

SPOKE & PISTON



Volume 10 No. 5

From The Chair...

Dear Fellow Members,



Sept/Oct 2005

BMW Motorcycles Sales and Performance Success

BMW motorcycles sales successes continue unabated and are currently running at some 45% up on a cumulative basis year on year, with SA holding the highest percentage market penetration in the world. In the 2005 PMC/Bavarian Economy Rally 6 out of the top 10 were BMW motorcycles. Yes, so what? Well, we all ride quality motorcycles that have a reputation for reliability, fuel efficiency, no-fuss ability, good service, spares availability, low cost of ownership and reasonable retention of value on re-sale. BMW Motorrad SA continues to upgrade the quantity and quality of the products and support services provided to you the rider, with Rider Academy, BMW on Call, 2-year warranty, the ABBG and GAGSC. Roll on Excellence and amazingly "fast and lighter motorcycles".

Rider Skills

The support of personal riding skills training is a subject that continues to concern your committee. We have been encouraged by the improved participation at riding and safety skills training by members. Please keep up this trend. Your committee still, more than ever, has the view that skills training is crucial to the sustained enjoyment of riding motorcycles. The investment in training is primarily for the moment of the potential accident as well as the safe riding of motorcycles. Accidents (like the proverbial "--it happens") happen, so be prepared. **Your safety and enjoyment is our concern, so please let it be yours as well. Support organised training events, details of which will be permanently posted on the notice board. André Henrico is your training portfolio man.**

Club Membership Subscriptions

Our membership has grown to 175 rider members and 75 spouse members. 250 is a large number and reflects an increase over the previous year of nearly 100. Well done to our members, facilities and camaraderie and the feeling of "welcome" that only great members can generate for newcomers. Please remember, your committee decided to make it necessary to pay annual subscriptions by the date of the Annual General Meeting (first Friday in March). Any member who has not paid by the AGM date, wanting to renew the membership subscription for the new year, will be required to pay the entrance fee of R40 in addition to the annual subscription. I trust you will understand and support this decision.

Spring

Spring is here again and the riding is fantastic. Smell the fragrance of the flowers, the earth and farm animals, enjoy the green hills, mountains and valleys, and believe that all of creation is here for us. Enjoy all things and live hope in this beautiful world, with my wishes for more shared riding pleasure.

My kindest regards, **Mike.**

A travel dream realised

(Henri Heyns)

In the Anniversary Edition that appeared last time, mention was made of Jan du Plessis and three colleagues who had left our fair country on a tour that would take them far up into Africa with the Equator as the turning point. From all accounts, these intrepid riders are back after an eventful tour and we look forward to receiving a report of their trip for publication in this newsletter.

Club member André Gouws told me the other night at a Noggin that he and a friend had already biked to that part of the world and I pressured him into also coming forward with his story on their experiences. He kept his word and what follows shows that a two-wheeled tour so far away from our borders takes an above average amount of skill and courage. Here is his story:



The two André's (with Benecke at left) congratulating each other under a road sign showing their remarkable achievement.

André Gouws (AG), flying to Entebbe, Uganda, whilst employed by South African Airways as a Flight Engineer, often told his mates of the desire to one day travel across the Equator to the Source of the Nile at Jinja by motorcycle. His dream fired up the imagination of a good friend André Benecke (AB), also a Flight Engineer at SAA, who confessed to having the same idea. This dream took exactly ten years before it could be realised and only after AG had retired.

The two-man team with AG at 66 and AB 18 years his junior, finally got together and set about doing this adventurous thing. Each has a BMW GS 1150 and planning commenced in all earnest.

Sufficient fuel is always a problem for long distance travellers, especially for those travelling into the bowels of Africa where distances are huge with filling points far apart at times and not always attractive at that. AG fortunately has the large capacity 30 litre (Adventure) motorcycle tank on his

machine, whereas AB had to resort to carrying 10 litres spare fuel in one pannier.

