

Accidents you have had.

I presume you mean bike

1990 – riding to school on MTX 50 – I was wearing a school scarf, and it got caught in the spokes of the back wheel. Needless to say, it got tight around my neck very quickly. Luckily it was only wound around once, so it pulled free leaving me with only a roasty

The old adage about accidents happening within a kilometer from home...next two were exactly that...

1992- Honda CB900F –1994 – riding home from Varsity, a woman driver! Turned in front of me (to go up to Pioneer park area) along the road past the Sharks Board in Umhlanga... I went head-first into the windshield, and then flipped over the top of the car. Both shoes and my helmet came off. I was a bit bruised, and had a limp for a few days.

1993 – Honda CB900F –1994 – riding to work, and a builders truck (carrying sand) ran through from a side intersection into my path. I swerved, but he came out too wide and I ended up bouncing off the side of the truck. This managed to finish off my bike, but at least I got a trip to the hospital by helicopter. Downside was that I needed a skin graft on my left leg and had my spleen removed. Has anyone seen my Spleen? Upside was an MVA claim and a new Opel Kadett.

Near miss - -1999 – TW200 – I was skiing along the beach behind my kite, with Jay following (unwillingly) on my bike. The wind was gusting up to force 7-8, so I couldn't stop going when we approached the Umhlanga lagoon (which had burst its banks, and was flowing into the sea quite heavily). I got dragged across on my belly, and unbelievably Jay followed on the bike. Water was up to the level of the tank, and the exhaust was barely above water, but somehow he made it across. It was a close call for having my bike swept into the sea.

2004-07 – Clean record in the UK on my BMW R1100S

That pizza explanation and how this trip came about

I think it was about March 2006, when Carlo had told me that he was traveling to America for one reason or another. I had said how much I enjoyed the bike trip Lynn and I did through the mountain passes of Chamoinix, France. A recent trip to New York had surprised me in that compared to the UK, American's seemed friendly, so I suggested that we should travel across the USA by bike as a Boy's road trip. It may have been the desperate last-stand adventure before children came along. I think I suggested us hiring Harley's and going along route 66. We started looking into the costs of hiring bikes or flying ours over there – never really believing it would really happen. Later on we discussed riding around Europe as an addition to some of his UK visits. It must have been a month or so later when Carlo suggested that we do Africa to London. This seemed like a great compromise – as I wouldn't have to fly to SA and hire a bike, and he wouldn't have to fly to the UK and hire a bike if we did a European trip.

Also, there is something special about Africa in that it still holds a slight mysticism and isn't the box-standard paved road trip.

It grew from there.... Jay had moved to Jhb, and now that him and Carlo were getting more brain-farts fuelled by a strict Amstel diet, the trip quickly evolved into us setting some kind of record. This tied in quite well with none of us thinking we would get away with more than 6 weeks leave, and still be able to return to a desk with our name on it at work. Jay wasn't happy joining the expedition using his new Land Rover, and the pressure of me and Carlo having more fun than him, helped him overcome his 33 year old aversion of motorbikes! The next pearl of wisdom from the Pizza Tycoon was that we would be delivering a Scooters Pizza and Luigi was coming to keep an eye on things (probably Carlo couldn't get permission to go alone).

We have sort-of forgotten about the leisurely sight-seeing aspect of the trip, and I am now bracing myself for a feat of endurance (stupidity).

What you think it will all be like... be specific... want to refer back to this

Too fast, too hot, too expensive, too tiring!! – but definitely a challenge, and I couldn't think of better friends to be doing it with.

Un-tarred sections will be tough (and hopefully not too taxing on the new bike)

Luxor and Aswan should be awesome, and I am looking forward to some Tusker beers and a meal at the Carnivore in Nairobi – not to mention a night on the tiles at Pavement in Nairobi (if the Italian task masters allow me a free minute!)

Some of the admin could be hard work – editing, filming, etc... will have to wait and see

Difficult to leave Tamsin (who will be 6 weeks old). – and Lynn, of course

Excusing yourselves to loved ones... promises

Surprisingly enough, I have gotten away with this (or so I think). Lynn is quite relaxed, although she has said that I will be paying for this for the rest of my life. I suspect she has a few shopping trips lined-up to make up for what I have spent on this trip. She does get to take Tamsin home to meet the grandparents though, so I'm not totally f*cked.

Equip testing

I wish I could be testing my bike or doing some off-road riding- -but given my bike is in SA, and even had to be run-in by Carlo, this hasn't happened. I have spent time working on testing and sourcing our video options and haggling over the route and timings with Carlo.

Bike skills

I suppose I have been riding since I was 16, but its all been on tar, apart from a few misspent adventures on the beach and through the Sugarcane fields in Umhlanga (when they existed). From my accidents section, you can see that it hasn't all been plain sailing. I have been on a European bike trip with Lynn (2 weeks), and commute to work in the UK (up until I sold my bike in June 07).

No real off-road experience to speak of...

Route

We spoke about the west coast at some point, but by then Carlo had taken it upon himself to be official navigator... We were just along for the ride with the dictator!

First aid implications

Without a spleen, I supposedly have a diminished immune system – but I am not too worried about it. I just hope we have morphine for anything that involves pain!

Calling and telling nonna

Nonna? Is that my mother? If so, she thinks we are nothing short of dim-witted in attempting this challenge, and has reminded me repeatedly that I am now a father!

Last chance to tell each other things... you may never have said before!

Tell who? Not sure about this one!