

# SPOKE & PISTON

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*From*

*the*

*Editor's*

*Desk*



## The Extreme Rider Gold Award

(This article, written by Deon Gericke, has been printed before but a number of enquiries lately justifies a repeat.)

The points to visit are: East – Kosi Bay; North – Pontdrift; West – Alexander Bay; South – Cape Agulhas.

The minimum distance to complete the 'Gold' run is in the region of 8 000 kms. To qualify for 'Gold' the trip must be done within three weeks. Riders may of course do it in less time if they so choose. However, a minimum time of two weeks should be allowed for, otherwise it becomes a race against time, purposeless and an expensive and tiring exercise.

Depending on the bike ridden, riding style, choice of accommodations, food preferences, wear and tear, etc., this adventure with two-up could cost in the vicinity of R14 000.

The camping option can be considered, but to pitch a tent and camp every night at a different spot for almost three weeks, will require real dedication (especially for the pillion rider!)

Out-of-season touring could reduce the cost considerably. December/January is obviously not the best time for this adventure.

The following guidelines could possibly be helpful in planning the trip:

1. March or thereabouts is possibly the best time for undertaking the trip. It is before the Cape rainy season starts and the weather is usually pleasant in the other provinces.
2. Doing the run clock-wise or the other way around, is immaterial.
3. Never book accommodation in advance. Decide where to stay over from day to day.
4. Avoid taking shortcuts inland to save time and distance travelled.
5. When riding as a group, keep it as small as possible.
6. Only use a bike in excellent condition with new tyres fitted.
7. Limit distance travelled to  $\pm$  600 kms per day. Beware of fatigue.
8. This is a discovery trip. Do not rush things. Try to see as much possible and enjoy.
9. Roads generally are reasonable but do not assume this always to be so.
10. Avoid travelling in the late afternoon or at night.
11. Try to include Swaziland in your trip – good roads, splendid scenery, friendly people.
12. Proof of having visited each point must be submitted. This could be in the form of petrol slips, hotel receipts, an affidavit from a police station, suitable photograph, etc.

Happy riding guys and dolls and do take care!

## End-of-year run into the Mpumalanga.

(Henri Heyns)

The annual year-end function of our club took place during the weekend of 1-3 September in glorious weather at the Aventura Blyde Canyon resort way up east in Mpumalanga.

In what has been described as one of the most beautiful parts of the country, the Blyde River Canyon offers breath-taking views to all prepared to move a little beyond the comfortable lodgings where we were booked in. Situated on the escarpment 160 km north of Nelspruit and 50 km north of Graskop, this canyon, third largest in the world, is a sight not to be missed.

Being a group event, participants organised their rides according to the dictates of preference and circumstance. Some left on Friday already whilst others could only get away Saturday morning. As usual the GS die-hards preferred taking to gravel roads which presumably added an extra dimension to their enjoyment schedule.

Apart from excellent hiking trails and horse rides, the venue offered an excellent opportunity for members to bring the entire family along. Other facilities available were a supermarket, liquor store, children's playground, swimming pool, a service station, tennis, mini golf and trampolines.

The some 120 members attending were highly delighted at the spread put before them at the banquet. This buffet dinner consisted of four starters, eight salads, a main hot dish, four desserts and finally tea/coffee with which to wash down this fabulous spread.

My group, arriving Friday afternoon and leaving Monday morning, wasted no time in savouring the amenities at the venue, and on Saturday undertook an expedition into the countryside, where we enjoyed the glorious views from God's Window, the Berlin Falls, ate a pancake in Graskop, and generally took just about every little (tar) road leading to a viewpoint without once being disappointed with what we saw.

Sunday saw a group leaving for a brunch at a delightful stopover in the vicinity of Sabie where we had an exquisite meal. Something for me to remember the place by, apart from the pleasant

surroundings and the excellent service provided by the lady owner herself, are the quaint hand-burned boards indicating Ladies and Gents with the most original wording AMATITI and AMATOTTI!