On 1 June 2005 at precisely 06:00, the two powerful BMW Boxer motors started up with a roar and the duo departed from the Engen service station in Nelmapius Avenue, near the Rietvlei Dam. Travelling mostly on tar as far as possible, (the exception was some 40 kms of bad sandy road *en route* to the Mkushi River Lodge), the tour took eighteen days to complete, discounting the one day's non-riding in Dar Es Salaam when they boarded a ferry to take them to the island of Zanzibar. All told they covered 11 055 kms with AG having used 545.8 litres, giving an average fuel consumption of 20,25 kms/litre. One should plan on a fuel cost of 1\$ (U.S.) per litre.

The route north:

Pretoria – Martin's Drift border post (bp)

Botswana: Francis Town – Kazangula bp

Zambia: Livingstone – Lusaka – Kabwe – Kapiri Mposhi – Mpika – Tunduma bp

Tanzania: Mbeya – Iringa – Chalinzi – Korogwe – Moshi – Arusha – Namanga bp

Kenia: Nairobi – Nakuru – Equator – Eldoret – Webuye – Malaba bp

Uganda: Jinja (Source of the Nile).

The route south:

Uganda: Jinja – Malaba bp

Kenia: Webuye – Eldoret – Londiwanne – Nakuru – Nairobi – Namanga bp

Tanzania: Arusha – Moshi – Korogwe – Chalinzi – Dar Es Salaam – Chalinzi – Iringa – Mbeya – Kyela bp

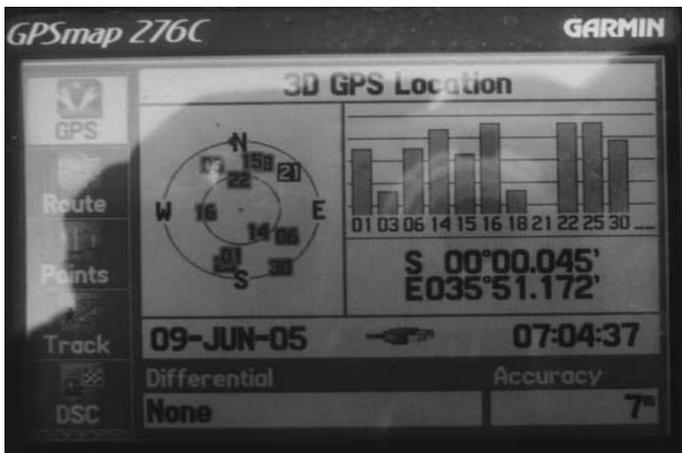
Malawi: Karonga – Mzuzu – Chinteche – Nkhotakota – Salima – Mwanza bp

Mozambique: Tete – Catadica – Chimoio – Gondola – Inhassoro – Inhambane – Xai-Xai – Maputo – Komatipoort bp

RSA: Nelspruit – Belfast – Pretoria.

Accommodation:

The couple camped for six nights with the weather not generally suitable for camping, the tour having been undertaken during winter. For the rest, they slept in hotels, motels, hostels, chalets and lodges, none of which was too bad, considering that all one really wants after a hard day's ride is a warm, comfortable bed to sleep in without any trimmings.



To all the unbelieving Thomases in this world, these explorers thought of a novel way to bring home the fact that they are telling the truth. A GPS device on one of the bikes proves (with an error factor of 45 seconds) that they were where they claim to have been!

Advice to would-be travellers:

1. Have enough time on hand. The idea behind a tour is to visit various places of interest, to spend time taking in the many attractions that are offered in the form of scenery, life styles of the inhabitants, places of interest, and so on. The tighter one's schedule, the less time one has to take in the multitude of interesting facts that makes the tour worthwhile in the first place.
2. Be aware of where you are and what you're doing at all times. Many a traveller has met with misfortune because of relaxing his or her guard. When in a strange country acknowledge the fact that you're just a visitor and other than that have no intrinsic rights.
3. Avoid travelling at night. Any untoward complications that may arise when travelling are exacerbated when the sun is down.
4. A good time for ending the day's riding activities, would be to stop at roundabout 15:00, leaving enough time for washing clothes, allowing them to dry, looking around and relaxing generally.
5. Eat a good breakfast and dinner. Do not be overly concerned with lunch as that function usually eats into one's travelling time and is essentially unproductive.
6. Always be on the lookout for pedestrians, livestock and potholes. These can appear anywhere at anytime and getting involved can easily spoil a tour. Obviously, by curtailing one's speed even on good roads with excellent visibility, reduces the chance of being unpleasantly surprised by an obstacle cropping up as from out of nowhere.

