

SPOKE & PISTON

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From The Chair...



Dear Members & Fellow Riders,

New Year 2006 is here and we are already well into the first quarter. We should be excited as the time of year presents, once again, another year of shared riding pleasure. Judging from the turnout and participation for the first two socials and ride events, our Club is alive and well with lots of new-member blood and the trusty long-standing members keen to socialise and ride. Club events like these bring with them memories and thrills of good times, friends, roads (both tarred and dirt) and reliable yet exciting BMW motorcycles.

Looking back at 2005 briefly, we should consider our level of participation in Club life. Life moves on and we are the drivers of what we do, with a lot of help I believe, from above. Whatever we do decide, we are truly blessed to be able to enjoy riding in our beautiful land with friends. I and on behalf of your Committee, wish you a year of participation, enjoyment and may all your dreams be realised.

Annual Subscriptions

With the New Year comes our responsibility as members to pay our annual subscriptions, which are due, in advance, on 1 January for the year to 31 December 2006. I appeal to members to meet this responsibility as soon as possible. I believe the expenditure during the past year has improved the safety and back-up support on ride events and was, therefore, worth the outlay. Some members did not pay their 2005 subscriptions or have paid late while enjoying the benefits of the Club throughout the year. I am sure you will agree that this is not good practice and we will need to improve our collection procedure.

Annual General Meeting

I remind you that our Club Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday, 31 March 2006 and at the AGM your Committee will ask you to approve a small subscription increase and the introduction of a registration fee, as well as some amendments to tidy up our Club Constitution in the spirit of what is right for the Club. Further, it was decided not to hold the AGM on a social evening as the informal comment from members pointed to this preference. Please consider nominations of any new members you would like see appointed to the Committee and any other issues or suggestions you would like to raise at the meeting. It would be useful for your Committee to have foresight of any matters prior to the meeting for consideration.

With best wishes for sheer riding pleasure,

Regards,

Mike.

13 February 2006.

A showing of hands – a commitment to participate.

(Henri Heyns)

The monthly Noggins at Bruce's Place are normally well attended by usually some half of the total club membership of 180 souls, and for a good reason. This is where the Pretoria and environs BMW motorcycle fans and their friends congregate the first Friday of each month to social, meet new friends, exchange ideas, look at new bikes and accessories, give and get new ideas or just to have some refreshment and let their hair down generally.

During the course of the evening the club committee calls together a short meeting of members to say hello, introduce new members, commend specific meritorious actions, discuss rides for the coming month and generally convey motorcycle-related information to those interested in the affairs of the club.

The rides schedule for the immediate period is usually discussed with the responsible ride leaders (on-and off road) giving a rough idea on distance, route, rendezvous points, possible weather conditions, special requirements, etc. This is when a showing of hands is requested of would-be participants so that the leader can establish how many people to cater for and arrange accordingly.

Towards the end of last year an invitation was extended to our club by ABSA to join a Saturday motorcycle trip to Johannesburg to provide some entertainment to kids in an orphanage there. The reason for timing the ride so late in the year is that some orphans are not placed with organisations and families for the holidays and therefore have to stay in the orphanage, which of course include Christmas and New Year. One cannot imagine a greater disappointment to a child than having to stay put when others may be enjoying the pleasure of being with other people during the holidays.



“Steek hom Oom, steek hom!”

Be it as it may, at the Noggin our club chairman asked for a showing of hands to determine how many riders would be going and a number of hands, ten or so, were raised. This did not signify wild enthusiasm for coming to the assistance of parentless children during the school holidays, but it at least indicated that some of us would commit to that sacrifice. The usual meeting place at 09:00 was agreed to from where the bike convoy would proceed to Centurion where the other bikers would be awaiting us.

Saturday morning I arrived at the rendezvous at 08:45 and found no one there. Admittedly there were ominous rain clouds all over with an obvious foreboding of a wet sojourn to Johannesburg and perhaps for the rest of the day. But a promise is a promise and I stuck to my guns, still alone, albeit with a growing doubt as to the wisdom of my ride choice for the day.

At 09:00 and itching to cry off and return home to a steaming cup of coffee, I noticed a new K1200 R pulling onto the service station concourse next to the waiting place. I could not recognise the helmeted rider and thought him to be a casual biker on the road to somewhere. After refuelling, the rider approached me and I was pleased to recognise our chairman proudly pulling up on his new bike.

