

SPOKE & PISTON

Vol. 9 No. 3



MEMBER:
BMW Clubs Africa



May June 04



From
The
Chair

Do's and Don'ts for Extreme Gold

The minimum distance to complete a 'gold' run is in the region of 8 000 kilometres. The maximum time, to complete the trip, according to the criteria for 'gold', is three weeks. However, two weeks should be the absolute minimum, otherwise it becomes a race against time which would serve no purpose and would be an expensive and tiring exercise.

Financial implications to cover 8 000 kilometres over a period of three weeks with a Pillion are:

Fuel cost:	R 2 000,00
Service cost: (before or after the run)	R 1 000,00
Rear tyre:	R 1 000,00
± 30% of front tyre	R 250,00
B&B : Acc. for two: (R300,00 x 20 days)	R 6 000,00
Meals: (±R150,00 per day x 20)	R 3 000,00
TOTAL	R 13 250,00

The camping option can be considered, but to pitch a tent and camp every night for almost three weeks at a different spot will need a lot of convincing (especially the Pillion). Out of season touring could also reduce the accommodation cost considerably. December/January is definitely not the best time to do this trip for the following reasons: It is peak holiday time and therefore very expensive. Secondly, weather wise, I think March would be a better time as it is the best time of the year to be at the Cape Coast which covers quite a large part of the trip and the far Northern Province and Northern Cape area could be a bit cooler than in December.

To do the run clockwise or anti-clockwise is a matter of personal preference. The decision at which point to start the trip is also a matter of personal planning, but I suggest that in planning the route (although it's not actually part of the criteria for the run) one should consider staying on the outskirts of the border of the Republic as far as possible. Do not try to take shortcuts inland in order to reduce the time and distance involved.

Never book accommodation in advance. The best part of the Gold Trip is to decide each day where to stay over. Once you are forced to ride, due to accommodation reservations, it becomes a strain and no longer a pleasure.

If you should decide to do the Gold Trip in a group, the group should be as small as possible. Logistics and quick decisions on where to stay or not can become a nightmare and could result in conflict.

Your motorbike must be in an excellent condition, recently serviced and with brand new tyres front and rear. Long distance high speed travelling with Pillion and fully laden, generates a different wear on tyres and it should not be compared to normal tyre wear. The tyres tend to run "flat" and wear faster than under normal riding conditions.

Try to limit daily distances to a maximum of ± 600 kilometres. It is a known fact that your concentration level drastically drops after 600 kilometres. If you push yourself too far on a specific day, it can take days to recover.

The conditions of the roads in general are reasonable, with the exception of certain parts through the old Transkei/Eastern Cape Province. This specific part should be planned carefully during the trip and should not be attempted late afternoon or in the dark. Most important, this trip is a discovery trip and should not be rushed. Try to visit and see as much as possible within your time limit. It is a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

Try to include Swaziland in your trip. The roads are excellent - the scenery splendid and the people very friendly.

As far as the silver badge is concerned, the only criteria are that you visit all four extreme points and that you be photographed with your motorbike at these points. There is no time limit on this qualification and the routes can be planned according to personal circumstances and are even provided for in the official club calendar of events.

Deon Gericke
Chairman.

Editor's Comment:

Deon and Basiliki Gericke are to be congratulated on being the first couple to qualify for the prestigious X-Rider Gold Award. To be sure, this is no ordinary achievement. Hopefully other couples will soon follow in their tracks to prove that they too are of the most enthusiastic and tenacious riders in our club.

Well spoken Bruce!

(Henri Heyns)

A popular South African biking magazine recently published a letter by an enthusiast complaining that it did not react to his previous communications to its editor. In them he expressed being in the market for a bike but that he was disenchanted with BMW motorcycles generally, singling out the R1150 GS particularly and mentioning specifics in his missives. (These letters were subsequently published.) My curiosity was of course immediately aroused and I dashed out to procure a copy of the magazine for myself. As was to be expected, the complaints are well worn (and perhaps not necessarily unfounded) criticisms of the too high gearing of the sixth gear, the turn indicator switches on both handle bars, the ineffective windscreen, and a few other minor points not worth mentioning here.

However, this gentleman further raises a point that is worth looking into. He desires to have Mag wheels fitted to his GS should he buy one, but was told that the option was not available. To this he laments to no end, stating that his human rights have been violated (where have we heard this phrase before?) because it's his money and he can do with it what he wants. He then goes on to derogate everybody concerned and tells them where they can put their BMW!

I bounced the matter off Bruce Meyers (BMW motorcycle dealer in Pretoria) and he promptly wrote to the magazine requesting them to publish the following letter:

Sir,

The longish letter by your correspondent who signs himself John Cussons, Quellerina, in the April edition of your magazine, refers. Seemingly he takes exception to BMW for not giving him the motorcycle suited to his specific needs. If you will kindly afford me half the space, I will explain some of the problems that confront a manufacturer of durable goods (like motorcycles).