Road conditions:

An obvious anomaly here is that even in countries with good roads generally, bad stretches are inevitable and vice versa. As a rule of thumb, road conditions in the following countries may, according to the riders' experience, be summarised as follows:

Tanzania: Reasonably good but be careful of dangerous potholes.

Kenya: Very bad, generally speaking. There are many large potholes and road surfaces are bad.

Uganda: Very bad all over, and even worse than in Kenya.

Malawi: Reasonable but due care should be taken.

Mozambique: Bad with reasonable stretches here and there.

Clothing, equipment and spares:

Each rider took with him:

1. Three T-shirts, three pairs of socks, underwear, a sweat suit, a jersey, long pants and a bathing costume;
2. No spares were taken along. Only a tow rope;
3. Water was bought as and where necessary;
4. A first aid kit each;
5. Certified copies of I.D., passport, proof of motorcycle insurance, as well as the actual motorcycle registration certificate.

Other pearls of wisdom:

1. Take enough money in the form of U.S. Dollars with you. Forget about any other currency, credit cards, debit cards and other such sophisticated buying aids. The trip cost them in the vicinity of R10 000 each, all told. At the border posts, tourists are inundated by 'traders' offering local currency in exchange for \$. Shop around to get the best exchange rate, but don't be caught with 'local' currency in the next country as it is virtually useless there.
2. Fuel may only be purchased with the particular country's currency. Therefore, remember to exchange US \$ for local money at the border. Avoid asking for too much local currency.
3. For all insurance requirements in a particular country, an insurance agent at the border must be approached for assistance. Remember they are not currency dealers.

Getting to know your Committee

(Henri Heyns)

4. Communication with people in the RSA by SMS is possible but cell phones must be equipped with an international roaming facility. See your local supplier in this regard beforehand.

5. A GPS device is handy but as these adventurers more or less stuck to the well-demarcated roads, ordinary road maps proved to be just as useful.

6. Nowhere did they find antagonism towards them. People were generally friendly, interested and helpful wherever they went.

7. Some countries require visas and other documents before being allowed in. When planning your trip, make sure that you select those countries you wish to visit/ travel through carefully and establish from the local embassy/diplomatic mission what entry/exit document requirements are in force.

Editor`s Comment:

*Well done AG and AB! It takes a great deal of planning, organising and especially **doing** to cover over 11 000 kms of foreign territory, having gone through some fifty towns in seven foreign countries on the African Continent south of the Sahara. And all this was done in eighteen days to boot! If this isn't Extreme Riding par excellence, then what is?*

Seemingly, tours into Africa have become quite popular as a number of tour organisers in South Africa are vying with one another to accommodate would-be sightseers. Some even go beyond the Equator into the far northern parts of Africa. Speaking to these brazen guys one is told that the fears surrounding war, upheavals, pestilence, famine, administrative ineptitude and so on are exaggerated. Touring groups stick to the main roads and overnight in reasonably comfortable surroundings. Seldom is there reason to fear for their belongings or safety. Officials are usually polite and helpful. After all you are bringing much-needed currency into their country!

Perhaps the club committee, in their wisdom, could consider offering such a package tour for our club to undertake. It may be worthwhile sounding out the members for would-be participants. Could we not also make an award to members making it to the Equator and back. After all, such a feat doesn't happen everyday. What about it committee?

Brian Cannoo is the member responsible for the Communications portfolio in the club. He is also the webmaster and when you sign on to www.bmwclubs.co.za/pretoria, you will see what he is capable of.