So, now there were two of us and that became the sum total of riders from our club aiding a worthy cause. We met up with the other group and eight bikes, all told, proceeded to Johannesburg. The weather looked threatening and before leaving Centurion we all donned rain protective clothing as we expected the mother of all storms to engulf us before even reaching our destination.

The ride was unexpectedly pleasant as only a few drops of water came down from the heavens, hardly wetting our windscreens. Our destination was Langlaagte where the Abraham Kriel Childrens Home is situated. Some eighty boys and girls, ranging in age from eight to sixteen were at the gate to meet us, all eager to see what this group of motorcyclists was going to provide for excitement.

After the introductions to the staff members, the first item on the agenda was the bike rides. Each biker was expected to make ten plus trips to satisfy the curiosity of the kids, most of them to whom riding pillion on a motorcycle was going to be a first. By this time we all had ample opportunity to exhibit our bikes to curious child-onlookers, explaining the aspects of a motorcycle that few of them have ever had the opportunity of even getting close to. The staff then had their work cut out to get all the eager riders lined up and to ensure that those who had completed their ride did not fall into the back of the queue for a second bite of the cherry! (Not that we would have minded!)



Mike Hennessy with a willing passenger enjoying the thrills of motorcycling with a teacher looking on.

One little chap who couldn't have been older than ten climbed onto my bike with the absolute confidence of a regular rider, threw his arms around my waist and with an air of wild anticipation shouted: "Steek hom oom, steek hom!"

All too soon for the passengers the rides were at an end and the next item on the menu commenced with. This took the form of a scrumptious braai, the necessary ingredients having been provided by a charitable local butchery with the preparation undertaken by staff members and their spouses. There is no food waste among those children because the Home is not flush with cash and there are many mouths to feed. And as we know youngsters, they're always hungry! What a feast it was and a pleasure to be among children who were really pleased to have us with them,

After lunch the group gathered in the main hall and were each handed a parcel containing sweets and some or other goodie. As a voice choir they simultaneously expressed their gratitude by saying in Afrikaans: "Thank you good people for being with us today, for your kindness and generosity. We appreciate your presence tremendously and ask the good Lord to bless you one and all."

Thereafter Johann Smit, the ABSA representative who organised the ride, presented each boy and girl with an envelope containing a R20 note. The happiness that abounded from this gesture was a joy to behold and the buzz of excited young human voices bore testimony to their delight and enjoyment. (As we all know, R20 is insignificant in the world today but to kids in an orphanage this is *real* money!



Johann Smit of ABSA distributing the Christmas envelopes containing R20 to eager takers.

It is often said that most children of today are spoilt and take everything for granted. Not so with the parentless kids at the Abraham Kriel Orphanage in Johannesburg. They don't have anybody to spoil them. For most, life holds a grim spectre in the stormy sea of hardship and inadequacy unless someone is at hand to throw them a life buoy to cling to.

The observant reader would now ask what the title of this story has to do with a group of orphans in need of understanding and sustenance. Just this! A well-known department store has a slogan which goes: 'A promise we make is a promise we keep.' When an organiser at a club Noggin asks for a showing of hands to determine how many people are prepared to devote some time and effort to visit an orphanage to bring to the kids there a few moments of joy and happiness, please do not make a promise that you cannot or will not keep. These children need all the support and understanding they can get and a let-down by a thoughtless act can sometimes have unpleasant consequences for an orphan child that are difficult to imagine.

Instead of only two club stalwarts turning up, the showing of hands at the previous Noggin indicated that there should at least have been ten of us. Shame on you for letting the little orphans and your side down. Remember a promise you make is a promise you keep. Never, never forget those words of wisdom.



Part of the merry group receiving their gifts.