Like so many other biking enthusiasts, I seek value for money in the form of functionality, reliability, good looks, good resale value, all-round ability, availability of spares and service over most of the country and, the highest integrity when it comes to warranty claims, to mention only a few of the possible requirements. I think BMW scores highly in all these areas.

Mr. Cussons is dismayed by the fact that BMW will not be equipping S.A. bound GSs with magnesium alloy wheels (Mags). There is a good reason for such a decision. This country is a part of Africa, a continent ideally suited for light, moderate and even serious off-road riding. That is why steel spoked wheels are fitted

to GSs coming this way. Mags are just too brittle for off-road riding generally and are not recommended for this purpose. In Europe the roads are excellent and even the worst ones are good by our standards. There are also not long stretches of really bad roads. As a result they may well be able to get away with Mags there.

Your correspondent may argue that he knows about the limitations of Mag wheels and would not subject them to very rough roads, and so circumvent the problem. However, after a while he could want to sell his machine to someone else and forget to tell the new owner about the fallibility of Mags in the rough. This person may come a cropper when a Mag disintegrates somewhere along the line and the bike manufacturer gets the blame. Mags are strictly for street bikes!

As far as his criticism of the R model is concerned, I'm afraid that it is much a matter of horses for courses, just as some men like the mother whereas others prefer the daughter. The R is a roadster and is therefore not cluttered with all the paraphernalia that other BMs are endowed with. Sure, an individual would sometimes prefer more of this than that, but that is why the after-market add-on business is flourishing. You can just about make any change or have anything fitted to your bike, if you so desire.

No, Mr. Cussons, I think you're a bit unfair in your assessment of BMW policy in South Africa. This company, like all other similar companies you could mention, are in the business of selling a good product at a realistic price to a willing buyer. In order to survive financially, they have to apply economically sound principles by first of all looking at market demand. Don't forget that much time-consuming and expensive research goes into the developing a new product long before actual manufacturing takes place.

In spite of the above, rest assured that the new R1200 GS is a pearl in German engineering. This machine is the product of countless hours of research, technical prowess, engineering perfection and road testing to give you, the biker, the best all-round motorcycle in the business. Do yourself a favour and call on your dealer for a demonstration ride when they become available. You will be delightfully surprised at what you will find. Remember that they build them well in Germany!

Greetings,
Bruce Meyers.

How`s this one for size?

The definition of a meeting is said to be a gathering of numerous talkative people around a table spending many hours making minutes.

Speed Cameras

(Written by Mike Abbotts as it appears in National Safety, April 2004)

There has long been a popular perception in South Africa that our approach to traffic policing is concerned with cash flow rather than traffic flow and that this has led to undue emphasis on speed trapping. This feeling was reinforced by the Department of Transport spokesmen who, in introducing the 'administrative' approach to traffic policing, gave the collection of traffic fines as a principal consideration.

Dennis Droppa, motoring editor of The Star reported that South Africa's Committee for Active Road Safety (CARS) has called for the implementation of a number of measures for the promotion of road safety, including the following:

- Remove the profit motive from traffic policing in order that priorities can be effectively determined and, where money is generated, confine its use to that which is a fundamental requirement for success
- Review the existing road traffic laws and ensure that what we have is fair and practicably implementable
- Thoroughly research causes, locations and times of accidents. Based on this, appropriate actions to address specific problems in specific areas can be put in place. The processing of proper statistical data is taking far too long and needs to be changed if problems are to be addressed effectively.

Based on my own police traffic accident investigation background coupled with my accident investigation role in the road transport industry, I am of the view that most accidents are caused by reckless behaviour such as overtaking in the face of oncoming traffic, at the brows of hills, blind corners and sharp bends; jumping traffic lights and ignoring other safety signs; and using unroadworthy vehicles. I would like to see statistics of prosecutions (and convictions) for these offences. I am not aware of prosecutions arising from motor vehicle accidents where there are no injuries.

Well, this matter is now surfacing in the UK, sparked by the increasing use of so-called speed cameras. These are unmanned cameras similar to the traffic light cameras that have been in use in South Africa for years. The British Government maintains that the

use of these cameras cuts the number of casualties and serious injuries by an average of 35 per cent.

There is some scepticism about this claim and recognising that accountability is the key element in government, both central and local, that government now have plans to get police and local authorities to publish the accident history of every camera site, before and after installation of the camera. The facts about the effectiveness of cameras speak for themselves.