The round trip involved my group having had to travel some 1200 kms. Some of the back roads, although tarred, are full of potholes in places but if one is not in a hurry and travelling leisurely, these can easily be avoided on a motorcycle. I for one, thoroughly enjoyed the trip and the stay-over and look forward to something similar in the near future. The club members responsible for the arrangements, notably Dorothy Prinsloo, acquitted themselves excellently of their tasks. On behalf of all participants in this tour, we extend a hearty thank you for a job well done. Keep up the good work!

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## What are your chances of a bike prang?

(Henri Heyns)

A previous Club chairman has a saying that there are two types of biking enthusiasts: Those who've already had a prang and those who've got one coming up. Such a statement usually produces a flood of protests from the riding fraternity because, some of them ask with indignation, if a club chairman should do everything he can to get people to join up and enjoy themselves by riding, what encouragement does one get from him on a stance like that?

Some would argue that they agree with the chairman but that it all depends on one's definition of an accident. Naturally there are fatal, serious and light varieties with or without damage, but we know from various studies undertaken that the degree of seriousness of any accident is just a matter of luck. An accident is defined in its simplest form as a unplanned and uncontrolled event caused by unsafe acts and/or unsafe conditions that can or does result in bodily harm to persons and/or loss in the form of damage to machinery and equipment or other forms of loss.

Having said that, it is generally accepted that motorcycling is a fairly high-risk activity because of hazards inherent in its nature like exposure, two wheels, high speeds, the unpredictability of some other road users, lack of real protection in the event of a mishap, and so on.

There are a number of categories associated with motorcycling that one can identify as contributory

factors in predicting whether one is going to experience a mishap or not, always bearing in mind that the result is again dependent on further factors in the equation .

Factors to consider are, *inter alia*:

- Speed travelled
- Traffic conditions
- Time of day/night
- Alertness of rider
- Attitude of rider
- Condition of motorcycle
- Road conditions
- Weather conditions
- Geographical surroundings
- Extraneous factors

It would perhaps be worthwhile taking a brief look at the ten factors mentioned :

1. Speed travelled. In the RIP article in this newsletter this aspect is covered in reasonable detail. Please refer to it to better understand what follows here.

2. Traffic conditions. I pity anyone who works in Johannesburg and has to travel there and back every day in rush-hour traffic, be it by car or motorcycle. Furthermore, unless you travel in the dead of night, there almost is no reduction in traffic volume at any normal time. Needless to say, the more one has to be on such roads, the more the chance of experiencing a road mishap, and the more impatient one becomes, the more the chance of making the wrong move at some time or other, perhaps resulting in a prang.

3. Time of day/night. Obviously, night riding is more dangerous than daytime because of visibility impairment despite the fact that travelling speed is likely to be lower than that for daytime riding.

4. Alertness of rider. This is probably the most important consideration. It is physically not possible to be 100% alert all the time, despite one's best efforts. The human being is just not made that way. Factors like fatigue, alcohol, medication, problems, illness, nervousness and such can cause a lapse in concentration, no matter how brief, that could have serious consequences.

5. Attitude of rider. This is also an enormous problem on the roads as every reader of this article probably

experiences every day. Many motorcyclists just don't care how they ride and how they inconvenience other road users, as long as they can reach their destination as soon as possible. But comes a day when the biker cuts in too quickly in front of another road user, gets side swiped and lands up on the pavement somewhere.

6. Condition of motorcycle. This is possibly not a big problem as bikes not in good nick are not likely to withstand the rigours of everyday road use. Yet, one sometimes comes across a bike with worn tyres, defective brakes or shock absorbers, faulty flickers or lighting, etc., making its use in traffic risky to say the least.

7. Road conditions. Road deterioration has become a serious problem and the joke doing the rounds that perhaps one of these days one will be forced to ride a GS may not be so funny as is intended! Needless to say, the authorities' inability to keep the roads ship-shape is progressively becoming a factor in road accidents.