Impressions of the new BMW R1200 ST

(Henri Heyns)

There are numerous local and overseas motorcycle magazines, some consistently better than others, in bookstores nowadays. Hardly is there an edition wherein some or other bike is not tested with a yes/no/maybe opinion expressed by some or other astute expert. The trouble often is that depending on the writer's particular mindset as to what he regards desirable or not, this subjectivity clouds the issue even more, so that the ordinary biker cannot make up his mind as to whether that particular bike is for him or not. Pertinent information such as weight, type, engine configuration, number of cylinders, cubic capacity, kW and torque maxima, ride and handling characteristics, braking efficiency, etc. is then provided in considerable detail. This is meant to give the reader a general overview of what to expect so that he/she may make up their mind from the outset whether that particular type of machine falls within their ambit of interest or not. Furthermore, to give the test report a modicum of impartiality, a 'second opinion' feature is often added where, in a paragraph or so, the contributor finally helps to make up the mind for the reader.

The old saying that the proof of the pudding lies in the eating thereof is also applicable here. That is why demo's are provided for test riding at bike outlets. So, when I asked Bavarian Motorcycles for a test ride on the ST and then pen my impressions in this newsletter, they immediately acquiesced. It is not that I'm such a good rider. Far from it. Admittedly I did my share of riding both on and off road and can honestly claim to have visited most cities and towns in this country by bike at one time or another. However, a high speed rider I'm definitely not and apart from the occasional opening up when safe to do so and when the fuzz aren't around, I could be termed a conservative and moderate rider.

It was probably with this thought in mind that I mounted Bruce's ST Demo and as I'm likely to be in the market for a new BMW in the near future, the ST fills part of my expectations. The machine hadn't been run in yet, so I was requested not to exceed 4000 rpm, a figure so close to the national speed limit in sixth gear, that I seldom see need to go beyond. The machine was in my hands for about an hour and-a-half, taken through traffic and on the freeway to get the true 'feel' and what a splendid ride it gave me!

What I liked:

1. Oodles of power. Frankly, why BMW keeps on increasing cubic capacity, goes beyond me. I started off with an 800, then a 1000, thereafter an 1100 followed by a 1150 and now they want me to buy a 1.2 litres magnum! Be it as it may, as one can well imagine, nothing is lacking in the power delivery department and without being stupid, it is almost impossible to be caught in the wrong gear. Because of the balancing mechanism that it is now equipped with, the engine is quite smooth for a horizontally opposed twin. Of course I couldn't go over 4000 rpm, so I cannot tell what those huge pots will be like in the higher rev range, but it's probably a safe bet that nothing untoward will happen even into the happy sixes!
2. Gearing. Unless one is a highly strung person consistently living on the edge, high revolutions, especially on a horizontal

twin, do not normally win the day. This 1200 cc motor is no laggard and can certainly keep it's own in normal company, but you do not need many revs. to cruise at the speed you may want to ride. At 4000 rpm in sixth gear the speedometer shows slightly over 120 km/h. I should think for a guy in not too much of a hurry, one could cover a fair piece of ground at some 150 km/h without having the engine revving beyond five. At the same time, sixth gear is not an overdrive and there is ample pulling power with the top cog in place. Travelling between 4000 and 5000 rpm I should think that one can expect a fair return on kms covered per litre of fuel consumed. Also at this speed, although nominally exceeding the speed limit, one should not attract too much attention from the fuzz.

3. Height from ground. Some bikes, especially those of the off-road variety require long-legged people to be able to handle them comfortably. My personal test of being able to move the bike from side to side when standing with legs spread over the saddle, is the standard for determining the 'ride-ability' of a bike. The ST scores 100% here with me. What is more, the seat height can be adjusted in two positions to suit individual requirements. Also, a lower seat is available at extra cost.

4. Equal size panniers. I know of few BMW riders who don't lament the 'same size look' of the old set-up. They appear to be the same, but because of the space taken up by the exhaust pipe on most of the older models, the left side pannier actually provides much less packing space than the right. On the new models this imbalance has been redressed by lowering the tail pipe considerably. What a boon to would-be long distance travellers!

What I'm not excited about.

1. Looks. At first glance from the front, the ST looks like a monster out of hell, frankly, quite scary. The twin lights, one below the other with a small height-adjustable screen above, gives the bike a queer look. It makes the bike stand out though because there is nothing like it and I imagine one can gradually grow accustomed to its 'face' as the old song will have it. I remember the new-look American cars just after WW 2, like the Studebaker Champion, Hudson Hornet, Kaiser and Frazer, and Edsel of those times causing quite a stir because of their unusual looks. But the human being is infinitely adaptable and pretty soon those shapes were in vogue all over. The same can probably be said of the ST in time to come.

