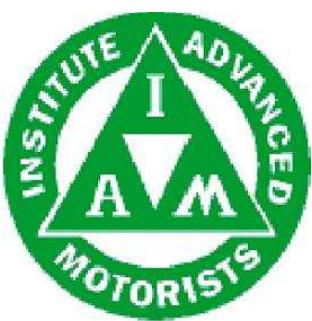


NORTHUMBRIA ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS. (N.A.M.)

**AFFILIATED TO THE INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS
(I.A.M.)**



Portpatrick weekend away May 2011 with GUY the Gorilla



SPRING 2011

THE NORTHUMBRIA ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS ARE SUPPORTED BY:-

NORTHUMBRIA POLICE



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For more information on how to join us and become a better and safer rider come along to our monthly meeting held every 2nd TUESDAY of the month at the WHEATSHEAF HOTEL on the B6918 near NEWCASTLE AIRPORT. 07.00 pm for 07.30 pm

OR

Contact our Membership Secretary,

Patrick Jarvis 01670 523736 or Email Jarvis_p1@sky.com

OR

VISIT OUR WEBSITE; www.nam-online.org to see what N.A.M. has to offer.

Chairman's Notes



Who can deny that riding a bike is good fun and we intend getting our share. We in NAM are lucky because when we go along on the monthly rideouts we tend to travel on unaccustomed roads. This happens because we encourage a variety of members to lead the days run and they tend to take us all to their favourite parts of the area.

That's the fun bit and because we have passed the IAM test, we keep ourselves safe by riding in a disciplined manner. This disciplined bit isn't always easy and has been testing me of late, as new speed limits of 20mph have been introduced around the city. I believe it's a good idea for housing estates and other busy streets, but main estate roads with bus routes, I'm not so sure. However it's not for me to pick and choose which urban limits I respect and if it's the law, then that's what I ride within. Not a problem for me personally, but I know I'm creating a problem for others.

On the main road out of the estate where I live I'm usually subject to some serious tailgating, both in the car and on the bike. Given time people may settle for the slower speeds, but until then I'm watching my back.

Our Training Team have introduced the Pass Plus Programme for those members who want to improve their riding skills, but don't wish to commit to observer training. This will include classroom training, leading to a greater depth of road safety awareness. I would encourage all members who have passed their IAM test more than three years ago, to consider attending this event to ensure continuous improvement.

Ron.

Northumbria Advanced Motorcyclists - NAM

The History and Beginnings of our Club.



I have been asked (coerced) by the Newsletter Editor, Dave Henderson to pen a few notes on the brief history and how the Group Northumbria Advanced Motorcyclists came into being so that the newer members and probably many of the longer serving members may be aware of how the Group was formed.

It all began back in 1994 when Durham Advanced Car Group had a few bike members (6) and training was done by a Car Observer following the motorcycle. Obviously this was not a satisfactory way to try and observe a bike from a following car.

Retired Chief Superintendent, Alf Charlton who was involved with the Durham Car Group suggested to Sgt. Bob Brown of the Durham Police that consideration should be given to forming a Durham Advanced Motorcycle Section.

This suggestion was taken up and with the blessing of the then Chief Constable of Durham, Frank Taylor who granted permission for Sgt. Bob Brown and P.C. Mark Langridge, Police Motorcyclists to train in work hours, helped by Mike Cope who had previously been a Police Motorcyclist for 15 years. The principle by the forward looking approach of the Chief Constable was the aim of casualty and crime reduction. Motorcycle accidents and fatalities were high and with an advanced riding approach it was reasonably expected for them to reduce. Succeeding Durham Chief Constables; George Hedges; Paul Garvin and Jon Stoddart have given their blessing and support. Cleveland Advanced Motorcyclists gave support also; and the number of Associates grew rapidly, and when 20 Associates had passed the Advanced Test it was possible to form an individual Motorcycle Group and in 1996 Durham Advanced Motorcyclists was formed. (The Institute of Advanced Motorists rules required 20 or more Advanced Riders before a Group can be formed).

In the period 1996 to 2000 the Group expanded rapidly and numbers reached 400 Advanced Riders. Approximately half of the membership resided in Northumberland. The Durham Committee suggested that the name be altered to Durham and Northumberland Advanced Motorcyclists but this was not practical for two reasons:-

1. It would encroach into Northumberland Police Force area; the Northumberland Police Senior Management was approached to enquire if the Police Motorcycle Section could be involved with the IAM in the form of Durham and Northumbria Advanced Motorcyclists. This was deemed not acceptable.

2. Newcastle Car Group were also a part Motorcycle Group, training Motorcyclists by an Observer following in a car.

The IAM Rules do not allow for more than one Group in any geographic area. It was necessary to obtain Newcastle Car Group agreement to give up Motorcycle training and Motorcycle Group status before NAM could be formed. P.C. Mark Langridge and I had meetings with the Chairman of the Group, Andrew Allerton and the Committee who finally agreed that it would be much better for the Motorcycle Group to do the training. It was also agreed that the bike members of Newcastle Car Group would transfer to NAM when it was formed.

It was decided that a Sub-Committee from Durham would be set up with the intention that after a period of 6 months to one year an independent Group would be formed.

An Inaugural Meeting of the Sub-Group Committee took place on the 8th April, 2003 the first Committee was:-

Chairman	Jack Lormor
Vice-Chairman	Wayne Monk
Secretary	Malcolm Lonsdale
Treasurer	Tracie Darling
Membership Secretary	Judith Clarke
Training Officer	Kevin Wellden
Training Group	Wayne Monk and Dave Lucas
Team Leaders	Simon Lupton and Dave Lucas
Ride out Co-coordinator	Thomas Parkinson
Newsletter Editor	Craig Newman
Promotions	Martin Hutchby
Merchandising Officer	Geoff Spencer

After a familiarizing period of six months finally the Group was formed and became Northumbria Advanced Motorcyclists in November 2003. On the day of Formation 128 members transferred from DAM to NAM. It was agreed that DAM would geographically cover the Durham Police Force area and NAM would cover the Northumberland Police Force area. In order to ensure financial security DAM donated £500 and I approached the Northumberland NHS who gave the Club £1,000 and Northumbria Water Board who also gave £500 ensuring that the Club started from a sound financial base.

Numbers of members have fluctuated; originally meetings were held at the Highlander, Belsay however the numbers outgrew the size and a move to the Wheatsheaf became necessary.