8. Weather conditions. This is one of the laws of nature that bikers, like everyone else, have to face. However, the prudent rider will evaluate weather conditions, preferring not to ride in an adverse situation. Should he have no option, however, he would ride appropriately dressed and with the necessary restraint dictated by the particular condition prevalent.

9. Geographical surroundings. Here we would be looking at adverse circumstances such as blind rises, decreasing radii in bends, steep down-hills, and so on. In most cases authorities place road signs warning of these conditions, but as is so often the case, road users either ignore the warning or react only partially thereto.

10. Extraneous factors. Under this heading one can identify conditions such as high winds, earth quakes, lightning, sudden floods, animals crossing roads, etc. Although no road user is safeguarded against such hazards, the motorcyclist, is normally, because of his exposed situation, the user hardest hit under such circumstances.

## Man with his hand on the purse strings.

(Henri Heyns)

The double double-barrelled name Roger-John Faulkner-Smith at first glance conjures up in one's mind a person, probably an Englishman, high up in the chain of command somewhere, stooped in a stiff upper-lip tradition, and a serious, almost dour, highly principled and capable disciplinarian for whom life holds few pleasures and is no laughing matter. This description does not fit the true South African Bavarian Motorcycles' Financial Director whom I interviewed the other day. Roger Smith, as he prefers to be called, has all the positive attributes outlined above, together with a friendly demeanour, bearing testimony to an understanding and sensitive heart that beats warmly in this soft-spoken gentleman's body.

Born in Pretoria, where he grew up, Roger matriculated at the Glen High School in 1989, thereafter joining a firm in Hatfield for training as an accountant. After completing his articles he served the company Automotive Leather in 1994 first as Financial Manager and finally as Financial Director, until joining the 'new' Bavarian Motorcycles undertaking in the latter capacity. He is presently in his final year for an MBA degree at the University of South Africa and has also completed their Management Development Programme. By his side are his charming wife Sharon and their only child, a daughter, Kara.

Being no slouch when it comes to motorcycling, Roger participated in the recently completed Great African GS Challenge event. Unfortunately, on the second day Red Route, four kilometres from the end, he did something in a turn that his HP2 Beemer didn't like and was thrown off, breaking numerous small bones in his right hand, a painful reminder that accidents do happen to even the best of us. The good news is that he's well on his way to recovery and should be again twisting the throttle control in a short while.

Despite his being unable to complete the event, Roger is full of praise for the organisers. It was well organised, he said, with excellent refreshments and facilities at the base camp, showing that BMW went to a lot of trouble in getting things ship-shape. However, he thought the time of the year for the event could have been better chosen as it was bitterly cold in the evenings and early mornings. It did not

seem to worry the other 600+ competitors though, as they always seemed to be in high spirits. Asked if he would participate again next year, he smiled and with a twinkle in his eye exclaimed: "Of course. What a question!"

Upon enquiring how he viewed the future of motorcycles, particularly that of BMW, Roger replied that the industry is apparently going into an exciting phase where huge growth seems to be on the cards. This would naturally also apply to BMW, especially with the new 850 & 650 ranges being introduced sometime next year. There definitely seems to be a growing interest in biking as a means of commuting, judging by the enquiries received from people having to travel regularly between Pretoria and Johannesburg. Hopefully even non-riders would begin to look at this mode of transport as an option worth investigating.

Responding to the question as to how he viewed the presence of the club on Bavarian's premises, Roger declared himself absolutely delighted at having it there. The club with its loyal BMW base constitutes demand, which in turn leads to turnover in terms of bikes, bike spares, accessories and service requirements. Consequently, Bavarian's management is happy to provide a proverbial home to the club and will support it wherever possible. He added that the social gatherings were well attended by enthusiastic bike and biking supporters and that the buzz created is a good sign for the future.

What objectives does Bavarian Motorcycles have for the future? To offer the best quality service to customers, to promote safe motorcycling in every way possible, to make friends of customers and customers of friends and to promote and encourage a BMW lifestyle of motorcycling.