2. Slightly radical seating position from the controls. True to its dual purpose of being a cross between a sports bike and a tourer, hence the product denomination 'ST', one does not expect a fairly upright seating position with wide handle bars to enable tall riders with long arms to be able to sit on the rear seat with outstretched arms. Admittedly, there is a little bit of higher or lower adjustment available to suit most riders but unfortunately, even with the handle bars in their highest position, a rider still has to lean slightly forward to reach the controls. This can prove to be tiresome on long journeys as it does not allow for much body movement whilst riding.

3. New panniers required. As is the case with the other new BMW models, the old panniers cannot be refitted as the brackets are altogether different. Ostensibly, the same would apply to tank bags and perhaps top boxes.
4. Instrumentation. I long for the days long gone when analogue

instrumentation was in vogue. One could then amble up to any parked bike capturing one's attention and read the mileage already done, straight away. Not so with digital electronics. With the engine stopped, that piece of information departs from the screen and will only reappear when firing up again. (Most motorcycles are like that now.) I have also noticed that, depending on how the light strikes the bike, the instruments are more difficult to read than on older models. Furthermore, I personally fail to see why an instrument is necessary to tell me what gear I'm in. Just compare your engine revs with your road speed and you immediately know what's what.

5. Windscreen. I like the idea of a fairly tall windscreen, especially one that is adjustable to suit individual requirements. Although nowhere near the efficiency of the real tourer screens, the ST at least offers a modicum of protection against the elements. A handy aspect is that the screen is adjustable by hand, which means that the expense of being supplied with an electrically controlled device, is spared the buyer. When riding under windy conditions one can tuck in behind the screen and so avoid at least some of nature's huffing and puffing. Most peculiar though is that in the fully raised position there is an angular hole through the screen at about eye level through which the wind can attack the rider. The official explanations for this irregularity is that it equalises the air pressure in front of and behind the screen. To my way of thinking it would rob the screen of most of its effectiveness in the event of a serious head wind.

Final Word. The new ST is a well-engineered and superbly constructed motorcycle. Of that there can be no doubt. After all, it is a BMW! The model slots in nicely between the S with its more sporting characteristics and the RT, which is a tourer par excellence. Owners I have spoken to are ecstatic about the build an ride quality and coming in at a reasonable price, is a good buy considering all the new goodies built into it to make motorcycling safer and even more enjoyable. Amidst the line-up of all the other attractive models on offer in the BMW stable, the ST is probably not going to become top selling bike of the year, yet with its mid-placement between sports and touring, this machine is likely to attract riders desiring a little of both worlds, as so many of us do, this machine may well be on its way to establishing a niche. Go for a test ride. You may be delighted at what you find!



The BMW ST motorcycle - a successful attempt at finding a balance between a road bike and a touring machine. Although not perfect, BMW has come up with something to suit both tastes. It comes in attractive colours as well!

Letter to the Editor.....

Dear Henri,

I am writing to tell you of an uncanny experience I had the other day and to warn all you good people to be constantly on the look-out for new scams that these criminals appear to have no limit in coming up with. They care little for you and yours and are out to trap us when least expected.

My story has nothing to do with motorcycling but I'm sure you won't mind publishing this unnerving experience in your excellent publication.

I happened to be driving alone along a road in Menlo Park the other day, looking for a house address of some woman I wanted to contact. It is a quiet residential street in a respectable part of Pretoria and I was travelling very slowly so as to read the house numbers. Two adult men came walking towards me in the street on the left side of the road, the one nearest to the car carrying a plastic shopping bag. As there was no approaching traffic I gave them a wide berth and proceeded to drive by. Halfway through the passing action I felt a bump against the car (obviously the shopping bag being banged against the door I realised later on although there was no visible mark). Looking through my rear view mirror I saw the man with the shopping bag gesticulating wildly and pointing to his friend lying on the sidewalk writhing with pain as if he had been run over.

