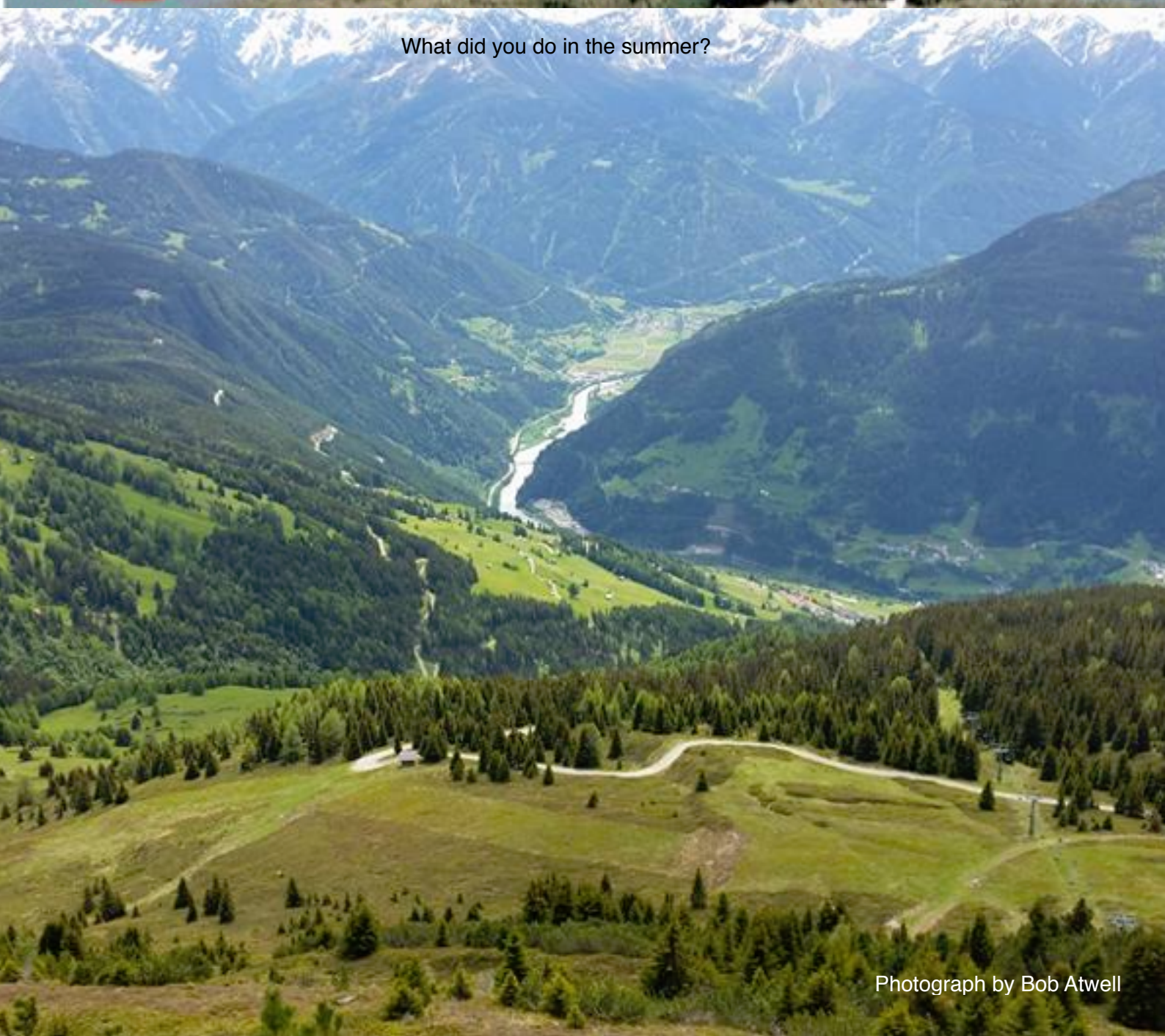




# Northumbria Advanced Motorcyclists

What did you do in the summer?



Photograph by Bob Atwell

**iam**  
RoadSmart





## Chairman's Remarks



As I write this, the end of the main riding season is just about on us and I'm reflecting on another very successful summer for NAM. To list a few successes, in no particular order:

Pitlochry weekend : Despite all the weather could throw at us on the ride up, we had a great weekend, especially as the weather changed to allow a couple of classic Pitlochry ride outs. As the photos testify, much fun and merriment was had by all. Thanks in particular to John McCormick for all the hard work in organising it.