As I look back, the Group has had several Chairmen and Committee members who have all played a part in the continued success the Group has enjoyed. I note that the Training Group, Kevin Wellden, Wayne Monk, Simon Lupton have been continuous and in particular Kevin Wellden has brought the good police influence to the training and has set high standards, originally based on the Police Roadcraft Manual; arranged the use of police premises for training; classroom days teach-ins and cornering clinics. The IAM examiner from the beginning has continuously been Police Motorcyclist P.C. Stuart Fawcett from the Cleveland Police. He has given guidance and advice and contributed to improvements in the training and established the Test Courses to ensure a well balanced route.

The present Committee Team and the Club have my Good Wishes for continued success.

Jack Lormor, President



Jack and his wife Jo



Ducati Jack with his S4



President
Jack Lormor

COMMITTEE



Chairman
Ronald (Ron) Patrick



Secretary and Vice Chairman
Michael Sutherland



Treasurer
Louise Atkinson



Training Co-ordinator
Kevin Wellden



Terence (Terry) Murphy
Team Leader



Patrick (Paddy) Jarvis
Membership Secretary



Eric Fitzpatrick
Asst. M/ship Secretary



Jack Stewart
Ride out Co-ordinator



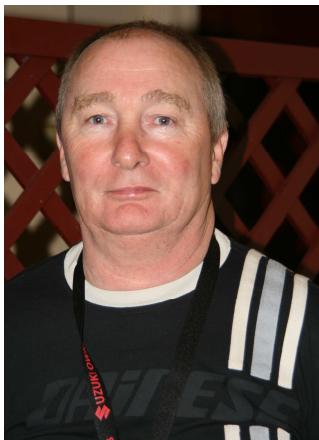
John Fagan
Marketing



David Steedman
N.A.M. Website



David Henderson
Newsletter Editor



Robert (Bob) Atwell has taken on the roll of Merchandising

Bob has for sale a number of items for sale with the N.A.M logo on it. So if you want to have a perusal at what is available Bob sets up his "stall" every Members Meeting for you to see.

2nd Instalment of Michael's and Alice's Diary of their South American trip continued.....

La Paz to Copacabana

The best day so far

Day Ten 3 May 2010 25 °C

Photo; detour leaving La Paz. Michal and Sylvia are on the bike r.h.s. facing.



Everyone in the group thought this was the best day so far. The riding was brilliant despite an unexpected off road section to get round a demonstration. (These are frequent in Bolivia and can spring up at anytime. They can also become violent, as with any demo and are therefore to be avoided). Eventually we got our first sight of Lake Titicaca, the highest lake in the world and absolutely enormous. Surrounded by massive snow capped peaks the sight was stunning. I've had a fascination with the lake since O level geography (Admittedly more to do with schoolboys titter at the name than anything else) but it was certainly not a disappointment. More was to come though as we crossed the Lake by barges. Made from wood and brightly painted they twisted with the weight of whatever they carried which varied from our motorcycles to buses and trucks. The barge crossing was followed by brilliant biking roads twisting and turning to over 4,200 metres then back down to Copacabana at 3,800 metres.

The Bolivian Copacabana is the original. The beach in Brazil is named after it. Not that Copa in Bolivia has any brilliant beaches but it does have an incredible view of Lake Titicaca.

There is also a ceremony you can attend where for a bottle of beer or a few Bolivians the local priest or shaman will bless your car bus truck or bike. This involves buying some flowers to adorn your bike with and then drinking some beer. Unfortunately for us we turned up after mid day and the priest was already p-s-d and incapable of carrying out the ceremony. We had to do with the flowers and beer.

We also arrived in the middle of a festival. A band paraded through the streets followed by a group of dancing women and men. The whole town was out and all were fascinated by the bikes. When we stopped to let the parade go by we were surrounded by people offering us drinks taking photos of them on the bikes. Lots of kissing and passing out beer. It turned out later that most of the beer was being passed around by the wife of the Chief of Police. So much for drink driving!

That night we sat on the balcony of the hotel and watched the sun go down over Lake Titicaca. Some days are as near perfect as you can get!

Goodbye Bolivia hello Peru

Another long border crossing

Day Eleven Tuesday 4 May 2010

Leaving Copacabana we faced a short ride of 5 miles to the border with Peru and then another 90 miles to Puna and a two night stay.

Leaving Bolivia couldn't have been easier and took about 10 minutes. Somehow we knew that it wasn't a good omen. Getting ourselves into Peru was easy and quick but when it came to the bikes much checking and computer inputting was required by the worlds' slowest one finger typist.

None of this was helped by the fact I had a touch of sunstroke and was feeling quite ropey. However we fared better than some of the group who were delayed by the customs officers lunch break then by a diversion along some dirt roads because of road works.

We are now on a rest day. April has gone on a boat trip to see the reed islands but I've decided to take the opportunity to take a rest.

We have now ridden 1926 miles and we aren't even half way round.

Floating Islands

Visit to floating reed islands, Lake Titicaca

Day Twelve Wednesday 5 May 2010

As Mick was unable to leave the Hotel due to a touch of sun stroke I went off with others in the group to visit the floating reed islands on Lake Titicaca, after a 30 minute boat trip we came upon the islands which stretch as far as the eye could see, the islanders are there after fleeing persecution by the Inca's several hundred years ago, they built the islands from the reeds on the lake and floated away from trouble. They have maintained their community until the present day, mostly I suspect because they are not liable to any taxes.

As we approached the islands there were numerous women in brightly coloured costumes beckoning to us to land and visit them, most of their income these days comes from tourism, they performed a welcome song for us and then took us into their reed houses where we were dressed in their costumes for a photo opportunity.

It was explained by the president of the island that they cut large chunks of peat from the shallow part of the lake and then put a stake through the middle, they then tie the chunks together and because they still have roots they bond together, they then place several layers of reed on top to make the islands. These days the islands are anchored down as they do not want them to float off.

It was quite weird walking around as you could feel them moving beneath your feet. We were then taken in a reed boat across to the school, the reed boats take those 6 months to build for a canoe type and they fill the bottom of them with empty plastic bottles to help them float. The school children have one classroom and a teacher from the mainland who has to row herself across the lake morning and evening. We left gifts for the children and donations to help them buy a generator to power a very old computer. All in all a very interesting morning.