Duly alarmed, and not understanding how I could possibly have struck the pedestrian, but knowing full well that 'hit and run' accidents are a serious misdemeanour, I turned the car around and returned to the scene of the 'accident', already suspecting that the performance was a ploy of some sort to get me out of my car. My husband taught me not to have the car windows wide open, so I lowered the window ever so slightly to enquire what was wrong but naturally, stayed in the car. The 'non-injured' guy immediately took over the role of 'negotiator' and explained vociferously that I had knocked his mate down with my car, that the latter had been seriously injured and in extreme pain and would require immediate medical attention. He added that if I was prepared to give him money, he would see to his friend's hospitalisation and that we then could forget the entire matter. His English was not up to scratch, which immediately gave me the impression that they were foreigners trying to earn a living by whatever which way.

Perplexed, but still suspecting a scam, and not knowing what to do, I reached for my cell phone in my bag which always rests against the seat behind my legs. The 'negotiator' must have thought that I was now going to give him money and so did the writhing friend because he immediately perked up, jumped to his feet and also stood closer. *Continued on the last column of page 9.*

Have you got what this one takes?

(Henri Heyns)

Long distance touring by bike, either on or off-road is very popular these days and the reason is not difficult to see. The club's own Extreme Rider programme recognises members who travel to the proverbial four corners of South Africa

Not so long ago I was sitting over a cuppa at Bruce's Place when I spotted a youngish-looking guy of some thirty years standing around as if waiting for something or someone. Not being the bashful kind I introduced myself, engaged in conversation and invited him to join me at the coffee bar. When he spoke, the Yankee drawl was a dead giveaway and I immediately and correctly assumed that he was touring through the country by bike and was obviously waiting for some or other service to be done by Bruce's wizards in the workshop.

The guy introduced himself as Peter Corboy from Berkeley, California. He rides a GS and had then spent twenty months on the road, touring the world solo.

Adventures: The most amazing tale on his adventures was the story of how he broke the GS's drive shaft in the desert somewhere in Patagonia, a bleak windy plateau in the southernmost part of Argentina. There he was, alone with his heavy bike in the middle of nowhere in a serious predicament if ever there was one. After spending half a day or so in the make-shift shade of a tarpaulin pulled over his bike, a speck of dust appeared on the horizon heading towards him. By and by he recognised it as a truck, seemingly half empty which raised his hopes of cadging a lift for himself and his bike in whatever direction the kindly Samaritan was going. The truck pulled up opposite Peter in reaction to his wild gesticulation and in broken English the driver asked what the matter was. Peter, prepared to do almost anything for assistance, quickly explained the problem whereupon the driver intimated that he was eager to help, but how were they going to load the heavy bike onto the truck. Problem? Not a bit. They built a sand dune with whatever tools they had, hauled the bike up onto the top, reversed the truck into the dune from the other end until the bike and loading ramp were level, and presto fait accompli! Peter is still grateful to the kindly truck driver who took him 75 miles (120 kms) to the nearest service station where he could be helped.

Peter started off on this adventurous journey by leaving California on his 1992 R100 GS, crossing into Mexico, then touring through Central America and South America to its southernmost point. Thereafter he loaded his GS onto a cargo ship and crossed over to Japan. After touring through the four main islands, Peter took a car ferry to Vladivostok in Russia. Thereafter he went farther north over the top of China and through Siberia, thereafter

through Mongolia back to Russia. Still Peter's wanderlust was not satisfied as he also did a turn in Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Kurdistan.

Next he focused his attention on Iran, then on to Turkey where he stayed over in its capital Istanbul for awhile. To further sate his enormous appetite for bike travel, our intrepid rider next came down the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea to take a look at Syria, Jordan, Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana and ultimately South Africa!

Peter said that he was on his way to Cape Town, stay there for awhile and then take a boat to Canada and tour his neighbour land in the last leg of his travels around the globe, a total of some 70 000 kms.

Asked if he preferred to travel alone, he answered in the negative and added that he would prefer to undertake such trips with a friend, if he could find one with drive, initiative, a deep desire to explore the globe and to take the joys and woes that world travel on a motorcycle brings, in his/her stride.

Had he never crashed his bike? Yes, he answered, in Siberia somewhere where he dropped his bike in a sand pit, and sustained a fractured rib. Obviously alone and in intense pain, Peter could not pick the bike up. Peter therefore had no option but to pitch his tent where he fell, take the medication that he brings with him and make himself as comfortable as possible. In all the two days in the pit he never saw a soul! How then could he lift the bike up? He used the branch of a tree to get the bike upright, straightened the handle bars and do some minor repair work to be able to ride, all alone and in great pain. So much for the he man that he is!