On the same theme, the end of season weekend away in the Lake District again proved immensely popular and great fun.

The Albermarle Skills days built on the success of last year and were very well attended. This year saw the devising of even more fiendish courses (thanks to Mike Briant and all those who assisted) to test and build on our skills. In addition we saw the return of the Heighley Gate evening slow riding sessions.

The two ride outs per month have become so popular, that we regularly have over thirty bikes, causing some organisational headaches for David Murphy, our ride out coordinator. Many thanks as well to all the new ride out leaders and back markers who have come forward, bringing the benefit of some new roads and cafes to explore.

Ten new Local Observers have been recruited and the majority have now finished their training. This is fortunate because we have trained 31 associates so far this season, with 24 passes and 7 F1rst. This has been so exceptional that our IAM Roadsmart examiners and Regional Manager have gone out of their way to praise the achievement. As if all this wasn't enough for our Training Team and Observers, there has been a complete change of

training material to disseminate and grasp.

Consequently, classroom sessions for observers and associates have proved well attended and popular.



Despite the atrocious weather at the start of the day, the inaugural Jack Lormor Memorial ride was very well attended and a substantial amount of money was raised for the North East Air Ambulance. Jo Lormor was very touched by the event, especially as the riders swept past her home in tribute to Jack and the

enormous contribution he made to the group. Again many thanks to David Murphy and all who helped to organise it, especially his family who he roped in to assist. Last, but not least, the monthly meetings and fish shop runs have been attended by up to 80 people. One of the most popular nights was at Coopers BMW at Boldon. Thanks to their kind

invitation and provision of a buffet 80 people attended to hear a great adventure and brush with Royalty by our fellow member Dave Routledge. These have been just a few of the highlights for me over this season and I'm sure you will have your own memories. Unfortunately, I don't have enough space to name everyone who has been involved in organising something, or contributing to the group whether formally or informally, during this summer season, but please, on behalf of the entire group accept our sincere thanks.

Finally, a big thank you to all the members, associates and friends who attended and hopefully enjoyed the events without whom none would have been a success. I hope many of you will be able to come to the AGM on 8th November, to hear in person about last years successes and some of the events planned for next year. Hopefully I'll see you there.

Mick Goodwin

## Notes from the Editor



Welcome to the third edition of the NAM Newsletter, I hope that you've all had a good summer with many adventures that you'd like to share in the next Newsletter. I've certainly had a wonderful summer - Ireland in May and Luxembourg in September with as many weekly and NAM rides as I could fit in and still stay married!! It would not have been as good had it not been for great planning -

ask Michael Wilkinson. I can recommend the hotels we used Il Castello Borghese, Senningerberg and Het Anker Mechelen. The roads, scenery and company were brilliant. As you'll see:

## Blink and You'll Miss It!

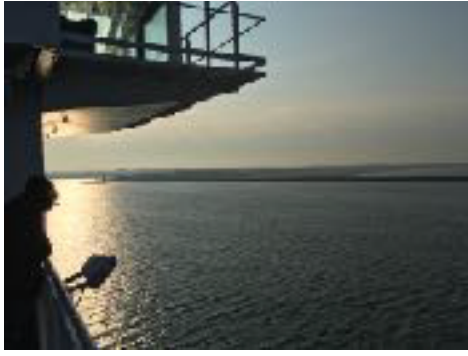
"Where are you off to then?"

"We are having a few nights in Luxembourg and one night in Belgium on the way to the ferry home"

"Why Luxembourg, there's nowt there"

I'll bet that each of us who went to Luxembourg in September had this or a similar conversation. Indeed despite five of our travelling companions having been to just about every corner of the world on their bikes, including Timbuctoo, and they hadn't been to Luxembourg. It's not just the place you used to listen too - or tried to listen to, I never got a good signal - on your transistor. It's not just the place where the European Court of Justice sits; and it's not just one of the three capitals of the European Union.





It's a very worthwhile destination in it's own right. About 260 miles from Ijmuiden - so only 261 riding miles from North Shields using the DFD ferry - Luxembourg is an ideal base from which to explore Northern Germany and the Moselle Valley;

Eastern France and the thought provoking battlefields and museums of the Verdun area and the forests of the Ardennes with all the Battle of The Bulge historical

connections.