Campaigners here maintain that over-regulation (such as unreasonably low speed limits and misuse of cameras) has created disrespect for speed limits where conditions allow it such as on empty motorways, or on straight country roads at night. It is submitted that modern vehicles and road surfaces are safer as well as faster than those commonly in use when most speed limits were set.

In Britain a speed camera may be installed on a road only if there had been four deaths or serious injuries as a result of speeding in the previous three years, but there is some suspicion that not all local authorities adhere to this rule. Publishing the figures will winkle out the ones that do not. It is believed that publishing the outcomes will help convince public opinion where the cameras are effective, and according to the 'The Times' it will also "shame police into removing them where they are acting as cash machines, not as deterrents".

The British government has announced an increase in the maximum sentence for causing death by driving dangerously, or whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Road safety campaigners are sceptical that increasing the maximum penalty – from ten to fourteen year's imprisonment – will be a sufficient deterrent because the maximum sentence is rarely imposed. More commonly, the courts hand down sentences of three to five years for causing death on the roads.

Campaigners believe that if a minimum penalty of two or three years' imprisonment was imposed, it would send a clearer message to those who might otherwise not think twice about careering recklessly on the roads.

Incidentally, the report said that "there are an unacceptably high number of deaths on the road: approximately 3400 per year of whom 800 are

pedestrians. Makes you think doesn't it – compared with South Africa's annual road death toll of 10 000 or so of whom pedestrians account for about a third.

Those of you who pay attention will note that the points made above have been addressed in various forms in previous articles but I must also reiterate the view that whilst government has a major role and responsibility in road safety, each of us has the responsibility of ensuring our own safety and that of fellow road users each time we take to the roads. I have previously drawn your attention to the 'Look after Number One' principle, which is that if you look after yourself you will incidentally take care of others. It works, honest it does! Go well.

Editor`s comment: Well said Mike! We all fervently hope that these wise words do not fall on deaf ears as so often happens in this country nowadays. Remember though that we have a large proportion of our population who are not as 'street wise' as in Britain. This is perhaps why our pedestrian fatalities are so high. We all have at some time or another experienced a pedestrian jay walking or making a wrong move at the roadside, often leading to an accident with possible death or injury in the aftermath. Should we not spend more time and energy on road safety education of the masses who are now streaming into our urban areas in search of work ?

First Winners of X-Rider Awards



At the last Noggin six awards for the Extreme Rider programme were made to couples, Rider and Pillion. They are (left to right) Deon and Basiliki Gericke (Gold), Johan and Marissabel Straus, (Gold) and Erick and Magriet (not in picture) van Zyl, (Silver).

Other riders have also already qualified for this award but have not yet made formal application for recognition.

Pride of Possession

(Author unknown)

There it stands in the carport, clean but no longer brand-new clean. These days the battery box and air cleaner stay right there in position when the bike gets its fortnightly ablution. The spokes gleam, perhaps not with the original shine but with added lustre lent by significantly more than a decade of honest pleasure and work.

I stand back and just look at it, admiringly and still madly in love after all these years. This machine is still in original condition except for a set of pannier cases, and a side stand that has been jettisoned in the pursuit of principles. There is no high performance, high decibel performance system; no flashy colours or widened rims; no sky-high compression ratio, but only the quintessence of a motorcycle standing there with some big odo numbers and an attitude towards bikes of up to a fifth smaller engine capacity that can outperform and outhandle it any day.

What is it about a chunk of German metal that can evoke such an emotive response? What magic cohesive force holds together this relationship which could so easily be tried by temptation? Could it be newer bikes, faster bikes, even more comfortable bikes? A relationship that has proven to be bigger than even geographical translocations; bigger than an expanded disposable income. Bigger than a failed first marriage. Bigger than periods of sheer poverty brought on by a nascent business practice with growing pains and teething troubles. Perhaps it is all a matter of the honesty inherent in the relationship asserting its dominance, that of 'you take me to love, cherish and to lovingly ride and maintain and I will take you almost everywhere you wish to be, economically, safely and reliably.'

If only all relationships were this straight forward. There was a tale once written some years ago, of a gentleman in Australia who married his dearly beloved thirteen Kwak. Solidarity brother. I know where you are coming from.

In these days of global instantaneous communication, of cellular telephones that speak to you whilst on the porcelain throne, of E-mail that can communicate even as you sleep, it is somehow reassuring to see that a man with his relatively limited thought processes and brain speed can still

thrash a chess computer and that a carburettor-fed, conventionally aspirated two-valve per pot twin can still look the short-lived, processor controlled, high performance flyers straight in the headlights, and, in the broader scheme of motorcycling, does not have to stand back or dip his headlight beam in deference to modernity.