Is IT his profession? No way, Brian is into aeronautics and is Senior Engineer at the CSIR, specialising in computational fluid dynamics. I don't have the foggiest idea of what his area of specialisation means, so collar him next time you see him and let him set you straight! I have a suspicion that there is some magic involved here so beware – he could turn you into a rabbit if you cross him!

Brian at 43 years of age, is married to Fran, a charming woman and they are in their 21st year of matrimonial bliss. They have a girl of 15 and a boy of 8.

The computer bug bit Brian in 1984 and he has been playing around with them ever since, to the club's great advantage. How on earth else could a dynamic club such as ours, especially in the Clubs Africa context, get our message across without a web page?

Brian is currently running three websites with one already mentioned. The others are a tips and tricks page on the BMW R1200 RT www.r1200rt.co.za (he bought a new RT two months ago), and his latest creation www.thinkbike.co.za

Think Bike, Brian's latest brain child, has the object of helping to save the lives of the thousands of people killed and injured in especially bike-related traffic accidents in South Africa each year. (See the discussion elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Asked what he regarded as being the main reason for the many, specifically, bike accidents that happen every year, Brian said unequivocally “inexperience.” He added that through training, awareness campaigns, a more positive approach to road safety matters by the media, etc., each road user should be made aware of the other guy's problems on the road. Unfortunately bike users always pull on the shortest end of the accident stick and motorists should be made aware, by whatever means possible, that motorcycles are a legal form

of road transportation and should be accorded the courtesy they're entitled to.

Of course, bikers themselves must often take the blame for road accidents as the small profile that a bike presents on the road, its manoeuvrability, acceleration and speed, often renders it almost invisible to motorists, especially under conditions of poor light.

Training courses should highlight the problems of accelerating and braking under poor conditions, the continuous reading of the road for objects that may induce slipping and tripping, animals and people moving onto the roadway, vehicles suddenly changing speed and/or lanes, oncoming vehicles overtaking one another on the wrong side of the road, and a host of other potentially dangerous actions/conditions that the motorcyclist could come across.



with Club Chairman Mike Hennessy at a recent Buffalo Rally in the Cape somewhere.

In Brian's opinion, the only way that a rider can become proficient on a motorcycle, can be summed up with the words SADDLE TIME! The more you ride, the more you learn and to really become a good rider, a fair amount of off-road riding is essential. It is all good and well to for a road rider to state that he or she never intends to go off the tar, but this is an untruth. For instance, when touring, a biker has to leave the tar to park under a tree for a spell. Even a simple manoeuvre like this often requires a fair amount of balancing and other skills. Also, riding in a rainstorm with all sorts of debris washing over a tar road is likely to induce conditions tantamount to riding off-road. That is why Brian insists that good riders know how to handle their bikes under

all conditions. With off-road riding, most of such conditions are presented all at once. He adds that it isn't necessary to obtain a burly GS for an off-road stint. A small scrambler will do even better because its lighter weight affords more control over the machine and can help you get out of trouble quickly.

Another gem of advice from Brian is not only to THINK BIKE and to DO BIKE by riding often and attending training courses, but to TALK BIKE with experienced riders whenever you can. Most important though is to ride every day if you can. If not, ride at least every week because if you don't, like a professional golfer, you get out of condition and on today's roads that is as bad as can be.

A huge thank you to Brian is in order for arranging for our bi-monthly Spoke 'n Piston to appear on the website. In the years gone by this newsletter had to be sent via snail mail to club members. The financial implication was staggering, but now, only on a rare occasion is a newsletter sent by mail. Members who do not have access to the Internet may, however, collect a free copy from Bavarian Motorcycles if they so wish.



The sticker shown above is the visual presentation of the BMW Motorcycle Club, Pretoria's latest efforts to create a greater awareness by motorists and the public alike of motorcycles as a legal form of transportation on our roads.

Many motorists see bikes merely as an annoyance to be tolerated but to be swept aside figuratively, and sometimes literally, as the situation demands. At the same time, bikers are reminded that courtesy begets courtesy and that the roads, congested as they are, have to be shared by all, but only possible in safety with due consideration to other users.