Puno to Cusco

245 miles of Altiplano riding at up to 4300 metres

Day Thirteen Thursday 6 May 2010

Leaving Puno we rode along the shore of Lake Titicaca for a few miles before leaving it behind to head Northwest along the Peruvian Altiplano.

After a few miles we had to negotiate a ring road around Juliaca. The first problem was finding it but once on it the traffic was manic. Peruvian drivers seem to be a little less forgiving than Bolivian drivers. As the traffic increased we were attacked from all angles. Buses, cars, bikes, pedestrians, dogs and most deadly of all the little three wheel "putputs".

Even the road conspired against us when without warning it went into a dual carriageway. All the locals seemed to know it was a dual carriageway so why bother putting up signs to show outsiders that it had changed!! Consequently we found ourselves travelling the wrong way against the traffic. The strange thing was that none of the opposing vehicles thought to tell us. We had to figure it out from the fact everything travelling in our direction seemed to be about ten metres from us and divided by a concrete barrier. A quick change of direction found us on the right side of the road only to find within a short distance that the road was blocked because of road works. This being South America however, not only was our side blocked but the previous enemy territory of the opposite carriageway was also blocked by a large mound of earth!! What do they say if you can't go around it just go over it and that's just what we did and carried on. No one batted an eyelid!

The road from Juliaca rose gradually to a high pass at 4,300 metres where we found another group of bikers this time from Chile who were doing a similar route to ourselves but in the opposite direction. At the rest stop were a number of women dressed in traditional costume with Alpacas who managed to get money out of passersby for a photo with them. This started me thinking, as a true Yorkshire man there must be a business opportunity back home. So if in the future you are passing Carter Bar on your way to or from Scotland and you see a man dressed in a strange costume, talking with a Yorkshire accent and asking for some money for a photograph with him and a couple of Cheviot sheep just pay up it'll help towards his retirement fund.

Machu Picchu

A day trip to an old mountain

Day Fourteen Friday 7 May 2010

When I say a day trip I mean a day trip. It started at 3.00am and ended at 11.30 pm but it was worth every minute. It's a long journey from Cusco to Machu Picchu. It took the Incas 7 days on foot and at the moment because of landslides caused by heavy rains it takes nearly as long. The train that normally runs from Cusco can only start from a small station about two hours away by coach. So we caught a small mini bus at 4.00am to catch the 7.30 am train. The line has been badly affected and many parts of the track had been washed away completely only weeks before we arrived. It was obvious that superhuman effort had been put into restoring the destroyed sections but also that there is still a lot of work to do. This was evidenced by how quite the train went as we crossed some sections where we were feet from sheer drops into a raging river that runs beside the track. In one short section workmen were still putting the track together and the train virtually stopped and then inched its way across the moving and swaying rail! It took a good fifteen minutes to extract the seat from our bottoms because we had been gripping so tightly!

We had a guide and I'm glad we did as he dispelled some of the myths around the place. I won't bore you with the facts because there are so many good books and websites devoted to Machu Picchu and I couldn't do it justice. Save to say that one thing I hadn't appreciated was that it was built as late as the sixteenth century and only occupied for about 80 years by approximately 500 people.

Machu Picchu is iconic and as breathtaking as all the films and photographs lead you to believe it will be. So much so that both of us, for the first hour, felt the visit was a little bit surreal. There we were sat on the walls of this place that felt so familiar but that we had never visited before. The classic view over the ruins just didn't seem real and yet we were taking the self same photos from the same angle that we had seen so many times before.

We had a guide and I'm glad we did as he dispelled some of the myths around the place. I won't bore you with the facts because there are so many good books and websites devoted to Machu Picchu and I couldn't do it justice. Save to say that one thing I hadn't appreciated was that it was built as late as the sixteenth century and only occupied for about 80 years by approximately 500 people. Words fail me in describing the place. Even the fellow tourists who were wandering around in the hundreds couldn't spoil the atmosphere of a place surrounded by giant mountains and thick jungle. In fact the other visitors probably gave some idea as to what it looked like when it was populated by 500 people.

Another aspect to the city was the Inca trails that led to it. We took a short walk along one of them to the Inca Bridge. It is truly incredible how the Incas managed to build these paths into sheer rock faces. Walking along them was enough to give you vertigo. How the Inca managed to herd Llama and carry goods along them I have no idea.

Cusco

A day off to wander the city

Day Fifteen Saturday 8 May 2010

Cusco is a little bit different from the places we have visited so far. It's a bit more touristy and street wise. There are many street sellers, more restaurants and attractions to see. It is a great place though. There is a central plaza where the gardens are surrounded by Spanish colonial buildings with shaded archways.

One of those buildings is occupied by the Norton Rats Bar. The bar is on the first floor and has a great view of the Plaza. It's owned by a Norton motorcycle fanatic and has a comments book open to anyone who arrives in Cusco by motorcycle. Consequently we signed it as had many others before us. The remarkable thing about the bar though is the fact it serves a great pint of Speckled Hen or Abbott Ale. How on earth they import it and how they sell it for the same price as a pint in England I have no idea.

Our day off coincided with a parade around the Plaza and some sort of competition between various local dancing groups. Many were bizarrely dressed in costumes that varied from parodies of past colonial masters to Doctors and skeletons. To foreigners with little Spanish it was all a bit difficult to work out.

If you ever find yourself in Cusco though go to the local indoor market. It is a sight to behold. You can buy most things there. Divided into sections there is the meat market including the monkeys head sub-section!! There is the fruit market and coat and zip repair section. We seem to have lost our ability to repair things but here in Peru the skills are alive and well. One of our fellow motorcyclists broke a zip on his motorcycling jacket and managed to get a new one fitted for the princely sum of £7.

One downside to the place is the poverty that invades even the city centre. There were beggars who had obviously fallen on hard times. We watched one man on crutches, blind and elderly begging for money. What surprised me most was that it was some of the other poor who were contributing to his begging cup. And so did we.

Cusco to Nasca

If Carlsberg made roads this would probably be the best road in the world.

DAY Sixteen Sunday 9 May 2010

Day Seventeen Monday 10 May 2010

Day Eighteen Tuesday 11 May 2010

Four hundred and fifty miles of motorcycling bliss. Ups and downs, twists and turns. No good talking about it. If you get the chance just do it! If you do ride it watch out for the concrete culverts built to direct rain water over the roads. When they have water in them they are very slippery which one of our group found out to his cost. The bike he was riding somersaulted a few times and ended up in the back of the support van. Fortunately the rider was fine. Remarkably the bike was patched up and is running again.