# Motorfietsry. Dis Lekkerrrr!

(Henk Gouws)

**E**k ry al baie lank motorfiets, eintlik vir amper so lank as wat ek kan onthou. Dit is amper `n leeftyd van om op twee wiele te wees en in hierdie tyd het ek feitlik elke vervaardiger se produkte beproef. Ek noem dit nie om beteweterig te probeer wees nie, maar eerder om aan die leser oor te dra dat ek so `n ietsie weet van wat `n motorfiets is en wat motorfietsry eintlik behels. Van die kleinste tweeslagmasjientjies tot die grootste viersilindermonsters het al onder my hande deurgeloop. Elkeen het natuurlik sy eie voortreflikhede en nukke, maar met die intieme kennis van elk, deur `n tydperk opgebou, word maklik bepaal watter die grootste mate van rygenot verskaf.

Motorfietsryers doen wat hulle doen vir verskillende redes. Party wil net `n vervoermiddel hê waarmee hy so gemaklik moontlik van punt A na punt B toe kan ry en dan nie moeite het om te parkeer nie. Ander ry weer om aan die wereld te wys dat hy `n duur masjien kan bekostig. Die jaagduiwel, op sy beurt, besit weer die vinnigste fiets in die woonbuurt om sy ding te bewys, en so aan. Ek ry dan ook motorfiets omdat ek wil en omdat dit vir my lekker is, met een belangrike voorbehoud egter: Ek ry nie om gefrustreer te word deur `n so-so behandeling van die kant van die handelaar nadat my tjek deur die bank is nie. Nog minder wil ek die slagoffer word van onbekwaamheid aan die kant van tegniese personeel, vrot dienslewering en die onbeskikbaarheid van onderdele. En daar is baie handelaars wat so is, soos die voorbeeld wat volg duidelik sal toelig.

Omdat ek versot is op twee wiele, het ek `n tydjie gelede die stoute skoene aangetrek en vir my `n bekende Italiaanse fabrikaat motorfiets aangeskaf. Hy was nie goedkoop nie, maar ek het maar oë toegeknyp en my bankbestuurder gaan oorreed om hom oor my te ontferm. Ai, maar die fiets was `n lus vir die oog, met genoeg perde onder die saal om mens vinnig en gerieflik, dog ook veilig, by sy eindbestemming aan te bring. Ek was op die punt om dolverlief op hom te raak toe daar, na net `n duisend kilometer of wat, `n onderdeel foutief geraak het. Daar dit nie `n belangrike onderdeel is nie, was ek dus nie oormatig bekommerd nie. Nouja, alles ervaar gewoonlik maar `n bietjie tandekryprobleme het ek geredeneer en my ter gelegener tyd tot die plaaslike handelaar van wie daar maar slegs enkeles in die land bestaan, gewend. Tot my groot teleurstelling het hy nie die onderdeel in

voorraad gehad nie. Daar was ook niks beskikbaar in die hele land nie. My bloed het egter gekook toe ek verneem dat die onderdeel direk van Italië ingevoer sal moet word en dat aflewering daarvan `n maand of wat sou duur. Ek het daarop gevra of hulle dan nie intussen vir my die onderdeel van `n ander nuwe fiets sou leen en myne dan, wanneer dit op bestelling arriveer, daarop sou terugplaas nie. Nee was die antwoord. Hulle sou nie eers dink aan so `n reëling nie. Dit was toe dat ek daar en dan besluit het om van daardie fiets ontslae te raak, wat ek dan ook gedoen het.