What plans does he have for the future? More travel by motorcycle to the farthest reaches of the globe to see how people live there.

Peter Berkeley never told me what kind of business he's in. He just scribbled a web page address on my notebook and invited me to come online if I wanted to. I did and was astounded at the number of activities he appears to be involved in (some ostensibly more interesting than others!). If the reader is curious to follow up, his web page address is www.petefromberkeley.com Perhaps you will be as impressed as I was!

Don't forget that the BMW Motorcycle Club Pretoria, will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Friday 31 March 2006 at 19:00 on the premises of Bavarian Motorcycles, Vermeulen Street, Pretoria. All are welcome to attend.

Afrikaanse bydraes gevra

’n Nuusbrief, al is dit van klein omvang soos hierdie een, kan nie vanself ontstaan nie. Voordat enigiets in gedrukte vorm kan verskyn moet ’n redakteur hard werk daaraan, baie kundigheid aan die dag lê en sorg dra dat hy nie enigiets doen of sê wat hom kritiek of sensuur, in watter vorm ookal, op die hals kan haal nie. Maar ’n redakteur kan nie alles self behartig nie. Hy het publiseerbare materiaal nodig waarvan daar nooit genoeg is nie. S’n P vra dus asseblief bydraes van lesers om die publikasie interessant, insiggewend en opwindend te maak.

Bydraers hoef nie oor ’n besondere skryfstyl of taalvaardigheid te beskik nie. Die redaksie doen die nodige taalversorging.

Die volgende materiaal is waarna gesoek word:

- Interessante toere
- Tegniese inligting
- Padveiligheidswenke
- Hoe ’n probleem opgelos is
- Foto-artikels
- Uitstappies
- Restourasiewerk op motorfietse
- Grappige situasies
- Wenke vir herstelwerk
- Kompetisies
- Besparingsritte
- Nuuswaardige gebeure ooroor
- Motorfietsryers se belangstellings, ens.

Onthou ook asseblief dat die meerderheid klublede Afrikaanssprekendes is. U word dus vriendelik versoek om gerus u bydraes sodanig lewer. Gedagtig aan die feit dat dat S’n P ook op die Internet gepubliseer word is daar moontlik dié van u wat twyfel oor die strekwydte van u moontlike bydrae wêreldwyd. Weliswaar is Afrikaans nou wel nie ’n groot wêreldtaal nie, maar die duisende Suid-Afrikaners wat hedendaags dwarsoor die planeet woon, sal dit moontlik waardeer om iets oor ons stokperdjie ook in Afrikaans te kan lees.

Begin dus asseblief dadelik ’n bydrae maak, en as daar iemand is wat bietjie hand kan bysit met tikwerk, redigering, skakelwerk en so meer, laat asseblief van julle hoor. Onthou dat ons vir die liefde van die saak werk. Dit is egter ’n opoffering wat beter mense van ons maak.

Nine plus One Golden Rules for Group

Riding
(Henri Heyns)

Despite all our best efforts at training motorcyclists how to behave when on the road, one often finds riders who seem to be totally ignorant of how to behave properly on public roads. The speeding, overtaking, cutting in and other forms of unacceptable road behaviour sometimes leaves one astounded.

The other day whilst having light refreshment at a coffee bar, a youngish guy on a big Honda pulled up quite close to where I was sitting. We got talking when he entered the cafeteria and as usual, the topic was bikes and biking. He told me he was essentially a loner and that he became horribly lost recently whilst on a group ride to somewhere. As he continued with his story, I became aware that his knowledge of riding with other people was close to zero. He asked me to explain a few things and I set out the nine plus one golden rules for group riding on a paper napkin.

Of course, everybody reading this page will be an expert on motorcycling and will probably know the rules off by heart, but in case some younger person has not got around to pondering that thought, let me set them out here:

1. Ride in a staggered formation and not directly behind one another
2. Stick to the predetermined order within the group
3. Maintain safe distances between group members
4. Each rider shares a stop/go/direction-indicating responsibility for whomsoever is following behind.
5. Each rider decides for himself when it is safe to overtake other vehicles.
6. Don’t overtake within the group unless absolutely necessary.
7. Make room for other traffic to pull in after overtaking you.
8. In an emergency, try to stop where other traffic is not obstructed.
9. Keep within legal speed limits within town boundaries.