Touring motorcycling is, in the final analysis, not an exercise in efficiency but in pure hedonistic pleasure, complete unto itself. As soon as it gets projected beyond the rider into a group context, then it becomes competitive. The machine must be smoother, faster, more luxurious than the next. The one-upmanship instead of the pleasure of touring becomes paramount and the very stress that we ride to escapes from, attacks again. The perfectly functioning, pleasure-giving old faithful then becomes inadequate and has to be traded in on a motorcycle with huge repayments, lots of plastic bodywork and a vanity mirror in the top box. The never ending cycle of chasing after your own motorcycling tail sets in.

Yet another thought before parting. No matter what of these modern contrivances one rides, for most of us there is no tinkering on it on a sunny winters Saturday afternoon. One just does not have the technical knowledge, nor the tools or equipment to spend a few loving hours around the bike setting idling, adjusting timing, fitting new plugs, cleaning the battery, etc. As an enthusiast once remarked, if your late model bike leaves you in the lurch on the roadside, even the best BMW-trained mechanic stopping to help, is powerless to cure your steed of its ills unless equipped to do so. Yes, the days of a piece of 'bloudraad' and a pair of pliers to do roadside surgery have regrettably gone forever.

However, please don't misconstrue my meaning. There is nothing better than a ride with friends and the trading of tales and lies around a fire in the evening after. The corruption only sets in when the one-upmanship does. Turn away. Your cheque book and you old bike will love you for it. Take another adulatory look at the old bike in the carport again next week. By next year you will appreciate that full-bodied roundness that the dissipating tannins of older wine bring about to an even greater degree.



Club Treasurer Mike Hennessy congratulates Chairman Deon Gericke and wife Basiliki on their being the first couple to be awarded the X-Rider Gold Medallion. Deon's stranglehold on his wife is presumably to keep her from spilling the beans on her role from a pillion rider's point of view, in this long trip around the country.



Equally pleased is Erick van Zyl (left), receiving an accolade from Deon Gericke for his 'hard butt' ride to qualify for the X-Rider Silver Award. Their smiles seem to indicate that it was easy, but better believe it, it takes some doing!

Friendship Defined

First half of the twentieth century
"A friend in need is a friend indeed"

Second half of the twentieth century
"A friend not in need is a friend indeed"

First half of the twentyfirst century
"A friend in need is a pest"

Second half of the twentyfirst century
"A friend not in need is a rarity"

Corruption is rife all over

(Henri Heyns)

In our 21st century environment we older people experience a steady onslaught on the moral behaviour that our parents of yesteryear took pains to inculcate in us. Those of the younger generations perhaps don't remember the time when one's word was one's honour, when telling a lie was regarded as sin, when a man stood aside at a door, lift, or stair to let a lady through first, when a promise one made was really a promise one kept, when a gentleman walked around his car to open the passenger side door for his lady, and so on. But the problem does not only revolve around chivalry and good manners. It has to do with the perpetration of so many of the 'not done' forms of behaviour that is so commonplace nowadays. Of these, 'lesser' crimes like bribery and corruption figure prominently in the moral make up of the population today. But let me get to the point.

The other day a public official tried to corrupt me. It is the first time that I have come across this phenomenon first hand. Usually one reads about vicious crime and more serious misdemeanours in the papers, with personal experiences usually restricted to gross neglect, inefficiency, petty crime and other small examples of inappropriate actions that work towards destroying the moral fibre of nations.

Recently my wife and I went to Johannesburg by bike on business and enjoyed a lunch at the Sandton shopping complex. Upon leaving the parking garage on our way back to Pretoria we were in a bit of a hurry to get home. So I decided to break a 'minor' traffic rule by crossing a 'left turn only' street and turning right to join up with the street that would put me on the Pretoria-bound road sooner, instead of having to make a lengthy detour. Of course I made sure that there was no traffic and I wasn't inconveniencing anyone. I noticed a guy in what seemed an overall standing on the other side of the road, but he didn't look like a (JHB) traffic cop to me, so I completed my manoeuvre without hassle, or so I thought.

The guy in the overall turned out to be a traffic warden or other, devoid of any conspicuous identification badges or such and pulled me over to my considerable embarrassment. He gave me a lecture on the dangers of not obeying traffic laws and

said that my offence was going to cost me R500. Of course I protested the severity of the threatened fine and said that I was only a visitor from Pretoria and not *au fait* with JHB traffic laws and that seeing that there was no accident, nobody had been killed, injured or inconvenienced, could he not be a good citizen and let us off with a warning. No, he said, such a serious offence had to be treated with the full force of the law that it deserved but what could I afford to pay in mitigation. I now knew what was coming but pretended ignorance so that he could be more specific. He was, and then I realised that he declared himself prepared to accept a bribe in front of a material witness (my wife). My response was that if he would give me a receipt for any money exchanging hands, I would be prepared to negotiate. That was when our friend got cold feet and waved me on with a warning. (Obviously, this guy now knew he couldn't give me a ticket because it would identify him and possibly land him in hot water.)