Nou ry ek `n BMW R1200 GS motorfiets en wat `n pragtige, genotvolle en betroubare werkesel is dit nie! As ek moet raai is 50% van die besitgenot die ryery met hom terwyl die res die naverkopediens is wat BMW handelaars lewer. As gevolg van die feit dat BMW beide motorfietsse en motors in SA versprei, is daar nie net `n behoorlike handelaarsnetwerk nie maar ook heelydse handelsverkeer tussen BMW SA en die moedermaatskappy in Duitsland. Dit beteken dat onderdele op `n daaglikse basis aangevra en beskikbaar gestel word. Geen ander motorfietsinvoerder is naastenby by magte om hierdie soort diens te lewer nie. In sekere gevalle is daar by ander fabrikate wagperiodes van 6 to 9 maande vir onderdele. In teenstelling hiermee, kan ek as voorbeeld net noem dat BAVARIAN MOTORCYCLES `n onderdeel, wat nie beskikbaar was in SA nie, vir my bestel het en binne 4 dae, vanaf die datum van bestelling, gelewer en aangesit het.

So, na my mening is daar is beslis mooier, vinniger, ligter, goedkoper en duurder motorfietsse as enige BMW in enige klas maar daar is verseker nie `n motorfiets as pakket wat soos BMW vir jou `n ryding met behoorlike diensondersteuning gee nie. Dit is ook die eenvoudige rede waarom BMW motorfietsse se herverkoopwaarde soveel beter is as dié van ander motorfietsse. Bravo mense, hou so aan!

*Redakteursnota.*

*Dit is nie die beleid van hierdie redaksie om spesifiek te verwys na besondere handelsinstellings in ons nuusbrieff nie. Die outeur van die bostaande berig is egter so vol van akkolades vir uitmuntende diens ontvang, dat ons hierdie verslaggie met groot plesier plaas. As daar enigeen is wat wil getuig van uitstaande diens ontvang van `n BMW handelaar, vernaamlik dié van motorfietsse, wil ons graag daarvan hoor. Komaan mense, neem die pen in die hand!*

## Die 50x50 Pryswenner

(Henri Heyns)

**D**it maak nou nie saak hoe versigtig die penningmeester met 'n klub se geldsake werk nie, daar is altyd meer uitgawes as inkomstes. Dit is eintlik vanselfsprekend want hoe ruimer die klubbeursie, hoe meer kan daar in belang van die ledebehoefte vermag word. Neem maar hierdie klub as voorbeeld. Daar word gereeld ritte en toere vir die lede gereël, party naby en ander die wye wereld in. Die moontlikheid dat 'n ryer en/of passasier in die moeilikheid kan beland as gevolg van 'n ongeluk of skielike siekte is nooit uitgesluit nie. Ook kan 'n motorfiets iets oorkom of selfs net gaan staan. Dit is waarom 'n volgvoertuig met treiler altyd in die nabyheid is om hulp te verleen in geval van nood. Hierdie gebeurlikheidsplan kos geld want die bestuurder se akkommodasiekoste word gedek, die brandstof vir die voertuig moet betaal word, 'n treiler moet of gehuur of gekoop word, en so voorts.

Nou goed, die deelnemer betaal 'n heffing om die voordeel van die volgvoertuig te kan benut in tyd van nood, maar die klub moet vir die grootste deel van die onkoste instaan en so 'n diens is nie goedkoop nie! Die klub moet dus metodes vind om sy fondse aan te vul en daarom die 50x50 gedagte. Dit is eenvoudig maar 'n lootjietrekkery. Vyftig kaartjies word verkoop aan vyftig lede. Die wenner kry 'n koopbewys van R1 000, geskenk deur ons weldoener Bavarian Motorcycles, op voorwaarde dat die wenner die prysgeld vir diens, onderdele, of klerasie, by hulle aankoop.

Die R2 500 wat die klub op hierdie wyse bymekaar maak help dus om allerhande gaatjies toe te stop. Klublede en besoekers word vriendelik versoek om hierdie poging te ondersteun, en wie weet, miskien kom daardie R1000 nog na jou kant toe!