The ‘plus one’ rule that I would like to suggest follows because group riders are prone to becoming lost in heavily built up areas due to the high volume of other traffic, robots, unexpected occurrences and so on. It therefore follows:

10. In a built up area when losing sight of the rider behind you, stop and wait awhile. If he doesn’t reappear, return to the spot where you last saw one another (usually at the entrance to the town). This rule might mean that in a worst case scenario everyone eventually circulates back to the same spot. Time consuming to be sure, but it will keep the group together. To obviate this bother, rather ride in small groups of not more than five or so.

Getting to grips with the new R1200 RT

(Wernher Stoltz)

If there is something that I'm really pleased about it is the decision to go for a new RT. I didn't really have to get rid of my R1150 RT, which served me well for the time I had it, but the new model captured my fancy from the start and after serious consideration, I decided to go for broke. Of course, the voice of wisdom in me suggested that I wait for the new year before registering, but I wanted to run-in the bike during a tour to the Eastern Cape in December. The result was that the kindly gentlemen at Bavarian Motorcycles had no difficulty in getting me to sign the dotted line before the year was out.

I met Henri Heyns at Bavarian Motorcycles a short while ago and we immediately started chatting away like old friends, or perhaps I should say that I chatted away leaving Henri with only the odd opportunity to get a word in. The reason must be my passion for touring and my new R 1200 RT. Henri immediately recognised an opportunity for getting me to put a few thoughts on paper, hence this effort which I gladly agreed to.

I am pushing a half century in the age stakes and have been riding motorcycles since the age of 15, although I only acquired my first licence at the age of nineteen. Apart from my first Suzuki AS 50, nothing quite stirred my soul and imagination as much as this new RT. I've owned a host of other makes before being bitten by Beemers and before the present bike, have had a R100 RT and a R1150 RT. Just for the record, my three children are all grown up and my dear wife, with an innate fear of motorcycles, doesn't ride at all.

On the 20th of December I had my R 1150 RT serviced at a competitor dealer for a trip down to the Eastern Cape. They lent me an R 1200 RT for two days. The bike impressed me so much that I just wanted to keep it. When I collected my R 1150 RT, I wanted to do a trade-in deal immediately but unfortunately there was no stock until the new year. Thereupon I decided to go ahead with the trip on the 1150 and trade it in on a 1200 as soon as they had one available. At the same time I still had to put new tyres on my 1150 and went to Bavarian Motorcycles to have them fitted. Here it so happened that there was a PD'ed R 1200 RT standing on the floor almost begging me to lay a hand on it. The temptation was just too great and an hour later I drove away on my new steed. After all, why wait to purchase in the new year if I could still do the trip this year and get the opportunity to really experience the bike on an extended trip. The surprise on my wife's face was worth it when the "new tyres" transformed the bike so completely.

I have to say that the 1150 RT has always been a wonderful tourer and I will always have fond memories of my many kilometers of touring in all seasons, ranging from freezing cold, through sweltering heat and between two and three hundred kms in pouring rain at a time. It is necessary to draw some comparisons between the 1150 and the 1200 in order to put some things into perspective. My first impression upon getting onto the 1200 RT was the feeling of lightness and the solid handling, then the smoothness of the engine and the extra power and torque. I also realised that the 'hunting' (a fuel injection characteristic) at even speeds was gone and together with it the lethargic acceleration in sixth gear. The new RT had a narrower and harder seat and that worried me a little as I

always felt the 1150 to be an excellent long distance tourer with a fantastic range on its fuel tank.

However, all my concerns were dispelled when I went on tour, as the range is much better except for the first tank that somehow did not last me that long, probably due to the stiff engine.