Nasca to the Chile Border

From East to West across a Continent

Day Nineteen Wednesday 12 May 2010

Day Twenty Thursday 13 May 2010

Leaving Nasca we immediately hit desert. Mile after mile of nothing but parched land and big skies. We experienced some desert riding last year when we travelled through Death Valley but this was different. Surprisingly for us it was quite cool in places, especially as we began to drop towards the ocean.

When we reached the Pacific it was spectacular. That fresh sea smell and giant waves rolling in and not a surfer to be seen. We travelled down the coast for some 200 miles and saw no commercial exploitation to speak of. The scene reminded us both of riding down Highway 1 in California.

So we had crossed a continent. All the way from Buenos Aires on the East Coast to the West. It had taken three thousand miles and three countries to do it. We had reached heights of over 4,300 metres and now we were back at sea level and able to breathe normally again !

We then headed inland for a two day stay in Arequipa. This was to be our last in Peru before moving on to Chile. First though we were delayed in road works which meant we entered the city in the dark. Not recommended when you have little idea of where the hotel is.

On the plus side we had all grouped together so there were seven bikes travelling together. This was handy when we had to muscle our way through the evening rush hour traffic. Arequipa itself is known as the white city. There are a couple of theories as to why. The first is that it is built in the Spanish

Colonial style and still has many original buildings still standing. Most of these have white walls hence the name the white city. The second reason is a bit more disturbing. When the city was founded by the Spanish the indigenous population was kept outside the city walls and it therefore became known as the white city. Whatever the truth the central plaza is beautiful. The only downside to the city are the thousands of very tiny yellow taxis that buzz around and around the city streets like little tiny wasps. None of them seem to be carrying any passengers though.

We had a day to explore the city but we were so shattered we did a bit of wandering sat in a couple of cafes and watched the world go by. For squeamish people stop reading now. This was the place I tried Cuy or fried Guinea Pig. For those of you who think this barbaric it may satisfy you to know that I got my "comeuppance" because it tasted like chicken, gave up no more than a mouthful and cost a packet.

Random Thoughts

On people we have met

We are about to leave Peru and are told that Chile is a different world to the rest of South America. It is more prosperous. More European. So I've been thinking about some of the people we have met in Bolivia and Peru. Like Clara who we met in Macchu Picchu. She was from Arequipa but was working for a short time for a friend to help her out in a bar. She was happy because she had just started her own travel business in Arequipa. She was tiny and full of enthusiasm and energy. She had a lot of optimism for the future and in a way embodied some of what Peru seems to be trying to do. It has a mushrooming tourist industry with many Americans, Canadians and Australians taking package holidays to discover the natural beauty of the country. In Bolivia, all the people we met were friendly and curious. Life was obviously hard for many of them but there was something very endearing about the way people went about their daily business. The entire group enjoyed the people of Bolivia, none of us can say exactly why.

On South American Dogs

Have you ever wondered what it must be like to be a South American dog? First of all there are a lot of them. They wander the streets in towns and villages, they wander the roads miles from anywhere, and they rummage in bins and on rubbish heaps and enjoy sleeping in the middle of the road. But above all if you were a South American dog you would enjoy chasing motorbikes. For some of them it seems that is what they were put on this earth to do.

There we are riding along minding our own business when the flea ridden sneaky type, lurking behind a bus or hidden in a doorway sprints to maximum speed and hurls itself at your wheels. Or there is the long range "head off at the pass" type that you see from three miles away on an intercept course that you can't avoid. This one runs three or four miles to hurl itself at your wheels! I'm busy perfecting my kicking game but feel I need some sort of implement. A sort of polo stick would be perfect. Now where can I get one of those?

Chile

The Pacific Coast and the Atacama

Day Twenty One Friday 14 May 2010

Day Twenty Two Saturday 15 May 2010

Entering Chile was like entering a different world. Arica and Iquique are very European. In fact Iquique was like a mini Costa Del Sol. Order was restored from chaos. Drivers had rules to obey, vehicles stopped to let people across the road and the tap water could be drank in a certain amount of safety. Having said all that in the four days we have been in Chile many of the group have commented that we have lost something. The chaos of Bolivia and Peru was different.

Chile seems all too familiar in the attitudes and behaviour of the people. What is very different is the landscape. We have travelled through endless desert. The Atacama is truly vast. Lifeless and empty it stretches forever. The roads can be dead straight. We measured one stretch that went on for 54 miles without a bend! The coastal roads are every bit as spectacular as those we found in Peru. With the Pacific on our right and the Atacama on our left it's hard to get lost. We always knew we were heading south with that combination. Eventually we turned inland and headed for San Pedro de Atacama. On the way we encountered high winds for hour after hour which did their best to drive us off the road or into the opposite carriageway. We also encountered rain. Well we didn't exactly see the rain but we saw the water left on the road and the rain clouds. That was near enough for us. Rain in the Atacama is very rare indeed.

San Pedro is a strange place consisting of mud houses, with many hippy types some of whom seem to have come in the 60's and forgot to leave. It's made for adventure holidays. If you want to mountain bike, sand board down dunes, climb mountains or smoke dope this is the place for you. As for us we cleaned the bike and are waiting to hear if the high pass into Argentina is passable or blocked with snow. Some people left our hotel this morning to cross over the Paso de Jama at 4,800 metres but were turned back at the border. So we may have to wait here until it clears.

Waiting to Cross the Border

San Pedro waiting to cross into Argentina

Day Twenty Three Sunday 16 May 2010

Day Twenty Four Monday 17 May 2010

Day Twenty Five Tuesday 18 May 2010

As half expected we have waited most of the day at the Border Post just outside San Pedro waiting for news of the condition of the high pass into Argentina, our team leader thought it best that we sit at the border and this may hurry things along, however Chilean officials are not to be hurried and when the pass did eventually open it seems we were last on their list of priorities with buses and trucks taking precedence, whilst we killed time kicking dust and some of us playing Frisbee courtesy of an Australian biker who had tagged along with us for the day. When it got to 3pm and we still weren't at the head of the queue we decided enough was enough and headed back to the hotel we stayed at for the previous 2 nights with a promise that should we arrive at 8am tomorrow we will be first through - of course we are not holding our breath! It was not a total waste of a day however as it did give us the chance to see the 'valley of the moon' this morning. At a cost of 2000 Chilean pesos each they have capitalised on this natural phenomenon with its weird rock formations which are millions of years old. There is a dirt road runs for about five miles through the valley with viewing areas and walks up into the dunes. At night we went for an impromptu group meal at Aprils suggestion. It turned out to be a great night especially as Globebusters provided the wine ! That's more like it who cares if the pass is blocked.