*Die eerste trekking is gewen deur Willie Coetzer en op die foto oorhandig Klubvoorsitter Renier Jordaan die tjek terwyl komiteelid Richard Hussey toekyk.*



# Guffaw!

## Sipho's Dilemma

(Henri Heyns)

He was just another scholar in Grade Four and showed no signs of ever coming to grips with the intricacies of the English language. Yet, his class teacher was tempted to recommend that he be advanced to the next grade, in the hope that although late in developing his general knowledge and communication skills, there still may be a chance for him in the presence of playmates less intellectually challenged than he.

The school principal agreed to the move with the proviso that Sipho be posed three questions, the correct answers to which being a prerequisite for such a move up the educational standards ladder.

Question 1. How many sides are there to a box?  
Answer: Two, namely the inside and the outside.  
Teacher's response: Not quite right but also not altogether wrong.

Question 2. How many days are there in a week?  
Answer: Three, being yesterday, today and tomorrow.  
Teacher's response: Again not quite right but also not completely wrong.

Question 3. How many seconds are there in a year?  
Answer: Twelve. The 2nd of January, 2nd of February, 2nd of March, and so on.

Teacher's response: The learner shows an astounding ability to think laterally. It is recommended that he be advanced to Grade Five.

## Factors that work for you in a potential accident situation.

(Acknowledgement to the Jan. 2006 newsletter of the Motorcycle Dealers' Association)

- **High visibility from the front is critical**
- **Approved helmets effectively prevent disabling and fatal head injuries**
- **Full face helmets provide better protection than those offering less coverage**
- **Helmeted riders are less likely to sustain neck injuries**
- **An expensive helmet offers no better protection than a cheaper DOT approved one**
- **Attending a riding school does improve your chances of avoiding an accident**
- **Regular practice in swerving techniques is important as bikers sometimes steer the wrong way in an accident situation**
- **Regular practice in hard-braking techniques (front and back brake together) should be done**
- **Suitable protective gear does make a big difference**
- **Bikers with off-road riding experience are less likely to become involved in an accident**
- **Wearing bright, solid coloured riding gear avoids accidents.**

## Shortage of motor technicians set to increase servicing costs.

Motorists and inevitably motorcyclists as well, will probably in the near future be less worried about the rising fuel costs than about the cost of servicing their vehicles. There is already an urgent shortage of trained technicians to service modern day vehicles. Many of those available are approaching retirement and are not being replaced quickly enough.

In consequence it is even possible that one would be charged up to R1000 per hour for labour to have your vehicle serviced, says Mr. Colin Musset, Divisional Head of the Automobile Association (AA), who sketched this somewhat dismal picture at a conference on a strategy for the motor industry. "More than 35% of the South African workshop labour force are ten years or less from retirement and the average age of a technician is 37,8 years," said Musset.

The average technician now servicing sophisticated models was in all probability trained in the 1980's when computer literacy and electronic diagnostics were not imperative knowledge.

Workshop managers can also not afford to send technicians for training because of the high cost of lost working hours.

The days when a motor mechanic could repair almost anything with a shifting spanner, are long gone, is the opinion of Musset. "Nowadays technicians are professional people with a three year degree."

According to an AA survey the motor industry loses some 3037 technicians annually from the available pool of 20250, whilst only 2000 are added due to apprenticeships.

Some analysts see this discrepancy as a crisis in the making, whereas others are of the opinion that new sophisticated vehicle models are more reliable, making frequent servicing less necessary. Says Jeff Osborne, executive head of the Employers' Organisation for the Retail Motor Industry: "With some of these vehicles 100 000 kms isn't a significant distance anymore as they are so reliable".

With the help of Merseta, the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related services Sectoral Education and Training Authority, motor dealers have already secured a number of apprenticeships. The AA itself is opening its own training academy in August this year which could train between 150 and 200 technicians per year. The challenge lies in changing school leavers' perception of the motor industry.

But Colin Musset is adamant in saying that the crisis in the South African Motor Industry is being exacerbated by countries like Australia and New Zealand enticing away our trained technicians. This he says, is something that must be halted.

Similarly, Brand Pretorius, head of the McCarthy Group, is also of the opinion that the problem is worsening. "Three years ago we serviced 400 000 vehicles per year at our workshops. Last year it was 800 000. Where are we going to get the trained personnel to handle this work load?"