For those of you who have toured by bike from Gauteng to the Eastern Cape, I think we all agree that the N1 via Bloemfontein can be a fairly boring trip and most of us therefore opt for the scenic route through the Eastern Free State. This is also the trip that I favoured on the 1150 RT. However, due to time constraints on my way down I opted for the Bloemfontein route. The 1200 RT with its ESA (Electronic Suspension Adjustment) and cruise control made this a real pleasure and I could ride for long distances at a time with my hands almost free, because another improvement on the 1200 RT gets rid of the older model's tendency to pull right. On the new RT you can actually ride hands free. This leaves a lot of time to play with the computer and the GPS and listen to music over the IPOD.

On the way down I pulled up at the ENGEN 1-Stop in Bloemfontein, refuelled, drank some water, did my ablutions and then went straight on to Colesberg where I repeated the exercise and had breakfast. From there I rode to Cradock and refuelled whilst I remained seated on the bike and proceeded straight to Cape St. Francis. This I couldn't even dream of doing on the R1150 as it was only possible to do around 450 kms without saddle sore but thereafter I had to stop with ever increasing frequency or do acrobatics on the seat to keep the backside from going totally numb.

The boredom of the straight roads are counteracted with the accessories (trip computer, ESA, windscreen etc.) and then you hit the wonderful mountain passes, switch from comfort mode to sport mode (whilst riding), lower the screen and give it stick. The boulevard cruiser turns into a superbike! The 1200 RT handles better with a load than the 1150 RT without. Turn-in is wonderful and you feel your confidence surge with every corner. For the first time the new brake set-up where the rear brake can be operated separately starts making sense.

The RT has been improved from tourer to super-tourer. Is it perfect? No, not at all. I think the old RT had slightly better rain protection despite the larger screen although that might be a subjective view point. The old RT was easier to wash than the new one because the fairing was smoother and it did not have those funny little deflectors underneath the screen that gets dirty inside and can't be removed for cleaning. Apart from that it is better in every aspect by far.

From Cape St. Francis I went to Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn via Robertson's Pass, George via Outeniqua Pass, back to Cape St. Francis via the Groot River and Bloukrans Passes and then on to Pretoria (again via Bloemfontein because the weather forecast showed better conditions). From Cradock to Colesberg I drove in torrential rain, lost all traction at Noupoot due to a lack of grip as I entered a turn, was saved by the ABS which kept the grip on the road although I decided to go across the road rather than attempt to take the turn and lose control of the bike. It was a narrow escape but the incident will go into the bag of memories that make each long-distance trip a memorable occasion.

Official Club Calendar 2006

Date	Route /Destination	Dist	ROAD	GS
24-Feb	Impala Rally Hartebeespoort Dam		Informal	
05-Mar	Bayshore Marina Vaal Dam	350	Dave Swart	Pauli Massyn
17-19	Buffalo Rally	2500	Etienne vd Stockt	
11-21 Golden	Extreme Points ride including Buffalo Rally	8000	Brian Cannoo	Informal ride in small groups
31 Mar	AGM			
09-Apr	Cosmos	350	Johan Strauss	Etienne vd Stockt
27-Apr	ABBG - Sabie area???	1300	Renier Jordaan	Adriaan Scheepers
27-Apr	Pontdrift		Dave Swart (On route to ABBG)	
06-May	Botswana - Chobe/Vic Falls	1800	Etienne vd Stockt	
07-May	Charles Hauman Memorial Ride - Cullinan	150	Richard Hussey	Pieter de Koker
27-May	Paradise Rally	700	Informal	
04-Jun	Warmbad	500	Dorothy Prinsloo	Pieter de Koker
10/6-18/6	Mocambique/Kozi		Pauli Massyn	
16-Jun	Kozi Bay	1600	Dave Swart	Stefan van Rensburg
09-Jul	Discover Lodge - Krugersdorp	200	Johan Strauss	
??	Malawi		Izak Geldenhuys	
06-Aug	Ladies Run		Lorette v Rensburg	
Aug	Alex.Bay Namaqualand Flowers	3000	Volunteers??	
02-Sep	Year end Function	tba	tba	
23-Sep	Round Lesotho	2200	tba	
	GS Challenge	tba	tba	
28-Oct	Rhino Rally - Harrismith	tba	Renier Jordaan	
05-Nov	Katze Dam	1100	tba	
29-Nov	Lesotho /Roof of Africa	tba		

All runs and events are subject to confirmation at the prior club social meeting. This is a work-in-progress schedule 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.

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

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