Also highly recommended is the medieval town of Vianden to the north of Luxembourg City with it's fairytale castle, ancient houses and fantastic cafes and restaurants



A small but prosperous country, Luxembourg has the money to spend on it's road system and it shows . Leaving the main roads the area abounds with forested twisty roads all in superb condition. It's a great place to practice cornering and hairpins

and the best thing of all is that there is very little traffic apart from the odd tractor (which of course we Brits paid for with our contributions to the European budget ... ). There is a motorway network second to none. Some of the engineering has to be seen to be believed - bridges and tunnels are all over along with great curving interchanges which seem almost endless.

The towns and villages are so beautifully cared for it's sometimes a pleasure to take a wrong turning just to look at the houses and gardens! I often wish that the contractors who



lay the tarmac on the roads of Tyne and Wear and Northumberland could go to



Luxembourg for some training in how to achieve a smooth finish. You may have gathered that I am a bit of a Luxembourg fan. It's true. My son and his then fiancée, now wife, lived and worked there for some years as part of the large ex-pat community servicing the financial industry which is the heart of the Luxembourg economy. We enjoyed visiting and



exploring - going to see him in London isn't quite the same as the adventure of boarding the ferry to foreign parts and enjoying amongst other things apfelstrudel mit eis and sahn.

I've been at all times of the year and each has special attractions and whilst the summer months are best for biking, the December Christmas Market in Luxembourg is enchanting, especially around five when the office workers end their working day by calling for a glass or

two of Gluewhein and a couple of gromperekichelcher (which are a delicious Luxembourgish potato snack similar to rosti - highly recommended!) I'm not going to write a whole travel book, there are enough available already.

However, I strongly recommend that you consider visiting Luxembourg. Don't just make it a country which you whizz through on the way to Switzerland, Italy or further afield. It will reward you with good roads, great countryside, excellent foods and very nice local wine and, perhaps most importantly, a choice of roads and ride outs which are as good as you will find anywhere.



Our group stayed at two restaurant-hotels I in the village of Senningerberg near to



Luxembourg

Airport only a few miles from the capital city. Both are great small hotels with a fantastic restaurants owned by the same people Everyone of us enjoyed every meal.



## TRAINING

For me one of the core principles of advanced riding is maintaining concentration. To constantly observe and utilise the information stage to its fullest, the rider must be aware of their surroundings at all times, therefore concentration is a must. When asked what is the job of an observer I often say we are here to produce a thinking rider. We are certainly not here to teach people how to ride, that is the job of an instructor, at post learner test level associates comes with a certain level of riding ability already. Our aim is to get associates thinking about what they are doing and why they are doing it. So with that in mind how difficult is it in the modern age to maintain a decent level of concentration? When the IAM was formed back in 1956 they certainly did not have the technology we possess today. Now we are faced with mobile phones and sat-navs, add in head up displays and ever increasing levels of signage and street furniture, coupled with a mix of the odd Pokemon hunting car driver and you certainly have a recipe for disaster. The IAM have taken the first steps towards addressing these issues by including the use of modern technology within the new Roadsmart material, but where does that leave the experienced rider? Many riders now have Bluetooth intercoms fitted into their helmets, these pair up to many devices at the same time, so now you can be riding along chatting away to your pillion when the phone rings in your ear. If you are travelling at sixty miles per hour you cover ninety feet in one second. How long does it take you to answer the phone? The World Health Organisation published a document stating that drivers affected by Cognitive Distraction, ie using a phone, are four times more likely to be involved in a collision than a driver who is not using a distracting device. So far no evidence has been published to show that using hands free devices are any safer. The answer to this growing problem lies with the individual. You may feel you need to be in constant contact with someone, or you may need directions when riding in foreign lands, I doubt no one would argue the benefits these devices can bring. The next time you're riding along listening to the radio, or chatting to your better half, just ask yourself what is the driver behind you doing? Are they paying attention and concentrating as they should? Or are they hunting Pokemon in an artificial world of augmented reality.