## What Chance?

I received the following letter through the Internet recently.

Dear Prize Winner,

We are please to announce you as one of the 3 lucky winners in the THE QUEEN'S SWEEPSTAKES INT'L LOTTERY DRAW held on 22nd of September 2006. All 3 winning email addresses were randomly selected from over 100,000 companies and 1,000,000 individual email addresses. Your email address emerged alongside 2 others as a 3rd category winner in this month's draw.

Consequently, you have been approved for a total pay out of 2,000,000 Pounds (Two million pounds) only. The following particulars are attached to your lotto payment order:

- (i) Winning numbers: 07,14,22,35,42,53
- (ii) Serial number: 644-1803
- (iii) Game number: 12-77
- (iv) Reference number: QS-391-1

Please contact the under listed claims officer as soon as possible for the immediate release of your winnings: (Blah, blah, blah.)

Wow! Two million quid! A quick mental calculation showed some R28 000 000 in my pocket here. What a windfall! My first reaction was should I tell my wife or go it alone on this road to riches, come what may. My second reaction was to consider what half-a-dozen or so new motorcycles were going to grace my garage floors. I re-read the letter carefully. I could not recall ever having bought a ticket, even having filled in a form in respect of any happening in Limey Land. Then I saw the catch somewhere in the fine print where it said that I would be required to pay a fee (up front of course) for the insurance of my prize money. This was the snare. It was all a big scam to get you to part with some of your hard-earned cash. Once done, you would never hear from these skelms again.

The world is full of dishonest people and the Internet is a useful instrument in bringing them right to your doorstep. Like when riding your motorcycle, be constantly alert. **Caveat Emptor** is the Latin expression for **Buyer Beware**. Be that at all times.

## Bikers should R.I.P.

(Henri Heyns)

The caption above may seem ominous at first glance but it is not the intention of this article to even begin to speculate on what happens to a guy after he has expunged his last breath on this earth of ours. Therefore, any implied reference to the after-life of a biker is accidental, unintentional and purely coincidental.

There was an article in an overseas motorcycle magazine recently wherein a rider explained how he, riding a super bike in a tight bend, slid the front wheel on a banana skin, lost control and came within a hair-breadth of a complete wipe-out with all its attendant tragic ramifications. This occurrence set me thinking. There is hardly a motorcyclist anywhere who cannot relate at least one instance where his riding, but for a stroke of good luck, could have had him ending up in a biking calamity of immense proportions. Why, what and how are questions not easily answered when analysing such a 'near-miss', yet having pushed the safety envelope is likely to feature highly among possible reasons. I venture to guess that a lapse in concentration, even if only for a split second, for whatever reason, is one of the main culprits in this scenario.

The R.I.P. regimen works for me as it helps me to sharpen my concentration whilst riding and especially when going into bends. It is easy to learn but must be applied effectively and consistently without exception.

READ is what the first letter stands for. It means a continuous intake of road conditions as you come across them. Motorcycle rider trainers always emphasise that one should never look at where your front wheel is going. Why? A motorcyclist travelling at 120 km/h is actually covering 33,33 m every second. Even at such a moderate speed on the open road, bad patches in the tarmac, obstacles, animals crossing and such conditions are upon you in a flash, leaving you very little chance, if any, for defensive manoeuvring. Unless you look far ahead, are wide awake and spot the hazard in time to be able to take defensive action, you may easily get yourself into more trouble than what you've bargained for. And obviously, the faster you travel the farther you should look ahead.

Of course, the human eye also has the blessing of giving us peripheral vision which means that even by staring straight ahead, one is still able to see things

out of the corners of one's eye at a considerable angle. This enables the rider to spot likely problems over a fairly wide arc on the left and right and to timeously make decisions on what to do should the need arise. Good riders further enhance this characteristic by sweep-observing from side to side continuously, which also includes glancing into both rear view mirrors. Yes, this should also be done on an open road with no visible traffic around. (A madcap in a Porsche coming up from behind and travelling at 240 km/h can change from a speck to a realistic threat within a few seconds.)

