

Hey All,

We got back last Saturday 30th April, after leaving the Thursday 21st April from Durban on our GS 1200 for the BMW Rally. It was a 6 day trip to start with.

We left at 5am on the Thursday and pushed through 1000 kays to Port Elizabeth for our overnight stop. We travelled via Kokstad to Queenstown, Grahamstown, the roads were fine most of the way, however the stretch between the T Junction to East London and to Grahamstown had more pot holes than road (this may be where my control arm may have been slightly modified from original factory specification)

Just before Grahamstown and the start of the pass, we regrouped to asses our fuel situation. There were 6 bikes and the consensus was, according my mate Mike there was indeed a filling station at the bottom. I asked if he was sure as i only had about 80 kays left in the tank, to which he replied that he was positive. (AAAH my mate Mike).

About half way down the range indicator informed me that I had 38 kms of fuel left. Now I have been riding for a while and I swear that I have never covered 38 kays in such a short space of time in my life.

Note to BM riders, you can do at least another 30 kms even if the computer tells you it's empty. Anyway, we were on the last downhill when she spluttered, coughed and died. This was not a problem because the petrol station was in sight and we could coast into it. One small detail though, it was now a fresh produce shop, so we came to a stop, involuntarily. By now, 60 kays from PE, tired and getting dark I put my emergency indicators on and waited for the rest of my mates to catch up.

After consulting the GPS, which informed us the Colchester BP was a mere 12 kms from us, Trevor set off to get us some go-juice. He returned 30 minutes later with a 500ml bottle of unleaded and declared that this would be sufficient to get me to the garage.

We were about to set off, but much to my disbelief and torment the battery had run flat, (remember the Hazard lights for safety). New plan, push start the old girl! Have you ever tried to push start a GS 1200? It's simply not gonna happen, not even in sixth gear!

New plan, jump start it, one small technical problem, no jumper cables. After flagging down motorists, Trev went back to Colchester to find some. After an hour, after the police were of no help whatsoever he found a tow truck driver to assist us for a nominal fee of R300 South African Rands, what a sharp businessman he was.

So, now the bike is purring softly we pack everything back in and on and set off for the petrol oasis. But, halfway there, yup you guessed, it I run out of fuel again. 500ml doesn't get you far I can tell you.

Now, we are semi-intelligent individuals, so now in the pitch dark on a very busy road we are not going to make the same mistake twice, so no hazard lights were used on this occasion. Dave jets off this time, with the same little bottle while we rest on the side off the road. We eventually got to that bloody petrol station, 3 hours behind schedule.

We got into PE, booked into our accommodation and I believe I purchased most of the liquid encouragement that evening. Mike denies any knowledge of the conversation at the top of the pass-funny thing that!

On the Friday we set off with FULL tanks via Knysna to George and then on to Oudtshoorn. The roads were a pleasure and the motor vehicles were very bike aware and friendly to boot and except one BMW X5 driver who believed she owned the road, everyone moved over to let us pass. The scenery was awesome and the weather was perfect.

We arrived in Oudtshoorn that afternoon and went to register for the rally. A well run rally it was, registration was painless, the goodie bag was packed with golf shirts of good quality and there were discount vouchers for all sorts of activities. I purchased jumper cables from The Adventure Bike Shop stand. (You never know when you gonna need them).

The weekend was jam packed with different routes to take, depending on your abilities and type of bike you were on. I believe there was only one serious accident, when a lady on an 800 went over the side at Die Hel and fell pretty far. She was rescued by helicopter and although bruised and scratched, I am informed she will be okay. Even her bike survived, but it needs a bit of work.

Now, I cannot comment on the outrides for the weekend personally as I was not able to participate. Remember when I modified the control arm, whilst negotiating pot holes. Well it seems I also managed to damage the outer rear wheel bearing at the same time. Another mate, Harry, pointed this out 5kms into our Saturday morning ride whilst riding behind me, the back wheel was wobbling about a bit.

I went back to the Rally Site, where Lynn Schroeder BMW from George were on hand to attend to all things bike related. Unfortunately the surgical procedure required on my bike could not be done at the rally and being a long weekend, with a few bmw's in town, I would have to wait till the Tuesday morning for a repair. We didn't ride much after that and had to nurse her back to George on the Monday morning.

The food on offer at the Rally was excellent, on both the Saturday and Sunday night, supper was provided by the organisers as part of the registration fees. The entertainment in the tent was very good and a two man band called Wild Lettuce was incredible, they sold out their CD in 5 minutes flat.

We left the Monday for George, just the missus and I as the rest of our mates were going to go to Aliwal North and then on to Clarens, to be back in Durban on Wednesday. The initial plan was to play catch up after the bearings were replaced.

We got into George at 10h30 on Monday morning and we stopped at a place called Tarantino's for directions to BMW. Once I had got directions, which in George is easy, I enquired with the proprietor of Tarantinos if he was open for business, to which he replied that he was not standing there for his health.

I have soft pannier bags on the bike for the make-up (hers not mine) hair dryer and other basic necessities for the missus and as such didn't want to leave them on the bike whilst we were sampling his wares. He suggested that I park directly in front of the door so we could keep an eye on it, having done so, we decided to make ourselves at home in his pub. We were informed by his chief cook and bottle washer that it had started raining shortly thereafter, or two beers later if it makes it easier.

I said that I am going to get the pannier bags off, to which he replied," no worries boet, just bring the bike inside." (We make friends fast, the missus and I!) . So without much fuss the doors were opened and I rode my bike into the pub. We got to meet the locals and had a blast.

On Tuesday Lynn Schroeder BMW had arranged a courtesy car for us, whilst they attended to my bike, very efficient bunch of people. The repair came to 5 grand and we were back on the road by 13h30. We decided that we were not going to chase the rest of the gang and head to Cape Town for a day or two, but a friend that lives there informed us that the weather was kak and we should reconsider. We decided to go to P.E, and then do the 570 kms to Port St Johns the next day.

We got to Port St Johns on the Wednesday afternoon, what a crap trip. The wind was howling and I used more tread on the side of my tyres than I could if I was racing on an oval track all day.

We decided to stay at Mad Hatters Lodge near second beach and we had such a good time, 1 day ended up being 3 days. The accommodation was great, the food, terrific and the company awesome.

We reluctantly had to leave for home on the Saturday morning. Lots of bikes on the road as it was the beginning of bike week in Margate, but resisted the urge not to take a detour. We make take the Triumph Tiger next time, but it may be frowned upon.

