Cape some time next year (winter time being the best), and then *en route*, taking in Sutherland as well.

Of course, I know that the observatory is not open to the public, except for a superficial tour of the premises and structures (which has to be arranged beforehand), but being able to have a peep at and through the big guys – no way!

Not being easily discouraged, I sought out a few guys I know who could possibly work out a plan for a few biking visitors to that noble establishment to be shown around and treated in a proper way. Despite my best efforts and hard work to get a few strings pulled with the right people, the results are not encouraging. This is the bottom line:

1. The huge glass lenses of these telescopes are most susceptible to temperature and humidity changes, and to dust, with the result that special precautions have to be taken in the form of hermetically sealed enclosures in which they are housed.
2. The only outside people allowed to come near and work with these monsters have to have a doctorate in Astrophysics. (A doctorate in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry or similar does not allow for qualification.)
3. The applicant must appear before a panel of astronomy professors and must convince them of the meaningfulness of using the equipment and what advantage would accrue to the astronomical society.
4. The successful applicant can then rent a telescope at a rate of 1700 English pounds (R20 000) per hour.
5. These telescopes do not have eye lenses as one would normally expect. All information is transferred onto computer screens, being mostly in radio wave or infra red imagery form and in such a manner that only experienced astronomers can make sense of.

So, unless we have a real heavyweight in our biking fraternity with the necessary financial and cerebral make-up to swing this kind of punch, our chance of seeing a 'big one' is non-existent. On a happier note though, I understand that several B&B establishments

in Sutherland have small telescopes of their own for use by guests. So we may be able to see something of the mysteries of the universe after all. I would still like to go. Who is game to join me? A further communication in this regard will be forthcoming soon.

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### As I See It... **Feet flat on the Ground**

(Henri Heyns)

The thing I like about Bruce's Place at Bavarian Motorcycles is that there is always someone to talk to, especially on Saturday mornings. I don't mean keeping the guys and gals at Bavarian from their work, but that there's always a crowd of people from outside coming in to buy, to look or just to chat.

I like the R1150 R because it is possible for me standing to put my feet flat on the ground and fling the bike from side to side in that position. This is important when stopping. The first thing one does is to look for a patch of grit free solid dry ground on which to place one's left foot before attempting to dismount.

What about putting out the side stand first before dismounting? There are plusses and minuses, the most serious argument against being that the ground will have to be relatively flat for doing so. In the case of a significant positive camber on the road, the side stand cannot be used, and if the road falls away rapidly to the left, this parking aid is also useless. Off tar, soft soil also makes using this stand impossible.

#### Manoeuvring

Every rider knows to park uphill when stopping because it makes pulling away easier when remounting. But as we all know, it isn't always possible and one then has to stop on a slightly downward slope. This could call for manually manoeuvring the bike backwards. The tip-toe guys will find this a difficult exercise as they don't have the foot grip to move a heavy bike in the desired direction.

Chatting away at Bruce's Place the other day, one enthusiast expressed the view that most bikes are too heavy for their riders and that in Japan, if a person is unable to pick up a dropped bike unaided, he may not purchase such a machine. Here, a buyer would look through the range of bikes available and after taking cognisance of his financial and other restraints, would probably select a machine dictated to by his heart and not his intellect. Unfortunately, a test ride does not usually bring him to his senses. They usually only visualise themselves in the driving seat, with good looks, colour, power, ride ability, brakes, accessories, and self-esteem clouding the real issues. But please don't blame the salesman for wanting to do a deal. After all, it's not for him to tell you that the bike is perhaps too big for you to handle. You are an



adult and should know what you want. Remember the dictum *caveat emptor*?

I have seen people of both sexes buying huge Adventure, GS and similar bikes when, sitting in the saddle adjusted to its lowest position (if it is at all adjustable), they have to tip-toe to keep it upright. How on earth are they going to handle such a machine in any other than a perfect road condition, having to start, stop, dismount, remount, manoeuvre, park, contend with slanted and uneven pavements, potholes, ruts, etc.? No wonder that such people are forever coming off during low speed manoeuvres and sometimes becoming discouraged in the process when this happens repeatedly. Just think of the leverage disadvantage that a tip-toe rider has if he has to lean the bike, especially when laden, over at the angle that it takes for him to put his foot flat on the ground? Has he then the strength to still keep the bike balanced whilst dismounting?