Maybe I should take this opportunity to tell you a bit about our travelling companions. We are a diverse bunch. Our leader is Peter who is German, speaks fluent Spanish and English and lives with a Chilean in Italy but works in Germany. How diverse is that. He also likes making a wide range of noises to illustrate his points. In fact he is the Percy Edwards of motorcycle impressions. (For those who are too young Google Percy)

Alan the van man is our support and a good Geordie he is too. Single and on the lookout for a partner. Try Face Book or one of the Dating agencies (I think he's on them all) if you fancy a date with a humorous and much travelled middle aged man. The rest of us are made up of three Dave's. To differentiate they all have nick names. Dave the Hip is the owner of an engineering company. In his sixties and recently had a hip replacement operation. Smokey Dave is the only smoker; he travelled down to Madrid with us and is also well known for getting his bike to do somersaults and walking away from it unharmed. He now rides a street fighter GS Adventure that travels sideways and has no backside in his trousers. Gadget Dave owns every gadget it is possible to have for a bike and every other gadget it's possible to buy. His partner is Christine who is a fanatical football fan. Despite this she supports Manchester United. Mark is a 6' 5" builder who has adopted every stray dog in South America. He even took two of them into his bedroom one night to stop them barking (much to the consternation of Smokey Dave who shares a room with him!) Steve is a baker and owns an Artisan Bakery near Andover. He lists as his pastimes, herding Lamas, helping local Bolivians sweep the streets and is known to go missing on occasions to be found eating fish head soup and any other local delicacy he can find. Some people think he is a little eccentric.

The photographic group is made up of Denis and Neil who were mates before they came here and actually remain mates despite sharing a room for five weeks. We know them as the odd couple but they are in their spare time a management consultant and architect. Hedley and his long suffering wife Salina make up the group. His enthusiasm knows no bounds and I have had to threaten him with a baseball bat on a number of occasions for being far too lively before 9.00am. (Anyone who knows me will understand what a grave offence this is.) As for April and I you can make up your own entry about us.

Back to Argentina

Over the Passo De Jama

Day Twenty Six Wednesday 19 May 2010

Day Twenty Seven Thursday 20 May 2010

Day Twenty Eight Friday 21 May 2010

We were finally given permission to cross the Passo De Jama. At its highest it reaches 4,800 metres which in old money is over 15,700 feet. Well over three times the height of Ben Nevis. The last time I was anywhere near this high I was wearing crampons and carrying an ice axe, not riding a motorbike. The one thing that was similar though was the cold. In parts it was below freezing. We saw no evidence however of snow blocking the road and so the reason for us not being allowed through on the previous day remains a mystery. The Argentinean Border post is 100 miles from the Chilean post. Most of that road is at over 4,000 metres so we were very glad to get there, get the formalities over and done with and get down to a more respectable and warmer height. On the way there were salt flats that asked to be ridden on and so we obliged. Our destination for the night was Purmamarca. First though we had to negotiate a brilliant twisty descent through mountains that were coloured green, red gold and brown. There were stunning rocks formations that made it hard to concentrate on the road. From Purmamarca we travelled to Cafayate a small town based around a lovely Plaza. The hotel was probably the best we have stayed in. With an inner court yard where we stored our bikes the rooms had old wooden floors and the air of a place that had been around since Spanish rule. The next days' riding was a day of contrasts. We entered cloud forest on single track twisting roads that ascended high into the mountains.

However there was a stark contrast to our previous weeks of travelling as the mountain sides were covered in thick lush green forest with lakes in the valleys similar to the Lake District in England. The difference was all the more impressive by the fact we had seen very little greenery since leaving Peru. Later in the day we returned to the semi desert before arriving at Catamarca.



Alta Gracia

Home of Che Guevara

Day Twenty Nine Saturday 22 May 2010

Che Guevara's old family home is now a museum in Alta Gracia and from the visitors book it's obvious that people come from all over the world to visit. The house is modest and although it is small it contains many family photographs and relics of his life. We were given an English guide book containing translations of some of the letters he had sent to his family and to others such as his fellow revolutionary Fidel Castro. Che Guevara for me is one of those iconic figures from my youth. I remember many people wore Che badges with the famous photograph of him in his beret. (Or was that just me?). Now I'm not sure about the Marxist ideology but the ideas that maybe still hold true is his fight against injustice wherever that might be. He also held true to his beliefs. After the successful revolution in Cuba Guevara was given various Ministerial Posts and I'm sure he could have lived his days in Cuba in relative prosperity but instead he chose to continue his own personal fight. In a letter to his children he made it obvious that he knew the probable consequences of that decision as he foretold of his death in the cause of the revolution against injustice. Whatever your thoughts about his ideas there is no doubting his commitment.

Return to Buenos Aires

The final miles and thoughts

Day 30 Sunday 23 May 2010

Day 31 Monday 24 May 2010

From Alta Gracia we headed for an overnight stay in Che Guevaras birthplace Rosario before travelling the last few hundred miles to our starting point in Buenos Aires, having completed over 5,500 miles in South America.

Many of the group have spent these couple of days reflecting on what they have seen and experienced and we have been no exception. April and I both started the journey not quite knowing what to expect. Our thought was to experience it as we went rather than read up on lots of travel books and guides. In many ways it's been overwhelming.

The riding itself has been far more physically demanding than I thought it would be. The rest days were barely enough to pull yourself together especially when combined with some of the must see sights we went to. That ate into any of the rest we needed. It's only now that we are safely back in Buenos Aires that this is catching up on us. As I write this April is having an afternoon nap and I have barely been awake for the last two days! The altitude has also been a big factor. Day after day at over 3,000 metres takes it out of you. It's difficult to breathe or even walk around at times. Sleep is interrupted by your body begging for more oxygen and then it becomes hard to get back to sleep again.