Get free stickers from Bavarian Motorcycles.

Club's Tenth Anniversary Celebration in the Bundu

(Henri Heyns)

Ellisras as we older folks know it, or Le Phalele as some of the younger folks would have it, isn't exactly in the sticks as the above caption intimates. Lying some 350 kms NW of Pretoria, deep into the Waterberge, this small bustling town lies smack in the middle of the Bushveld. One of the main attractions in this little town is the Machauke Lodge, a lodging house with the correct cuisine and atmosphere for a celebratory gesture befitting an organisation like the BMW Motorcycle Club, Pretoria.

Saturday morning, 3 September from 07:30 saw the gathering of the clan at the Atterbury Road Ultra City, on a bright and sunny day. By the time they departed the numbers were some 120 enthusiasts atop seventy bikes or so, a formidable group in any person's language. Of course, there was no question of so many bikes travelling in one group, so the plan was to pass through the Zambesi toll plaza first and then split up into four groups or so. We were reminded to have a five rand piece toll fee ready to hand, so as to facilitate passing through as quickly as possible. Tollgate antagonists were requested not to protest the merits of motorcyclists having to pay, but to hand over the coin so as to get the group through with the minimum delay. The rebels reacted admirably and quick as a wink everyone was on the other side.

We divided into four groups with the speed merchants taking off first and with the others following on at a more leisurely pace. Of course, the riders were not *organised* into riding with any particular group, so every now and then a bike went past or fell back as its rider decided. This all happened with extreme *finesse* so that no one was inconvenienced. We were all professional riders, after all!

The weather was fine and not uncomfortably hot as can easily be the case travelling north in September already. Going there we took the 'normal' route along the R101 through Warm Baths* and Nylstroom* and thereafter the R33 through Vaalwater to our destination. We arrived without incident although along the road my group had the experience, just through Warm Baths, of having had to pick our way carefully through a few hundred dozen of broken beer bottles, strewn all over the

road. Seemingly a beer transporter truck had shed its entire beer load for some unknown reason, with the resulting chaos. The beer and bottle mess was spread over about a quarter kilometre and where possible we did a bit of 'off-roading' to escape the worst danger. Adding to our problems were the scores of locals standing all over in the roadside, scratching among the wreckage to see if anything could still be saved, totally oblivious of our presence.

A nice touch from our accommodation host was the flagging down of riders just before entering Ellisras* to stop at a cooldrink tent erected by the roadside for a free quick thirst quencher before proceeding on the last leg of the trip.

We had all arrived at our destination without incident just on lunch time and after booking in, with the dedicated campers setting up a stone's throw away, set off to the watering hole for a well-earned beer and a typical pub lunch. Needless to say, with some locals also adding to the horde, not everybody could be accommodated at the eating place, so some merrymakers spilled over into the lounge and dining room.

Thereafter, some of the 'oldies' withdrew for a quiet nap while the rest of us sat at tables around the pool (some even braving the cool water), waiting for nightfall and the celebrations to start.



Bruce Meyers of Bavarian Motorcycles explaining how the club was formed ten years ago.

The weather was good to us and all the evening proceedings took place in the open air with tables arranged around a stage specially prepared for the occasion. Speakers were kept to a bare minimum and speeches short so that the revellers could enjoy themselves. Musical entertainment was provided by a guitarist/singer, and a scrumptious buffet dinner laid on. Thereafter dancing took place and it was

in the early hours of the morning that the long day began to take its toll, forcing the merrymakers to look up their lodgings so that Morpheus, the god of sleep, could take them into his arms for the rest of the night.



The first chairman of the Pretoria BMW Motorcycle Club, James Mc Clelland, recalling what things were like when the club first started up. Listening attentively on his left are Richard Hussey, Deon Gericke and Renier Jordaan.

Sunday morning everyone (well almost!) was up and about at 08:00 and a mouth-watering breakfast was served. Thereafter the four groups said goodbye and thank you to their host facility and took to the road.