A comment was made by two examiners recently with regards to the riding quality of test candidates coming forward from NAM. It basically went along the lines of, “ I don’t know what NAM are doing but they need to keep doing it”, we are seeing a high number of Firsts being awarded and those that have not met that standard are being highly commended on their riding. This is the result of the hard work and dedication being put in by the observers and it is to those people that the credit must go. Being an observer can be tiresome at times, sometimes you find it hard to face the rain, sometimes you simply want more time to yourself but you know you have a duty to an associate. The upside is the satisfaction that comes from seeing a successful test pass, it has also been known to be the start of some long term friendships, and sometimes a simple thank you is enough to bring on a smile. We recruited new observers this year, and whilst the process has not been without difficulty, we are starting to reap the fruits of the process with the introduction of some new faces.

We have had more people volunteering to assist with both our skills events and assist with training, this is the lifeblood of NAM, without people willing to give up their time we would not have a club so do not doubt how appreciative we are of your willingness to help. It is precisely because people take time out of their busy lives to volunteer that NAM is a successful club. I am not talking about club officials, I am talking about the people who volunteered to help run the popular skills sessions at Heighley Gate and Albermarle, the people who volunteered to help train the new observers, the wives and partners who put up with the endless bike conversations. Hopefully, NAM will continue to grow; people will continue to offer their time and their expertise, and if you have a good idea why not bring it forward. You can bring your ideas to anyone of the Training Team or committee, none will be dismissed and all will be considered. So with a little bit of forward planning next year will be even better, as the nights draw in towards the bad weather I am already thinking of the successor to the plank.

Paddy Jarvis

Chief Observer

## **The New Highway Code 16<sup>th</sup> Edition 2015**

The latest edition of the Highway Code which was introduced properly in 1935 is now freely available at Post Offices and main newsagents and it’s well worth getting hold of a copy. It has a dark blue cover with an old car and a modern car ‘morphed’ into one on the front page.

Prior to the driving test being introduced under the Road Traffic Act on March 26<sup>th</sup> 1934 it was possible to drive/ride yourself down to your nearest Post Office and pick up your full driving licence without ever having tuition or sitting a practical test of any kind! Initially the driving test was voluntary until it became law on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1935 that every motorist should

take the test before driving/riding on public roads. The Highway Code which was first published in 1931 became a mandatory part of learning to drive and taking the practical test from the same date in 1935.

Here are some interesting statistics; before the test despite there being only 2.7 million drivers in the country over 7,000 people a year were killed on Britain's roads.

These days there are over 27 million drivers but the number of actual fatalities has fallen to a quarter of the 1935 figures making the busy roads in Great Britain among the safest in the world.

If my arithmetic is right, the roads are ten times more crowded but overall they are forty times safer than before!

The actual driving test has seen a number of changes over the years including the introduction of the CBT test in 1990 (Compulsory Basic Training), the Theory test in 1996 and the Hazard perception test in 2002.

To add a bit of interest, which common road sign has been deleted from the latest edition and which sign has been given a new name?

Answers please to The Chairman at the AGM in November.

Michael Sutherland

## **A South American Adventure**



There are some regions of the world that grab your imagination and for us South America was not to be missed. Our research suggested a BMW1200 GS adventure would do the job so we traded our bikes for a new GS in 2013. The plan was to complete 2 legs of the Trans Americas expedition in 2016 heading from Montevideo in Uruguay to Ushuaia, then north through Santiago to Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and finishing in Bogota Colombia. While this seemed like a long way off, we had to take into account my lack of off-road riding skills, Julie's lack of any motorcycling experience and how we could get 12 weeks off work and family commitments. So the challenge began.

I began my Skills for life course to become a better rider and had Mick Goodwin as my observer; completed the BMW Off-road skills course level 1. ( must do level 2 ) and



acquired some ladies gear from Cheryl Robinson (for Julie). We did our first trip to Pitlochry, going on to complete a few more trips through Europe, and put 20k miles on the bike in 2 years. I prepared the bike and bought ourselves new suits and boots to cope with both the weather and terrain we would encounter. The preparations included riding the gravel and fire trails through Kielder following which I did my own modifications to the bike, for both safety and comfort.

The Sargent seats were definitely the best modification, thanks to Simon Parry. Protection for the lights and oil cooler, ABS and lambda sensors as well as the fuel and injection system. I removed the standard mudguard and forgot to remove the wunderlich hugger which lasted about 5 minutes off road. Touratech supplied an Expedition sump guard, better hand guards, phone carrier and chargers, bar risers and pivot pegs also proved invaluable. Some new conti 70s fitted, bike serviced and away to London to be shipped to the start of our adventure (6weeks at sea).