However, and it's a big however, the things we have done and seen have been a truly once in a lifetime experience. Bolivia was an eye-opener. I think often in the west it can be easy to equate poverty with dishonesty and laziness. There is much poverty in Bolivia, It hits you in the face and sometimes in the nose! But not once did anyone have anything stolen or did we feel threatened or in danger, in fact the complete opposite. Everyone was extremely friendly; although many were curious about the motorbikes no one touched them without permission and the interest in where we had come from and where we were going was overwhelming. As for the driving, on reflection there were rules but at first we just didn't understand them. Drivers never lost their tempers and waited for the crazy foreigners to sort themselves out before telling them they were travelling the wrong way down a dual carriageway again or that they should have stopped at that junction because that's what everyone who lives here always does !

Peru was full of fantastic scenery, cities and sights. It's trying hard to promote its tourist industry and justifiably so. They are also trying hard to improve their infrastructure. The amount of effort that has been put into repairing the railway to Machu Picchu after the recent floods is enormous. We did however fall foul of some of the road works. In particular, there was one small stretch of road, shortly after leaving Cuzco, on our way to Nasca. This consisted of about 1,000 metres of bends on an uphill section of road that the road builders had decided to cover in gravel to the depth of about a metre. When we came across it they were in the process of trying to flatten it with a couple of rollers. Unfortunately for us and all of the other traffic using this main road they had covered both sides of the carriageway. This made it impossible for any of the trucks to get up or down. It also posed a very tricky problem for us. Bikes do not do gravel very well especially those that are fully loaded and have a passenger. But we decided to do what most Peruvians seem to be good at and that's just getting on with it. With April pushing and getting covered in dirt and gravel, then walking to the top, with Hedley burning out his clutch and much sliding and slipping we made it to the top for a celebration picnic. Then we carried on as normal, just like everyone else.

Chile and the Atacama were a complete contrast to Bolivia and Peru. Prosperous well organised there is a sense of purpose in Chile. The desert must be one of the harshest places on earth but the Chileans are making the most of their natural resources. The mines are on a gigantic scale suited to the vastness of the Atacama. It's a shame in many ways that we didn't have time to see other parts of Chile. Four days was hardly enough to scratch the surface. Maybe that's for another time.

Argentina. What can I say about Argentina other than I think it's a great place? Today is the Bi Centenary of Argentina's independence. Here we are in the capital and there is a lot of flag waving and celebrations but none of the hardnosed jingoism that you might expect in other countries. They are rightly proud of what they have achieved. There are displays from Gauchos', drummers, native music, football celebrations and music. All taking place with good family spirit and humour. The celebration reflects the people we have met here. For instance, coming into BA yesterday we parked our bike at the entrance to a service station so that the entire group could meet up to go into the city together. As we parked a man approached us having walked a hundred metres back from the petrol pumps. In perfect English he said he had noticed we were English and wondered if we had a problem, was there anything he could do, and then the questions about our journey and what we thought of Argentina. It all begs a few questions about Government posturing and wars.



Michael and Alice with Lake Titicaca in the background

All in all I think we have lost count of the number of photos that have been taken of our bikes and the number of people who have had their photos taken either on them or next to them. What a way to travel. You wouldn't get that in a car.

Finally, April and I hope you enjoyed reading our diary. We have only written what we have seen rather than fill it with facts and figures that can be found in proper travel books, but we hope you have found it interesting.

One final thing was left for us to experience. As with our outward journey, our flight home was problematical. It was marred by the BA Cabin crew strike. We didn't find out until 24 hours before we were due to fly whether the flight would go ahead or not. As it was we managed to get to Heathrow as scheduled only to find our connecting flight to Newcastle was cancelled! Consequently our journey ended as it had begun with a 250 mile drive in a car!

Michael and Alice Goodwin

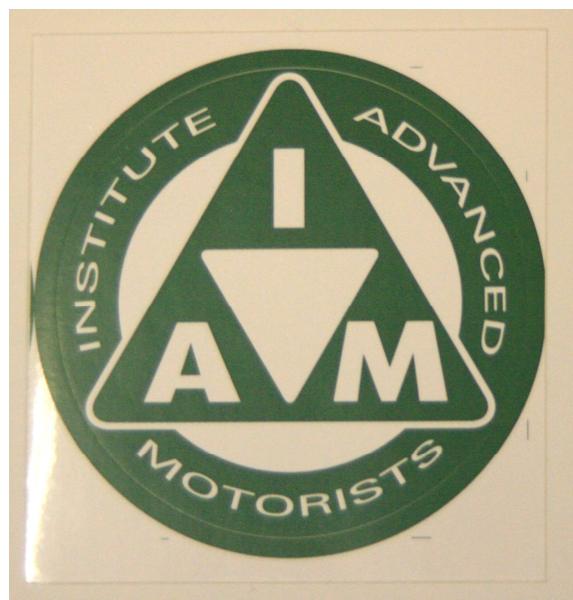


Switch backs. Page 11



Inca Bridge. Page 10

Safer doesn't necessarily mean slower, says I.A.M.



Advanced Training & Rider Performance, a new report launched today by the I.A.M., has shown that the organisation's advanced system of riding really does deliver sustainable benefits in anticipation, better road positioning and swift but safe progress in a wide range of road environments.

One of the first systematic motorcycle simulator studies into rider behaviour, the research was undertaken by the Centre for Motorcycle ergonomics & Rider Human Factors at the University of Nottingham. The study was designed to ascertain whether or not riders who have passed the I.A.M. (Institute of Advanced Motorists) Advanced Riding Test, ride differently to those that haven't taken this further training. The findings demonstrated clearly that I.A.M. riders took up safer road positions and kept to urban speed limits, but actually made better progress through bends than non-I.A.M.-trained riders and beginners.

Neil Greig, I.A.M. Director of Policy and Research, said, "We work to promote safer riding and we educate riders to maintain momentum and progress where possible. So we were pleased to learn that I.A.M.-trained riders adopted the safest road position to deal with hazards while still managing to achieve the quickest time through tight and medium bends. The evidence shows that it was due to their approach and positioning up to and through the bends."

Non I.A.M.-trained riders tended to approach faster but then had to overcompensate for the error, slowing while in the bend itself where the machine is at its least stable. "The I.A.M. riders also rode closer to the centre line on left hand bends than the other two groups and further away from the centre line on right hand bends. This positioning extends the riders' line of vision as far as possible around the bend, giving earlier awareness of hazards that could be lurking around the corner, as well as making them more visible to oncoming traffic".