Moral of the story? Obey traffic laws. Sometimes they are a nuisance if not ill-conceived, but in the other guy's house one plays according to his rules. When caught for an offence, be prepared to take the punishment and accept a ticket if you cannot talk the enforcer into letting you off with a warning. The alternative is aiding and abetting a criminal act. We already have enough criminals running loose in this country without encouraging this kind of dishonesty. Next time I see a 'left turn only' anywhere, I'll turn left. Make no mistake about that.

Which of these are you?

(Author unknown but adapted by Henri Heyns for better rhythmic value)

Some members keep a grouping strong
While others join just to belong
Some dig right in and serve with pride
Some go along just for the ride

Some volunteer to do their share
Some just lie back and couldn't care
Some do their best, some help, some make
While some do nothing, only take

Some help the group to grow and grow
When asked to help they don't say 'no'
Some drag some pull, some don't, some do
Pray tell me which of these are you?

Toe Harley nog Koning was

(Jaybee Willers)

Die dinge waarvan ek nou gaan vertel het darem nou so 'n paar dae terug gebeur, die dae toe daar nog nie so 'n hoë prys op 'n Harley Davidson motorfiets geplaas is nie.

Nou moet ek darem net eers die leser so 'n bietjie inlig oor die vroeëre modelle waarvan daar, sover my beperkte kennis strek, basies twee modelle was, die “sewe-nege” en die “tien-twaalf”. Die “sewe-nege” was die enkel motorfiets (sonder 'n syspan) en die “tien-twaalf”, die meneer met 'n syspan aan die linkerkant en selfs met 'n tru-rat toegerus. Ek glo dat albei hierdie modelle seker maar uit die stal van die S A Polisie en S A Weermag gekom het.

Albei hierdie motorfietses was ontsettend sterk, met 'n koppelaar wat met die voet aan die linkerkant getrap is en dié het oor 'n horisontale as gewerk. 'n Ekstra kenmerk van hierdie koppelaar was dat as jy dit in die in- of uit- posisie getrap het, dit in enige van die twee posisies kon bly. Aan die regterkant was die agterwielrem, ook met die voet getrap. Al twee die motorfietses het behoorlike breë, motorkarbande, 600 x 16 as ek reg onthou, gehad, met 'n behoorlike motorbattery en die tien-twaalf – soos alreeds genoem – nog 'n trurat ook. Ek het in my kinderdae gesien dat boere dit as 'n trekker voor 'n ploeg gehad het om lande mee om te ploeg.

Op die massiewe groot handvatsels was aan die linkerkant die vonkversneller en aan die regterkant die petroltoevoer. Baie ervare manne het grond gekoop wat hulle nie wou gehad het nie deur slegs die Harley met die linker hand te wil bestuur. Die vonkversneller moes natuurlik net op die regte posisie wees om die Harley aan die gang geskop te kry. Te veel “advance” het menige maermerries van die gewigtiges byna nerfaf geskop en ligter manne sommer oor die handvatsels geslinger as die masjien deur die pedaal terugskop.

Nou het die leser darem so 'n effense agtergrond van die Harley Davidson van weleer, waaroor die storie gaan. Op die manganmyne by Glosam in die Noord Kaap het daar saam met my 'n sekere Dawid gewerk, iemand wat ons seker in vandag se terme 'n entrepreneur kan noem, gedurig besig om iets vir iets anders te ruil of te koop of te verkoop.

Dawid was 'n “ervare” motorfietsryer van stalperde soos Triumphs, Nortons en BSA's, almal natuurlik enkelfietses, maar nogtans menere wat jy goed in toom moes hou op die grondpaaië, wat al was wat ons in daardie kontrei geken het. Die naaste teerpad of straat was in Kimberley gewees. Dawid het van sy vader 'n Dodge motorkar geërf waarvan ek nou nie die model reg kan onthou nie, maar dit was so in die laat 1920s of baie vroeë 1930 model gewees, maar in elk geval, al in daardie tyd – wag daarvoor – outomaties of dan nou semi-outomaties.

Op Dedebeben was daar 'n sekere oom Erasmus, wat vreeslik graag die “automatic” wou gehad het en 'n Harley Davidson “tien-twaalf” met 'n syspan besit het. Dawid weer wou baie graag die “tien-twaalf” gehad het, en was bereid om met die nodige geldelike aanpassings, die Dodge vir die “tien-twaalf” te ruil.