We trialled suits and boots and both used BMW dry suits with rst over suits for really wet weather. Sidi enduro and GTX ladies enduro boots proved invaluable. Our shoei lids both leaked in testing here in heavy rain and shoei who are aware of the problem did a modification to cure the problem (thanks to Rachel at Newcastle Honda).

Six months of doctors appointments and injections, lotions and potions tested and precautionary medicines for malaria and altitude sickness were all acquired. April Goodwin helped us prepare for a number of difficulties we would encounter, but the warning about altitude sickness was really beneficial.

Towards the end of February I flew into Buenos Aires via Paris; my adventure had begun. Julie's adventure would begin 5 weeks later. In all we would complete 12000 miles, 2500 miles of non Tarmac roads, 70 days of riding through 7 countries and 19 border crossings. South Americans of all countries always asked us 3 standard questions: 1. Where are you from? 2. How much was the bike? 3. Where are you going to?

The intense preparation proved invaluable both on road and off road and in mad traffic in some cities where Julie would use both arms to get us some space to proceed.

Heading South from Montevideo to Buenos Aires and 2500 miles to Ushuaia via Rio Gallegos and the military bases adjacent to Las Malvinas. The south Atlantic is wild, the penguin colonies were huge and regular riding days of 350 miles with one day of 490 miles ( if I hadn't got lost). I had many conversations with local people whom were friendly and

very proud that someone would travel from 'Inglaterra ' to visit their country even though the road signs read ' las Malvinas son Argentinas'. Not quite the welcome Clarkson



received! Riding on ruta 3

south required new techniques to keep the bike moving in winds which were both extreme and unrelenting. Thankful of the rideout through the dales the previous year on a howler of a Sunday, all practice for what was to come. The route through Patagonia was beautiful with many diverse forms of wildlife and no traffic. To cross into Tierra del Fuego (land of fire) meant a ferry over the Magellan straits (wild) and regular border crossings from Argentina to Chile and back again. Here the borders are quick and friendly and relatively straight forward, not quite the same later in the trip. In Patagonia food and drink extended to steak and Malbec, further north we did at least have Guinea pig as an option, and pisco sours. Delicious.

La Pataia is the most southerly place in the world you can ride to after about 45 miles of gravel through a national park. From here the only way is North and the route headed into Chile and followed the Andes, the longest mountain range on earth. And they are awesome. Crisscrossing the Andes and through amazing National parks with live volcanoes, the perito Moreno glacier and up the Caratera Austral which becomes the pan American highway or infamous ruta 40.

Almost every day provided a real challenge either physically or mentally and pushed us to ride in conditions way outside our comfort zone. There were days of 120 miles of steep gravel roads with 180 turns in hot conditions where sitting down was a luxury. The climbs provided a gradual rise in altitude, needed to acclimatise our selves to be able to ride the high altiplano, and cities such as Potosi, and the Jewel of capital cities, La Paz, Bolivia at 4680 metres. The previous highest I'd ever ridden was the Timmelsjoch in Austria at 2750 metres. The ride up to Santiago de Chile was amazing, through the beauty of the Andes, staying on ranches in Argentina and sleeping on a puma skin, and swimming in the Pacific Ocean.

Arrival in Santiago de Chile showed I had travelled 5500 miles, so I had the bike serviced at BMW and had the tyres changed. Julie had flown in to join me here and we had 4 days of city sight seeing and a 180 mile rideout up the coast through Valparaiso and return via the edge of Aconcagua the highest peak in the American continents. This got Julie back in the saddle and we prepared for the big push north into Argentina via Mendoza to The Bolivian border. I also had my birthday in Catamarca. Northern Argentina is spectacular, where most people are seen on horseback, real Gaucho country much to Julie's great pleasure to find out the famous gauchos use saddles modelled on an English design.