By way of a change of scenery the road back was on the R510 and R511 via Thabazimbi, Rustenburg and Brits and then home. All the groups stopped at Thabazimbi for refuelling, a cool drink and a good bye as bikes started to peel off in different directions for the final leg of the journey. In all, the weekend involved travelling just over 700kms with excellent roads all the way.

Thank you to the organisers for a well put-together weekend gathering. The facilities were excellent on an all-inclusive basis at a price so reasonable that could only have happened in the good old days gone by. To those of you who couldn't make it, tough luck. You missed out on a most pleasurable weekend.

** Sorry dear readers, but the map I have is an old one. Should you wish to do so, the present nomenclature of the towns can easily be determined if you follow the route on a later map.*

New middle-weight Beemer in the offing

(Henri Heyns - adapted from a news item in the Pretoria News of 2005-10-06)

BMW has a line-up of formidable light- and heavyweight motorcycles in their stable, some of them achieving record-breaking sales against all competition. But up to now there hasn't been a new-generation middle-weight offering to satisfy that particular, quite substantial, niche in the market.

In the past two years BMW has launched new bikes in the super bike, enduro, touring and sports touring categories. Now the Blue Propeller Guys have turned their attention to the competitive mid-weight sports class. However, the bike is unusual for BMW in that it is going to be a parallel twin – the first in the company's 80 year old history. Called the F800 S, it will go into production in the first half of 2006. It is designed around an 800cc parallel-twin engine developed in collaboration with Bombardier-Rotax. The engine will be manufactured at the Austrian Rotax plant and supplied to the production line at Spandau in Berlin.

BMW claims a power output of more than 60kW, with strong torque characteristics. It drives through a compact six-speed gearbox and a belt final drive.

So, instead of turning your attention to some competitor for a middle-weight machine in the next few months, put your bucks in a savings account to earn interest, exercise a little patience and await the arrival of this new Beemer. The F800 S could be the bike to satisfy your wildest dreams!

Sorry, but we don't have a pic of the beast just yet. As soon as one comes along you will be informed. Meanwhile eat your hearts out whilst exercising a little patience. You could always put your name on the waiting list and be one of the first to savour its pleasure.

Many a true word...

If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?

Why are a wise man and a wise guy opposites?

People who live within a budget lack imagination.

Bose hou van Agter

(Henri Heyns)

Maandag 12 September omstreeks 10:30 ry klublid 'Pottie' Potgieter op sy tyd in Voortrekkerweg af om aan die onderpunt êrens 'n oud-kollega by dié se huis op te soek. Die verkeer is altyd druk daardie tyd van die oggend soos mens maar in groot stede kan verwag. Gelukkig is die pad slegs vir eenrigting verkeer en hoef mens nie nog oor die ou wat van vooraf kom, te bekommer nie. Rustige mens soos wat Pottie is, het hy geen rede tot kommer nie. Dit is 'n heerlike dag, sy R1100 GS loop soos 'n droom en hy verlang na daar waar die grootpad wink sodat hy die fiets bietjie kan vetgee.

By 'n kruising onder in die dorp is die verkeerslig rooi en 'n paar voertuie het alreeds daar tot stilstand gekom. Pottie verminder spoed en maak hom gereed om in die tou te stop en te wag totdat die robot groen word. Nog in beweging word Pottie bewus van remme wat koersagtig agter hom aangeslaan word. Voordat hy kan reageer, stamp 'n Hyundai die fiets van agter. Die BMW val om en Pottie beland op die grond met 'n linkerarm wat onbruikbaar is. Die sterk reuk van petrol wel in sy neusgate op en die fiets lê nog en luier. Pottie dink dadelik aan brandgevaar, kom al struikelend op sy voete en gaan skakel die GS af.