Ek en Dawid het die Saterdagoggend vroeg Dedebeben toe gery vir die ruiltransaksie. Dit was redelik gou afgehandel en ons het, soos dit ons betaam, die aanbod van so 'n “ou ligte drankie om dit te vier” van die hand gewys.

Dawid het die kuns, op instruksie van oom Erasmus, na 'n tydjie aangeleer om die vonkversneller net die regte hoeveelheid te verstel om die Harley se enjin aan die gang te kry. Oom Erasmus het teen so effense hoogtetjie op 'n redelike groot erf gewoon. Die baie eende, hoenders en kalkoene en twee bokke op die erf was redelik tipies van die mense in die dorpie se boerdery.

Dawid het die motorfiets aan die gang geskop en ek het, nadat ons gegroet het, in die syspan geklim, reg vir die tog na die myndorpie waar ons albei gewoon en gewerk het. Vanaf die plek voor die huis waarvandaan ons vertrek het, het die erf so ongeveer 50 tree gestrek voordat ons die draai na regs moes maak om uit die erf in die straat te draai. Reguit-aan was 'n visdam, so ongeveer 30 sentimeter diep by so twee treë lank en drie treë breed, en nog verdaan, (iets wat ons later eers uitgevind het), die bokkraal.

Dawid het die Harley in eerste rat gesit en toe ons spoed kry, in tweede rat. Ons nader die draai in die pad waar ons regs moet draai, en Dawid begin leun na regs (soos met 'n gewone motorfiets). Hoe nader ons aan die visdam kom hoe meer leun Dawid, sodat hy later aan die kant van die motorfiets hang, maar al wat wil kantel is die motorfiets. Ons tref die visdam met 'n helse slag, Dawid draai per ongeluk die petrol verder oop, sy voete gly van die koppelaar en die rem, hy val af, ek in die syspan en die motorfiets op sy eie (halfpad mal teen hierdie tyd), nader die bokkraal teen 'n angswekkende spoed met oom Erasmus wat skreeu “ draai die hendels, draai die hendels”.

Ons het die bokkooie gemis. Nee...ons het niks gebreek nie. Ja...ek en die motorfiets het teen die buitekamer gaan staan en stof opskop. Ja... die syspan was onherstelbaar beskadig. Ja...ons het die syspan daar afgeskroef en net met die motorfiets die 70 kilometer na ons werk en woonplek teruggery. Ons het 'n ruk daarna die syspan met een van die mynvragsmotors gaan haal.

'n Paar maande daarna het ek die Harley by Dawid gekoop. Toe die Harley alreeds my eiendom was het ek die eerste en ook, dank die Vader, die laaste keer in my hele lewe met 'n motorfiets –met hierdie einste Harley – met 'n syspan geval. Hierdie twee episodes het my laat besluit om 'n BMW, my eerste van 'n reeks, te begin ry.

Redakteurskommentaar. Dankie Jaybee vir hierdie oulike brokkie uit die dae van weleer. Ons ouens wat al 'n jaar of sewentig agter die rug het weet presies hoe dit in daardie dae was. Die Harley was toe koning, maar soos jy sê, 'n moeilike perd om te ry. Ek was nog sommer 'n kannetjie toe ek die eerste keer met 'n Harley kennis gemaak en hy my dadelik afgesit het. Gelukkig het jy gou-gou na daardie petalje van jou, verstand gekry en na die BMW-stal oorgeloop waarvan jy, na al die jare, nog 'n getroue ondersteuner bly.

The Question of Toll

(Henri Heyns)

This vexing question crops up every now and then and, as toll fees increase and more stretches of our national roads are subjected to this easy way of making money for the authorities, we motorcyclists become more exasperated by the apparent disregard of the powers that be to our pleas for bike slip ways or at least, moderate taxation. I am told that a bike trip up to Messina on our northern border and back now costs almost R200 in toll fees, which is the same as for a motorcar towing a trailer! A young woman enthusiast complained bitterly the other day at having to stop to part with cash at a toll gate within sight of one they had already passed through a few Kms back!

A prominent S.A. motorcycling magazine in its May issue reports on a meeting in Pretoria recently between representatives of the motorcycling fraternity and toll road officials. Seemingly there is both good and bad news. The good news is that the toll officials are listening and have taken cognisance of our feelings of unfairness and being discriminated against, and will look at proposals put forward in this regard.

The bad news is that free use of such roads is not an option as 'die wet van Transvaal' applies to whatever we do and whichever way we turn nowadays. Even so, we recognise the value of being able to travel on good, well-signed and reasonably safe roads, and would accept a discounted rate for two-wheelers, based on the premise that our vehicles contribute much less to congestion and road wear and tear than other vehicles.