Through into Bolivia on concrete roads should have been relished but the switchbacks were covered in diesel spills from the less than maintained trucks with a few bikers in front of us coming off. On one afternoon we climbed from 1900m altitude up to 3850m in one ascent through 45 switchbacks at really slow speed to try and stay upright. The gravel looked inviting after that. The focus and concentration needed made even short distances quite tiring. Looking back down the valley from the top was amazing and the next 100 miles took us through volcanic valleys with gargantuan featured mountains. Llamas, rias, condors, Eagles and the odd puma were some of the wildlife present. Northern Argentina, Bolivia and Peru are the poor neighbours of Chile Ecuador and Colombia who are comparatively prosperous from minerals and wine.

At this time there was an earthquake in Ecuador where we were headed in about 10 days. The roads In Bolivia have deep gulleys in them to carry rainwater from the Andes to the left to the dry river beds on the right. On one intense day of rain a biker ahead of us came off when he hit gravel in a gully. He was carried 300 m down the valley under water. Although he was badly injured, he survived. He was hospitalised for a few days but his injuries forced him to fly home. His bike was scrapped and as you can only get 3rd party insurance, quite a costly rain storm. That day we were riding in floods on the pan am highway where the water was halfway up my boots while on the bike. Each gully we approached had to be carefully considered as to how we could proceed.

We actually rode many miles that day with a group of Brazillians who had a guide and were returning from the Moto G P in Rio Honda. Our destination was La Paz and it was

well worth the journey. The highest Capital city in the world which has beautiful natural features in Valley of the moon and Killi Killi and the frenetic life of an amazing city livelier than anywhere we've ever





been made this one of our favourite destinations. A must!!!

At these altitudes we would dress and carry all our belongings and checkout of the hotel all in one go because it was too tiring to walk back upstairs. In one hotel we could only climb 5 stairs before resting, The average Bolivian is about 5 foot tall and almost as wide. We found drinking Coca tea was a big help (banned here of course)!!!

Leaving Bolivia we crossed Lake Titicaca on a barge.

The ride to Puno around the lake and the families who live on the reed beds was wonderful. Heading through Peru up to the Inca Citadel of Machu Picchu where I proposed to Julie in a quite stunning setting. Someone said it would be a life changing adventure!!!



Heading on through Peru up to Ecuador the culture change is enormous and the roads became more dangerous due to the result of the earthquake, challenging every day but fun. Here we found a few night clubs for our other passion - dancing.

Lush vegetation, beautiful mountains, lovely people, good clubs and a great time on the bike, what more of an adventure could we ask for? Well Colombia would provide that in spadefulls. Biking wasn't recommended here at all as a tourist until 3 years ago due to ride by shootings by motorbike, pillion passengers were illegal until rules were relaxed for visitors only 18 months ago. Wealthy, wild, dangerous, lush and green, amazing

experience in the gun toting drug capital of the western world. Visits to the Colombian national coffee park and museum as well as the worlds leading centre of emerald trading where to look at jewellery (we did get engaged here) we had to pass two sets of armed guards just to have a look at rings. But would we return... absolutely. Here in Bogota we would end our adventure having 4 days to chill and have the bike transported to Cartagena to be shipped to the uk.

A great experience in countries we've heard of and read about and to engage with local people in their own environment and benefit from stunning scenery with awesome natural features made this the greatest experience we've ever had.



Colin Bates & Julie Shipley

## SUCCESES



Wendy Stuckey F1rst Pass



John Berwick Smith F1rst Pass



Kev F1rst Pass



Paul Harbron Pass





Chris Pass



Peter Dodgson Pass

David Wood



Robert Heron



Tony Portlock

## New Members

Trevor Hartley	4 July
Stephen Pratt	15 July
Steve Jones	2 August
Chris Tolley	2 August

Derek Farrow	5 August
Tony McMillan	11 August
Ian Marshall	11 August
Joshua Stepherdson	15 August
Alan Nixon	30 August
Adam Brown	13 September
Jim Ludsord	19 September

...AND FINALLY

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN**

**by order of the Group Committee that the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting of**

**NORTHUMBRIA ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS**

**Will be held at 7.30 pm on Tuesday November 8th 2016 at  
The Britannia Hotel, Newcastle Airport, Ponteland NE13 8DHJ**

**To enable the Trustees of the Group to present their Annual Reports and Accounts  
for year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016  
for approval by the Group Members and to conduct an election.**

If there are Members who would like to share there experiences about their bikes, accessories and some good advice please email:

[newsletter@nam-online.org](mailto:newsletter@nam-online.org)