Teen hierdie tyd het die verkeer agter en om Pottie al tot stilstand gekom, party om te help en ander uit nuuskierigheid. Die uitsondering? Die Hyundai wat al die moeilikheid veroorsaak het! Die bestuurder, alleen in die motor, het sondermeer straat af laat vat voordat omstanders behoorlik kon besef wat gebeur het. Maar geluk kom ook soms met die ongeluk, soos die spreekwoord lui. Meneer Hyundai het sy visitekaartjie in die vorm van die voorste nommerplaat teen Pottie se fiets laat lê!

Pottie se linkerarm is net onder die elmboog gebreek en hy moet ongelukkig die las van 'n gipspleister vir sowat ses weke verduur. Daar is ook nog 'n

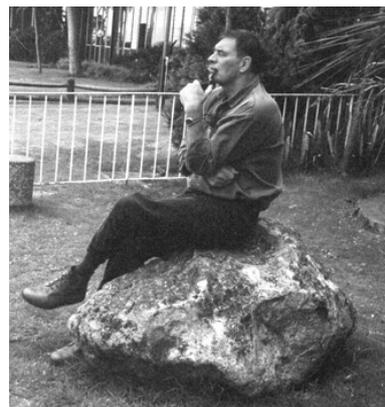
paar kneusplekke orals wat pla. Die BMW is redelik erg geknou, met die voorste suspensie wat blykbaar die ergste deurgeloop het. Maar die totale skade sal eers bekend wees as Bruce-hulle met deskundige oë daarna gekyk het.

Wat sê Pottie van al hierdie dinge? Hy is natuurlik baie ongelukkig oor sy fiets, maar handhaaf 'n filosofiese beskouing oor die gebeure. Ongelukke gebeur oorals sê hy. Weghol vragmotors bars deur mure en vermorsel mense wat dood onskuldig na die televisie sit en kyk; voetgangers word op sypaadjies raakgery; vliegtuie val op mense se koppe waar hulle tuis in die tuin werk. Mens is maar net gelukkig as hy redelik lig daarvan afkom soos in sy geval.

Gevra oor hoe hy voel oor motorfietsry vorentoe verklaar Pottie onomwonde dat hy en 'n paar rymaats ongelukkig hul Malawi-toer, wat op die 24ste van hierdie maand sou begin, nou moet uitstel, maar een van die dae is hy beter en dan begin die beplanning weer. Vir hom is fietsry 'n lewenswyse en kan hy nie wag om weer op twee wiele te wees nie.

Het hy enige raad vir motorfietsryers? Beslis sê hy. Dra altyd voldoende beskermende klere, al ry jy net 'om die draai' kafee toe om melk en brood te koop. Dit help nie om daardie duur Hein Gericke of wie ook al se tooisel te besit as dit in jou kas hang nie. Jy weet nooit wanneer jy aan die beurt kom van om in 'n ongeluk betrokke te raak nie. Pottie sê as hy nie sy volle uitrusting nou die dag aangehad het nie, sou sy beserings sekerlik veel erger gewees het.

Namens al sy lesers wens S 'n P vir Pottie sterkte toe vir die dae wat voorlê en dat hy spoedig sal herstel om nog baie fietstoere te onderneem en gesellighede van die klub by te woon. Vir vroultjie Gerda stuur ons ook beste wense in die hoop dat hulle vir nog baie jare vir mekaar gespaar sal bly.



Pottie Potgieter met sy alomteenwoordige pyp sit diep in gedagte versonke terwyl hy die wêreld beskou. Wat kan in daardie kop aangaan? 'n Ander GS miskien of is dit iets meer eksoties. Wie sal weet?

Think Bike!

(Brian Cannoo)

Although the SA Department of Transport does not keep statistics on motorcycle accidents and the causes thereof, there is no reason to believe that the general trends are different to those in other countries. Studies in the US and UK have revealed that fully half of all motorcycle accidents are caused by the drivers of other vehicles violating right-of-way in one way or another. The tragic part is that these accidents are AVOIDABLE!

Every motorcycle rider knows that the most serious danger to life and limb is not weather, speed nor road conditions. Who among us has not had a close shave, barely missing a car pulling out from a stop street, or having to dodge a car blindly changing lanes? Those of us who communicate with other bikers on a regular basis have grown used to hearing horror stories almost every single day. Many of us have lost friends to stupid accidents.