'Road-side furniture' near to the side of the road on bends caused a big psychological effect. The average speed of all riders reduced when barriers or trees were in close proximity to the road. When there was road-side furniture adjacent to the right side of the road on a left hand bend all rider groups rode further away from the centre line, thus moving away from the perceived danger. Even so, I.A.M.-trained riders gave up too much of their position to their apparent threat of a solid object, but maintained a good riding style to tackle the bend.

I.A.M. riders again appeared to have the greatest awareness of the risks in a more urban environment. In the 40mph zone their riding style was more defensive than the other groups; they rode closer to the centre line when approaching a side road on the left than the novice riders and more slowly than the experienced riders. This placed them as far from potential hazards as possible and better prepared them to stop if necessary. I.A.M. riders also tended to display lower speeds and applied greater brake pressure than the other groups.

Mr. Greig continued, "I.A.M. riders also appear to have a more responsible attitude towards their riding".

Participants in the study took a hazard perception task and I.A.M. riders were quicker to identify hazards and were more likely to blame poor rider behaviour or the situation than non-I.A.M. riders, strongly suggesting that their riding attitude is more defensive.

ITS OFFICIAL – ADVANCED TRAINING AND RIDING WORKS.

Not that we needed any research to tell us the obvious but Nottingham University ‘Centre for motorcycle ergonomics and rider human factors’ has conducted research that has established scientific proof of the benefits of advanced rider training.

The aim of the research was to examine the attitudes, behaviours and skills of riders according to their level of experience and training.

The University used a Triumph Daytona 675 on a rig as a motorcycle simulator in the research. They identified three broad groups of motorcyclists; novice riders, experienced riders and advanced riders. The groups of riders were put through identical scenarios on the simulator.

The research established that experience alone is not enough with some experienced riders behaving like novices in some situations.

Advanced riders were safest of the three groups, making better use of road positioning to anticipate hazards, kept to urban speed and actually made better progress through bends.

Dr Stedman of the University is quoted as saying about the research ‘It has demonstrated clear differences between the rider groups and potential benefits to advanced training above and beyond rider experience and basic training. Whilst experience seems to help develop rider skills to an extent, advanced training appears to develop deeper levels of awareness, perception and responsibility. It also appears to make riders better in urban areas, quicker smoother and safer riders in rural settings’.

Concentrate, Observe, Anticipate, Plan – we know it works and now it’s scientifically proven.

Kevin Wellden. N.A.M. Training Co-ordinator.



N.A.M. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Past experience has shown that the annual subscription for N.A.M has been a rather difficult problem when it comes to collecting the annual fee. The payment was due to be paid in January and still is. Some were paid by cash or cheque whilst others by Standing Orders. By having three methods of payment it consequently created a lot of hard work for the Membership Secretary (Patrick [Paddy] Jarvis). He didn't know who was renewing or no longer subscribing to the Club with many Members simply forgetting to pay or others under the impression that they had to pay on the anniversary of when they actually joined N.A.M. The result of all this was that he was chasing up Members for payment for many months after the January dead line. This included having to write letters send Emails, phone calls and reminding Members on club nights that they hadn't paid. A lot of work and a time consuming exercise for him.

It was therefore decided by your committee that it should be one of the aims of the Club to encourage Members to make arrangements with their bank to set up a Standing Order Payment. Forms were made available for all Members who had not set up a S.O. with their banks but it still resulted in some Members not taking advantage of this. Paddy was still chasing up payments right into May.

It must be understood that to be able to participate in the organised club ride outs that Members have to be fully paid up with the I.A.M and N.A.M for insurance purposes. Otherwise they, as laid down by the I.A.M rules, will not be able to go on the ride outs. If you don't participate in the ride outs it is still a rule that to be a member of N.A.M you have to be a fully paid up member of the I.A.M. Again it would be a great help to Paddy if you could inform him when you have renewed your annual subscription to the I.A.M.

All of this information enables the Club to keep an up to date Membership data sheet.

It would be greatly appreciated if those Members who are not currently making the payment by annual S.O. could make arrangements with their bank to set up the payment of £15 per annum to be paid on January the 1st or thereabouts. Forms are available to anyone that requires one.

Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

David Henderson

May 2011



Plus Pass Training



Sunday morning the 22nd May, 07.15am sitting outside admiring my VFR sun shining cup of tea in my hand getting hyped up about the training I was about to go through. Time for the off rest of kit on bike fired up sun still shining. Thought, going to be good day weather wise. Spoke too soon, 1&1/2 miles from home the sky turned a very dark shade of grey and then the heavens open!!! I was wearing my new "Aldi" textile jacket for the first time so it got well and truly christened. But it kept me dry just like the label that I had cut off earlier extolling all the advantages of its construction and materials said it would. Got to the B.P. garage at Anitsford put a couple of gallons of petrol in the tank, still chucking it down. Back onto the A19 south heading for the Silver Link then the weather changed completely. No rain, no wind just sunshine, great. The arrangements were made by Kevin Wellden for those participating in this very first session to meet up

at the new Police Headquarters adjacent to B & Q on Middle Engine Lane for a 09.00am start. There were six "volunteers" who were outnumbered by quite a few Observers. Cup of coffee to settle the nerves and the show got on the road. Kevin was in the chair and he started off by generally explaining what *Plus Pass* was about. This allayed some of the apprehension that concerned some of the guys. I'm sure you all have been in the "test" situation so you know what I am talking about.

After the introduction we were given a question sheet with 13 questions on it. Some related to the Highway Code and others to the I.A.M. Roadcraft Book. If you fancy doing the training then some revision would be advisable. To save our blushes it was a self mark question paper and it was your choice if you wished to say how many you got right. Needless to say none of us were brave enough to do so. I'll tell you now I got 9 & 1/2 right. Kevin went through the questions and what the correct answers were. He then suggested that we paired up with an Observer and I chose Melvin (Mel) Leitch. It was then suggested by Kevin that we chatted to our chosen Observer what we would like to gain from the training experience. For me one of my hang-ups was trying to keep to the speed limit. I know what some of you are saying to yourselves. But we have all been in the situation where we start off at the correct limit and for whatever reason when you look at the Speedo it has crept up and you are going just a few miles an hour faster than you thought you were. From these discussions you then told the group what was probably your weak point(s) or perhaps a safety issue and from this possible ways to rectify or clear up any unsure issues. These were very varied and it was interesting to hear what other people had to say. Coffee break was suggested and was taken up.