It is also reported that the biker representatives were complimented on their co-operative rather than antagonistic approach to the matter and then told that we will get much further in our discussions this way. The blockading of toll gates had been tried and got us nowhere. Further protest actions in the form of paying toll in large denomination bank notes, small change, demanding receipts on payment, laboriously getting off and on motorcycles in a time-wasting effort, etc. have not born fruit. Actually, these actions have only served to antagonise other road users who have no role to play in our actions and are therefore not interested in our plight. Also, mass protests, petitions, and debates will only tell the officials what they already know.

We are reminded that permission for bikes to be used on our country's freeways and for them to proceed between lanes of traffic were achieved through adult-like negotiation and goodwill. This kind of demeanour has born fruit in the past. It can again work for us. So meanwhile, grin and bear the burden of unfair taxation at the toll gates or use alternative routes to your destination. Frankly, I have opted for this second choice for some years now and have enjoyed scenery and the hospitality of far-away places impossible to experience on the tolled race tracks that abound in this country.

End of the affair

(Brian Cheyne)

It was over in the blink of an eye. Happily weaving through traffic the one moment, flying through the air the next. My bike hit a car changing lanes. I had no chance whatsoever. As I came to a stop on the road under the Alandale off-ramp, you will be amazed at the thoughts that go through your head. None of this life flashing in front of you stuff. Perverted as it may seem, the first thought passing through my head was a project I was working on that was now not going to be finished. Then I felt my legs were broken. And then I swore. Uncontrollably. I looked up to see a car parked in such a way as to shield me from traffic driving over me. I flew past this commuter and he kept his cool, following my sliding body. My dream shattered, my bike a mess. My mind was racing; the pain in my legs was all overriding. Man it was sore. Within minutes, paramedics showed up, scooping me off the road and carrying me to the relative safety of the emergency lane. An ambulance arrived, and some harsh words were spoken about the stupid splint they put on my leg. The ambulance guy threw the makeshift splint out the back door of the ambulance and then spoke some real demonic words. 'We are going to manipulate your leg now, you might feel some pain' I swore, grit my teeth and swore some more. 18 minutes later I was in the casualty ward at Carstenhof clinic. My injuries read like a restaurant menu. Right leg: Fractured Femur. Nice clean break. (They say that is a good thing) Left leg: Shattered knee, broken tibia and fibula, broken bones in foot, and lacerations on shin and foot. A very long day ensued, with endless X-rays, sonars and physical examinations to make sure that the injuries were only to my legs. Each time moving me from one room to the next onto this, onto that. The pain unbearable. Later that afternoon I was given an epidural, and the four and a half hour operation ensued. I had the option to watch, but when that surgeon got his Black and Decker out, I opted for dreamland.

After bolting me back together again with pins, plates and screws, I emerged from the hospital 3 weeks later a very frail version of my former self. Rehabilitation will take months and I wish I could transfer the pain of physiotherapy to the guy responsible for my accident. I will never ride again, but purely on medical grounds.

I have been warned that if I have another off of this magnitude, I will be wheelchair-bound. But a few things I have learnt from this whole ordeal, I think I should share with the entire motorcycle community:

1. ALWAYS wear protective clothing. NO exceptions! Even if you're only going to the store. Kit up. Thanks to BMW's protective gear, I had NO other scrapes and lacerations that also need time to heal. I repeat. NO exceptions! Oh and by the way, also specify your kit on your insurance. Paramedics remove clothing with scissors, not the normal way. Check it, it will be worth your while. Mine was not specified, so I lost out on about R10 000 worth of kit destroyed in the accident. Although I lost this money, it was money well spent. Thanks BMW, I can now honestly say : Your stuff WORKS!
2. Always carry your medical aid and driver's licence cards with you in a place where they can be reached. That ambulance was not allowed to leave the scene without my medical aid card. So lovely. Here you are dying but they need you medical aid card.
3. Full-face helmet is a must. If I look at the scrapes on the front part of my helmet, my face would not have been a pretty picture. Not that it is now, but you know what I mean... I don't care how cool a Harley 'mosdop' looks, it ain't protecting the face.
4. Finally, think twice before commuting to work in peak hour traffic. Your chances of getting sideswiped increases dramatically. It just might not be worth it. I am fortunate that my job is such that I can work from home, but not everyone has that privilege. Think if you can afford to be off work for three months. Ride if you must, but PLEASE, I urge you to be careful and don't assume ANYTHING. The idiots are out there, waiting to take you out.

This letter is not written to make you not ride your bike anymore, but just to let you know to take it easy. Cars don't look for, or care for bikes. It's a fact. The only ones that do are probably bikers themselves.

I will miss my 650 dearly. The hours on the saddle, the nice times we had, but in this case logic tells me to sell it. Safe riding everyone.