Of course, there are always people with differing viewpoints, wanting to counter any valid argument. Use the side stand, park on a high rise position, select level ground, etc. are counters often heard. These remedies are no substitute for the feet-flat-on-the-ground predisposition. Age of course is also a great leveller of human ability. The older a person becomes the less should be his inclination to go for the big brutes, no matter that he was a champion bike rider in the days of his youth. Everyone knows that older riders have diminished if not impaired strength, judgement, balance, reaction time, eyesight, riding energy, etc. The bigger the bike therefore, the less the chance of the older person being able to handle it efficiently.

There is no formula to indicate what size of bike is the correct one for each individual. He must decide that for himself. Today's 1100 cc + bikes are behemoths compared to that of yesteryear, weighing in at around 240 Kg to begin with. This is heavy ordnance for old or slightly built persons. I venture to extend this viewpoint to well-built but shortish people also. Remember that off-rovers are built with a higher ground clearance for them to be able to traverse streams, embankments, 'middel-mannetjies', etc. Some of them have height adjustable saddles but this doesn't alter the ground clearance deemed necessary for the work they do. In addition they usually are equipped with off-road wheels and knobby tyres, which further increases the saddle distance from the ground.

So, the upshot of this all is to always make sure that you can put your feet flat on the ground when seated. That's always been my main consideration above anything else and will remain so until I stop riding.

## (Bike) Salesman's Ultimate Weapon

(Henri Heyns)

My brother-in-law once said that if you want to know what's really wrong with your car (bike), take it, after a few thousand kilos, to the salesman you bought it from and try to sell it back to him. This is when you hear just how the latest model is better and more desirable in every way and that your piece of junk has a faulty gearbox, weak suspension, is a fuel guzzler, notoriously unreliable, and was really the worst product the manufacturer had the temerity to put together. Without saying it, this gentleman further insinuates that you should really be ashamed of yourself for having spent good money on that particular model whilst at the same time subtly inviting you to look around to see what else captures you fancy. Should your roving eye fall upon something to replace the 'crock' that you had bought, he will again, ever so gently, suggest that you acquire the new object of your affection to redress the wrong action committed in the first place.

All right, perhaps the above contains a bit of exaggeration in that the salesman at least tries to hide his fervent desire to talk you into parting with more cash by buying the latest (and best) whilst at the same time offering a meagre (to your way of thinking) trade-in for your old piece of scrap which he will say, nobody really wants anyway.

But in the end, in most cases, the salesman has it all his way because of the human failing which in psychological parlance is called *retroactive inhibition* or, if you will, *cognitive dissonance*. In plain English, it means that once you have spent you money on an (expensive) article, despite the perhaps extended research and soul-searching done previously on its pros and cons, and the wisdom of your decision, you immediately question your action and wonder if you shouldn't rather have bought something else instead, or have saved the money.

This is probably part of the reason why user clubs are formed and supported by owners of similar or near similar brand products. They want to know that there are others also enjoying the product as an assurance, (called reinforcement) that their original decision was the right one anyway. This approach works reasonably well in many cases, but there are always the few people who continue to have qualms about their purchase and are looking for an opportunity to reverse



their decision. They would want to cut their losses and start afresh with a brand new product of their (recent) choice.

Closely allied to the above is another human failing called *psychological ageing*. This occurs when a person tires of the product, usually of substantial worth, that he/she possesses. Asked why, they cannot tell, but mention a 'feeling' that it's no longer in style, safe, reliable, in keeping with their status, suitable for their work, age, whatever, or simply that they just don't want it any more. An excellent example of this phenomenon is that not so long ago a friend went through a deep pot hole in the road and bottomed his bike, what he thought to be, rather severely. Now he became fearful of possible damage to the frame and the suspension and conjured up all sorts of thoughts of the bike disintegrating under him, wheels collapsing whilst riding, the gearbox stressed to the point of jumping out of gear for no reason, leaks springing up, brakes failing suddenly, a tyre blowing out, and so on. When a person is in this mode, he is prepared to take almost anything for his old machine either as a trade-in or through an out-of-hand-sale, and is ripe for the purchase of something new. This is where a wide-awake purveyor of such a product detects an opportunity of scoring by making sympathetic noises whilst underlining the importance of the 'peace of mind' approach, a catch phrase as old as Methuselah himself.