The second half of the morning was where the trainee and Observer took to the road for a practical test to see how your riding was and have pointed out where you could make some changes to your riding technique if it was deemed necessary. For me and my speed "problem" it was suggested at the beginning of the ride to drop down to a lower gear as opposed to being in a higher gear which I tended to be when in the 30 or 40 limits. This I did and it did make it easier to keep within the limit but I couldn't quite get used to the increased engine noise. I'll just have to get used to it. There was a halfway stop at the car park adjacent to the beach at the bottom of "The Avenue" at Seaton Sluice where Mel and I had a chat about the first part of the ride. From here we headed for the "Beehive Pub" road, a road I hate and avoid travelling on it whenever possible, through Monkseaton, Billy Mill R-A-B, coast road to finally end back at the Police Headquarters.

Another chat with your Observer to discuss the final part of the ride and to give feedback on what you thought of the training and how it was set up etc. Then I was then heading off home.

I personally found it very interesting especially the discussions on the various topics that came up. This is not a pass or fail training session which takes the pressure off a bit. If the opportunity comes up to participate in the Plus Pass training scheme sometime in the future I would tell anyone to go for it. You've got nothing to lose and something to gain.

David Henderson

Ps. New "Aldi" jacket, well the zip failed!!! Took it back on the Monday for a replacement but there was none available nor at any of the other shops in the area. Had to settle for a refund, great shame as it was good value for money.

Central Café, Whithorn.

On one of our ride outs on the Portpatrick weekend we visited a café' in Whithorn, Galloway called the Central Café. It's owned by Paul and Elizabeth Soriani. This was a surprise stop off organised by Jack and Kevin as we were on our way to visit The Isle of Whithorn. The reason was for us to treat ourselves to some "real" Italian ice cream. It proved to be a great idea as the ice cream was very, very good. The café is run by Paul and Elizabeth and she took the opportunity to ask us to pose outside the café so she could take photos to display in the café. We, being a group of bikers who just love to be photographed were all too happy to oblige. We got ourselves organised and the photographs were duly taken. She then joined the group and posed whilst I took photographs of her with the group along with some of her in the café with the two girls. She briefly chatted about the café and its history. I emailed the photos to her and asked if she could give me a bit more detail of its history. This is the reply Paul sent me. It was opened in 1933 by Paul's Grandparents, Italo and Pepe Petrucci. It has been handed down for 3 generations with Paul and Elizabeth being the 3rd. Whilst they have contributed to the continued success of the café it is Italo's recipe for the ice cream that brings people from far and wide along with the fish and chips they serve.



The Café girls



Shannon

Elizabeth

Martina



Elizabeth with us outside the Café

THE I.A.M and N.A.M. welcomes the following new members.



Clinton Young



William (Bill) Houghton



Peter Currie

Congratulations' to the following members on passing their I.A.M. – N.A.M. Advanced riding test.



Jerry White



Alex Smith



Steven Carey



May weekend to Portpatrick



N.A.M's new member.



March ride out to Shildon Railway Museum.



Wilf and David at Eden Camp.

A NAME TO A FACE TO A NAME



Andrew Smith



Barry Reay



David Thompson



David Thornton



David Steedman



David Walton



Derek Joicey



Donald Fraser



Dr Clive Taylor



Edward Turnbull



Gordon Wilson



Geoffrey Spencer



James Fidler



John Fisher



John Fagan



John Magee



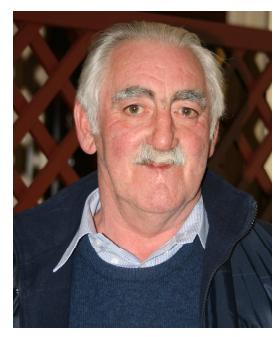
John Marshall



John Neil



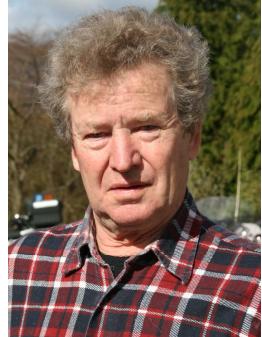
Lynne Alexander



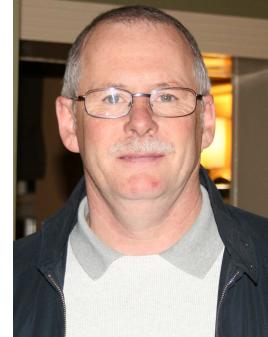
Malcolm Macpherson



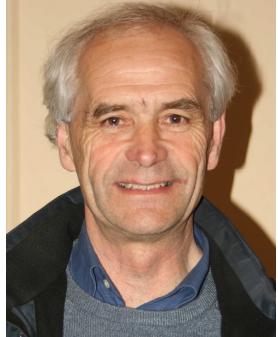
Neil Oliver



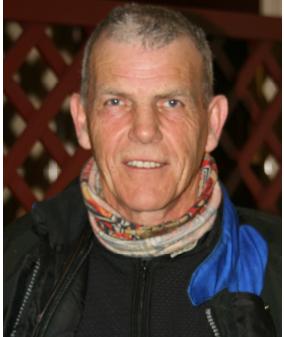
Norman Mordue



Richard Robinson



Roland McLeod



Ted Scott

Some of the Clubs Biking Couples



David & Ann



Neil & Ellen



John & Eileen



William & Jackie



Steven & Gillian



David & Sandra



Neil & June



Robert & Patricia



Terence & Janet



Kevin & Louise



Malcolm & Joan



Michael & Geraldine



Jack & Anne



John & Maureen



William & Christine

My thanks to the following contributors for writing articles for the Spring N.A.M. Newsletter.

Jack Lormor; Ron Patrick; Michael and Alice Goodwin; David Henderson; Kevin Wellden; Central Café. I.A.M.

David Henderson. Editor.

Have a look on the N.A.M. Website and the N.A.M Forum for information on forthcoming events and ride out information.

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Northumbria Advanced Motorcyclists (N.A.M) or the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists (I.A.M) and should not be interpreted as such.