The only effective way to reduce this senseless slaughter is by education. Education of motorists and education of riders. In some other countries, there are government campaigns to provide this education through posters, flyers, TV and radio ads, and other forms of publicity. In the UK, although motorcycle sales are at an all-time high, motorcycle accident rates are at an all-time low. All through education.

In the absence of any likelihood of a similar government campaign in South Africa, a group of concerned SA bikers have decided to do something. Hence the **Think Bike** campaign. Run entirely by volunteers, the Think Bike campaign aims to educate both drivers and riders as to the dangers affecting motorcyclists, and how they can be avoided. Most experienced riders have developed their own techniques to minimise risk while on the roads, and others can benefit from these techniques. The important aspects for motorcyclists to learn involve accident avoidance. These include visibility, defensive riding, reading traffic and anticipation of potentially dangerous situations. The importance of training can not be stressed strongly enough, but of equal importance is saddle time, or experience. We have a monumental task ahead to educate motorists too. The problem areas include how to judge a motorcycle's distance and speed, and how to react when a motorcycle is close by. How even to notice motorcycles. Raising awareness among motorists of motorcycles sharing the roads can only help. Of course, a positive attitude toward motorcycles is also required.

The campaign has a website, at www.thinkbike.co.za, which addresses these issues. There are tips for motorists as well as riders, links to other sources of information, stories and pictures, all of which are intended to educate and raise awareness. Downloadable leaflets are available for free, which explain the basic points. Anyone can print multiple copies of these and hand them out at work, to friends, at traffic lights, or anywhere your imagination takes you. Free bumper stickers are also available - these not only show support of the campaign but also help to raise awareness on the roads, where it counts the most.

The campaign is naturally non-profit, and therefore funds must be raised to pay for bumper stickers, banners, and other publicity and awareness devices. Sponsors are being sought, but in the meantime you can also help by buying a Think Bike T-shirt, ordering stickers, donations, etc. Please visit the website, and contribute in any way you can, whether financially, by buying a T-shirt, downloading a leaflet or with tips and advice of your own. Every little bit helps, and who knows, your contribution may save a life, perhaps even your own.

Official Club Calendar for 2005 + Jan. 2006

Listed below are all the official events organised by or attended by the club. Overnight trips have a star. All runs and events are subject to confirmation at the prior club social meeting. This is a work-in-progress and may be altered at any time. No responsibility will be accepted for changes to the programme.

IMPORTANT: Non-club members are welcome to attend club events as guests. Non-members, however, are required to sign an indemnity form before participating. The form can be downloaded from the Home Page.

The club has an official policy regarding the use and financial compensation of support vehicles on official overnight club trips. Details appear on the Home Page.

MONTH	DATE	ROUTE / DESTINATION	Kms	ORGANISERS
Sept.	3-4*	<i>Anniversary Weekend - Ellisras</i>	600	<i>DeonGericke/ Etienne vd Stockt</i>
	21-26*	<i>Great African GS Challenge</i>	?	<i>Pieter de Koker (Homepage)</i>
Oct.	9	<i>Club Training Day - Zwartkops (Auto Alpina)</i>	350	<i>Renier Jordaan</i>
	28-30*	<i>Rhino Rally</i>	900	<i>Brian Cannoo (Homepage)</i>
Nov.	6	<i>Lunch Run - Dullstroom</i>	550	<i>Mike Hennessy/Rupert Richter</i>
	13	<i>Cansa Cycle Race Marshalling</i>		<i>Mike Hennessy</i>
Dec.	2-4*	<i>Golden Gate</i>	?	<i>Deon Gericke</i>
	16-18*	<i>Sabie</i>	?	<i>Renier Jordaan/Pieter de Koker</i>
Jan.	8	<i>Sunday Run - TBA</i>		
	21-22*	<i>Badplaas</i>	?	<i>Renier Jordaan</i>

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.”