INTERPRET brings us to our second letter. Good riders develop the habit of 'thinking bike' continuously (sometimes also when not even near a bike).

There are possibly sceptics who would argue what pleasure can there be to biking if one is to be continuously alert and on the look-out for other traffic, potholes, stray animals, pedestrians, and a plethora of other, potentially dangerous factors when riding. The obvious answer would be that the safe biker, through training and plenty of riding exposure under all conditions, develops a 'gut' feel for hazards that remains with him all the time, not only on but off the bike as well.

POSITIONING gives us our last letter. This means taking timeous defensive action to overcome the observed threat. This statement should not be interpreted as a 'once-in-a-while' action to be implemented should an untoward situation arise. Far from it. It is a continuous process that occurs dozens of times on the bike every second to ensure that it remains on the course set for it.

The experienced rider would know what the word *inertia* means. Simply explained it means that a body in motion would tend to continue in that direction and speed until another force acts upon it to interfere with its progress. The greater the weight of the bike, rider and perhaps passenger and the faster the bike travels in a given direction, the greater the inertia would be. From this follows that to change direction or reduce speed or both, requires more energy and necessarily time for the change to take place. Of course, riding into a brick wall zeroes the inertia almost immediately, but the price to be paid for this enormous deceleration outcome prohibits the thought entirely!

Weight of course is almost always a given factor,

both as far as the bike itself and the rider/passenger are concerned. Thus we are left with only two inertia factors, being speed and direction. It is true that the slower one travels the easier it is to take evasive action should the occasion arise, but for obvious reasons, too slow a speed on the road also has its attendant disadvantages and dangers. (Remember in this regard the importance of flowing with the traffic, the absence of which is largely instrumental in why pedal cyclists are rammed from behind.) But with high velocity severely limiting one's options in an emergency, the speed factor could well nigh become a fear factor.

If the three simple words are taken into proper consideration when out on a motorcycle, the rider places himself in a position to be able to meet almost any condition head-on and emerge the better off for it. R.I.P.ing does not mean riding like a ninny who should rather be at home attending to his knitting. On the contrary, the more and the better you R.I.P., the more enjoyment you will have riding your motorcycle. Have a go and see what it can do for you. A word of warning is in order though. If you don't R.I.P., there is a good chance that you *will* R.I.P. in another, less desirable way!

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## NEW G 650's ON THE WAY

(Henri Heyns)

Three new enduro and supermoto-themed BMW 650cc motorcycles have been released at the Intermot Motorcycle Show currently being held in Cologne, Germany.

The range comprises three models – the dirt-oriented enduro labelled the *X-Challenge*, a supermoto street machine dubbed the *X-Moto* and dual-sporty ride named the *X-Country*, all being variations on the enduro and supermoto theme.

BMW South Africa has announced that the new G 650 X-model range of BMW motorcycles will be launched here by mid 2007. These models are however not successors to the current F 650 GS/Dakar range.

The new, technically advanced product range will occupy very attractive, in some cases very sporty, niches in the Enduro segment. As well as extending the market position in this core competence area of BMW Motorrad, the G 650 X models are also clearly aimed at making a significant contribution to the brand's positioning with regard to its youthful appeal. The model range will also provide greater variety in the entry level market. [More next issue!]

# Official Club Activities Calendar 2006

Date	Route /Destination	Dist	ROAD	GS
2-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 riding 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](http://www.bmwclubs.co.za) Visit us there and become acquainted with the comings and goings of our club, together with newsy bits, information on new products, what is happening on the motorcycling scene, etc. Please send all articles, pics, comments, etc. to: The Editor, Spoke `n Piston, P.O. Box 40422, Arcadia 0007, or e-mail to: [henrih@netactive.co.za](mailto:henrih@netactive.co.za)

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