Editor's comment

Its been sometime since this tragedy happened to Brian to cut short his riding hobby. We recall with fondness and nostalgia the many hours spent together on wonderful rides through the countryside. But Brian is recovering beautifully. When I saw him the other day, he was chirpy and although still limping a bit, almost his old self again. He visits us from time to time at the club and must know that he is always more than welcome there. Good luck Brian. Come and look us up whenever you can.

Unless I'm mistaken, this letter appeared on our web page some time ago, but if its placement here serves to again remind bikers of the importance of wearing protective clothing, and taking due care when riding, the space taken up would be more than worthwhile.

Motorfietsverkope gee vet

(Leo Kok)

In `n onlangse Afrikaanse dagblad het die volgende nuusberig verskyn:

Te midde van `n ongekende groei in verkope in die motorbedryf het motorfietsverkope ook in die eerste vyf maande van die jaar rekords aangeteken.

Altesaam 2461 eenhede is in Mei verkoop, 91 meer as April se rekordverkope. Dit is ook die beste verkoopsyfer sedert die bloeytyd in motorfietsverkope wat in 1985 geëindig het.

Motorfietsverkope is 72,3% hoër (10 887) eenhede as in die ooreenstemmende vyf maande van verlede jaar. Die groei is aangevuur deur `n groot vraag na ontspanningsfietse soos vierwiel-veldfietse, en hoëvlak-superfietse.

In die eerste vyf maande van die jaar was Yamaha se marktaandeel 24,2%, Honda s`n 18,4% en Suzuki s`n 16,7%.

Redakteurskommentaar: BMW motorfietse se verkope word nie vermeld nie, maar daar moet onthou word dat hierdie Duitse firma nie vierwiel-veldfietse vervaardig nie. As dit egter net van tweewielvoertuie afhang, kan die leser verseker wees dat BMW ook onder die topverkopers sal wees. Aangepaste syfers, wat ook BMW verkope vertoon, verskyn eersdaags in hierdie nuusbrieff. Intussen sal dit miskien raadsaam wees om na `n nuwe model of na `n goeie gebruikte een te kyk terwyl die rentekoers nog redelik laag is. Die ekonome voorspel dat die rentekoers heelwaarskynlik in die afsienbare toekoms kan styg.

Bydraes gevra

Ek gesels met baie mense by Bruce se plek en hoor dikwels goeie stories oor fietse en fietsry wat lesers graag van sal wil verneem. Wanneer ek vra dat dit in die vorm van `n artikel uiteengesit word, kry ek dikwels beloftes. Dan wag ek ordentlikheidshalwe vir `n week of twee voordat ek vra wat daarvan geword het. Weer beloftes en dan weer niks. Snaaks genoeg word min beloftes gestand gedoen en is daar altyd `n dosyn redes oor waarom die artikel nie op my lessenaar beland nie. Asseblief tog, gee die ander lesers ook kans om van jul vertellings te verneem.

Pretoria BMW Motorcycle Club

Events

Last update: 23 April 2004.

Month	Date	Route/Destination	Kms.	Organiser
June	5 Sun	Bronkhorstspruit – Cullinan	?	Committee
	12 Sat	S-Cup Racing - Swartkops Raceway	N/a	
June	12-16	Annual BMW Motorcycle Owners` Gathering. Clarens	750	Committee
July	4 Sun	Treasure Hunt (family outing)	?	A. Scheepers
	9-11	Soutpansberg/Pontdrif/ Lowveld		Johan Strauss
Aug.	1 Sun	Cars in the Park	50	Deon Gericke
	7-9	Swaziland - Kosi Bay	?	Stuart Downie
	8 Sun	Van Galens Cheese Farm	250	Committee
Sept.	5 Sun	Loskop Dam	?	Committee
	18 Sat	S-Cup Racing – Swartkops Raceway	?	
	18-26	Alexander Bay- Namibia	?	Mike Hennessy
October	3 Sun	Tba	?	Committee
Nov.	7 Sun	Tswaing Crater	?	Committee
	20 Sat	Club Xmas Lunch	N/a	Committee
Dec.	3-5	Golden Gate/Clarens	1200	Deon Gericke
	Sat 4	S-Cup Racing + 3 hour endurance – Swartkops Raceway	N/a	
	5 Sun	Tba	?	Committee
	16-19	Drakensberg	?	E. vd Stockt
Mar. 05	16-23	Bufalo Rally George, Cape Aghulas	3500	Brian Cannoo

This events calendar also appears on our web page, but 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, it is also 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 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

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.

Club Address: Bavarian Motorcycles and Accessories cc, 7 Ockerse Street., ARCADIA 0083. P.O. Box 23848, Innesdale 0031. Tel. (012) 323-4865/6. Fax (012) 323-1630. E-mail: bavarian@mweb.co.za

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