It would be improper if not at least unethical to suggest that a good salesman will force anything upon one, but with the machinations of the human traits outlined above plus his being on the spot with his charming manner, quick wit and sincere consideration for your well-being and utter satisfaction, he will do his utmost to affect a positive response. Of course he's in a position to offer you a 'deal of a lifetime', and with the bright shiny object of your affection ready to hand for driving away, your fate is sealed. All that is left thereafter is to sign the necessary documents and arrange to part with your hard-earned cash in any which way. The salesman says goodbye, rubbing his hands together, and laughing all the way to the (commission) bank, whilst you clench your teeth, thinking of how to get around the little woman's twenty angry questions as to why you just had to go for this bargain, eating deeply into the household savings in the process. Meanwhile, even as you delicately ride your new investment home, your stomach is already churning because your old acquaintances cognitive dissonance and his pals are already working on your gut afresh. Cruel world, isn't it?

## Cyber Crazy!

(Acknowledgement to Biker Lifestyle Sept 03 and adapted by Henri Heyns)

You know you're living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century when:

1. Your reason for not staying in touch with the family is because they have no E-mail address
2. You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three
3. You call your son's beeper to let him know it's time to eat. He E-mails you back from his bedroom, "What's for dinner?"
4. Your daughter sells Girl Scout biscuits via her web site
5. You chat several times a day with a stranger from America but haven't yet spoken with your next door neighbour this year
6. Your grandmother asks you to send her a JPEG file of your newborn so she can create a screen saver
7. You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home
8. You buy a computer and six months later it is out of date and now sells for half the price you paid
9. Leaving your house without your cell phone infuriates your wife because she can't keep track with hers of your movements in the shopping mall
10. Using real money to make a purchase is a hassle and takes planning
11. You've just tried to enter your password on the microwave oven
12. You consider second day air delivery painfully slow
13. Your dining room table is now your flat filing cabinet
14. You hear most of your jokes via E-mail instead of in person
15. You get an extra phone line so you can get phone calls
16. You disconnect from the Internet and get this awful feeling of just having pulled the plug on a loved one
17. You get up in the morning and go on-line before getting your coffee
18. You wake up at 2 a.m. to go to the bathroom and check your E-mail on your way back to bed
19. You're reading this
20. Even worse, you're going to forward it to someone else!

# PRETORIA BMW MOTORCYCLE CLUB

## 2003 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS MONTHLY & LONG WEEKEND AWAY RIDES

| MONTH | Date/Day      | ROUTE/DESTINATION                             | Kms  | ORGANISERS              |
|-------|---------------|---|------|-------------------------|
| Oct.  | 5 Sun         | Heidelberg Transport Museum (Road only)       | 200  | Mike de W, Pieter de K. |
| Oct.  | 19 Sun        | Rider training (Swartkops)                    |      | James Mc Clelland       |
| Nov.  | 9 Sun         | Broederstroom, Hartebeespoort Dam (Road & GS) | 150  | Brian, Pieter de K.     |
| Nov.  | 22 Sat        | Annual Club Lunch                             | 50   | Committee               |
| Dec.  | 5-7 Fri -Sun  | Golden Gate/Clarens (Road & GS)               | 1200 | Deon, Pieter de K.      |
| Dec.  | 7 Sun         | Tba   |      |                         |
| Dec.  | 13-16 Sat-Tue | Mpumalanga                                    | 1500 | Mike, Pieter de K.      |

Contact Nos.: Mike Hennessy - 0824103663; Deon Gericke - 0823368108; Adriaan Scheepers - 0832698897; Izak Geldenhuys - 0825544879; Brian Cannoo - 0828537503; Andre Henrico - 0824114247; Herbert van der Wissel - 0824581886; Pieter de Koker - 0828295425; James Mc Clelland - 0825606920

Recommended training:

GS - Country Trax Motorcycle Off-Road Riding Academy (beginners and advanced).

Tel & Fax (017) 753-1720, Mobile 083-669-7283, E-mail: ctrax@lantic.net

Road - BMW Rider Academy (beginners through the full spectrum of riding experience).

BMW Motorrad Rider Training Academy. Tel. (011) 805-7673; Fax (011) 805-3629

This events calendar also appears on our web page, and to make it easier for readers of Spoke `n Piston to plan rides in advance without their having to page backwards and forwards through the Web, is attached to this page of the newsletter. Please note that as the schedule is updated throughout the year, readers are advised to rely only on the latest information. Please check with the organisers before making a commitment.

**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, Spoke `n Piston, P.O. Box 40422, Arcadia 0007, or E-Mail to: [henrih@netactive.co.za](mailto:henrih@netactive.co.za)

### Indemnity

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

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