

# **Derbyshire Advanced Motorcyclists**

**News Letter  
April 2011**

**For members and friends  
of Derbyshire Advanced  
Motorcyclists.**

**I.A.M. Group no.3146  
Registered Charity  
no. 1049060**

**We meet at 7.30 p.m.  
on the second Monday  
of the month in the  
Meadows Inn,  
Chequers Road, Derby,  
just off the A52  
Pentagon Island.**





"Some doctor on tv this morning said the way to achieve inner peace is to finish all the things you have started. So I looked around my house to see things I'd started and hadn't finished so I have managed to finish off a bottle of Merlot, a bottle of Chardonnay, a bottle of Baileys, a bottle of wum, a package of Prungles, the remainder of bot Prozac and Valiumun scriptins, the rest of the chesecake and a box of choclets. You have no idea how bloody fabulous I feel right now. Please send this on to me you are in need of inner peace. An telum, u bloody love!!!"

## Chairman's Bits.

With the AGM over and done with and the newly elected committee in place we are about to set off on hopefully another successful season. The first event for your calendar is the Easter Egg Run to the Royal Derby Children's hospital on Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup>. This is thankfully being coordinated again this year by John Lloyd and will be starting from the Little Chef car park on the A38 at Little Eaton, so in support of all the children less fortunate than most please as many members and friends as possible turn up armed with Easter Eggs and help put a smile on the youngsters faces.

Most likely from May onwards we will be organising Sunday runs, these will usually be on the Sunday following club night, whilst John has said he will spearhead the organisation of the runs he is looking for ideas for runs and help in their planning from the floor of the membership so please if you have routes in mind or can give John help, please contact him.

Something possibly new for this year is that Birmingham Advanced Motorcyclists are hoping to organise an inter group competition which will involve observed runs, slow machine

control and a road craft and highway code test, we have said that we are willing to enter a team/s and I am sure we can give the West Midlands a run for their money. Tony Grimshaw will be organising this one so please give him a ring and lodge your interest in taking part.

After the AGM members present were given an excellent chat on accident scene management by Barry Rudge, one of the "Emergency Bikers" from the Channel 5 TV series. Interest was such in the talk that we have asked Barry to return next February and give members an update and refresher on what could be a life saving exercise. We have another couple of speakers lined up for the period September onwards but I would be grateful to hear from any members with ideas for interesting chats, they do not have to be bike related.

Here's hoping that all enjoy the lighter nights and warmer weather and I look forward to meeting at club events.  
Ride Safely.

*Graeme..*

## **DAM Meeting /Event Diary, for 2011**

**April 11<sup>th</sup> Club night at The Meadows 8pm.**

**April 16<sup>th</sup> Easter Egg Run to Derby Childrens Hospital  
Assemble 09.45 at Little Chef, Abbey Hill,**

**A38 Little Eaton, Don't forget to bring **EASTER EGGS.****

**May 9<sup>th</sup> Club night at The Meadows 8pm.**

**June 13<sup>th</sup> Club night at The Meadows 8pm.**

**June 19<sup>th</sup> Club run (To be confirmed).**

**July 11<sup>th</sup> Club night at The Meadows 8pm.**

**July 17<sup>th</sup> Club run (To be confirmed).**

**Aug 8<sup>th</sup> Club night at The Meadows 8pm.**

**Aug 14<sup>th</sup> Club run (To be confirmed).**

### **Future Events**

**Saturday Sept 17<sup>th</sup> Run to be organised by Peter Harris.**

**Monday October 3<sup>rd</sup> Club night with Speaker John Knox**

# **Derby Advanced Motorcyclists**

## **Committee for 2011 / 2012**

**Chairman :** Graeme Willett.

**Secretary:** Mick Ford (Acting). **Treasurer:** Mick Ford.

**Minutes Sec'ary:** Emma Dixon. **Membership Sec :** Richard Ballard.

**Test & Guidance :** Mike Barker, Tony Grimshaw, Senior Observers.

**Runs Coordinator:** John Lloyd.

### **Committee Members:**

**Peter Harris.**

**Richard Greaves.**

**Rob Hughes.**

**Pete Macrorie**

## **Derby Institute of Advance Motorcyclists.**

Minutes of 2011 AGM

Venue: The Meadows Inn, Derby                      Date: 8pm March 14<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Total Present: Full voting members:                      34                      Associate non voting members:    2

The meeting was opened by the then Chairman Graeme Willett.

Apologies were noted from the following: Mike Barker, Mike Fourie, Barrie Gill, Rob Hughes, Mike Sheehan, Anita Sheehan, Bob Whitmore and Dave Whitlock.

The minutes of the 2010 AGM were read by the chairman and accepted . Proposed by John Lloyd, seconded by Peter Harris.

The chairman's report for 2010/11 was read by Graeme Willett.

The secretary's report was read in his absence by Mick Ford.

The treasurer's financial report for the past year was read by Mick Ford who then proposed that Dave Whitlock be elected as auditor for 2011/12 ,this was seconded by Graeme Willett and carried unanimously.

The test and guidance report was delivered by Tony Grimshaw.

Election of executive and committee: At this point Graeme Willett stood down and handed control of the meeting to John Lickley (Region 3) . John read out the proposal for the executive ,that being Chairman Graeme Willett, Acting secretary Mick Ford and Treasurer Mick Ford, this was put to the floor and carried unanimously there being no votes against and no abstentions.

The re-elected chairman Graeme Willett then resumed control of the meeting for the election of the committee who stood en-bloc, these being: Emma Dixon (minute's secretary), Richard Ballard (Membership secretary), Tony Grimshaw (Test & guidance, senior observer), Mike Barker (Test & guidance, senior observer), Richard Greaves (committee), Peter Harris (committee), Rob Hughes (committee) and Peter Macrorie (committee).

The election of the committee members was put to the floor and carried unanimously there being no votes against and no abstentions.

Any other business. There was no other business from the floor.

The date for the next AGM was set as March 12<sup>th</sup> 2012

The meeting was closed at 20.25.

## New Zealand. Land of the long white cloud. By Paul and Sharon Hopewell.

Sharon and I planned our month long holiday, in December 2007 to be shared between the two islands of New Zealand. 9 days on the South Island touring in a hired camper van and the remaining time riding a hired motorcycle in the North Island. We arrived in Auckland on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December to be greeted by both Sharon's brothers who had emigrated out there earlier. After spending a day catching up on gossip and getting the jet lag sorted we departed Hamilton airport for Christchurch.

Our camper van was not ready when we arrived so the hire company loaned us a car, this gave us plenty of time to get our provisions and to get used to the traffic as well as get used to the peculiar give way to the right rule. Later we collected our up-graded 3 tonne Ford over cab sleeper 5 berth camper, and set off West toward our first intended tourist destination. It soon became apparent that the distance we needed to cover was deceptively greater than we could comfortably achieve due to the late start that day. We followed highway 73 until we saw a camp site, the one we chose was called 'Jacksons Retreat' and was rated four star but the site entrance and the road up to a small office cabin left a lot to be desired, the potholes were something else. After paying our dues of \$30 we were shown the campsite and were invited to park in any empty bay and help ourselves to any of the facilities. The camp site was a bit of a shambles and I understand it was due to the site being revamped; despite this the facilities would have been good enough to grace any five star hotel. We slept well and the following morning we woke to the sound of Tui and song thrush. We opened the back window curtain to be greeted by a sight that I've only ever seen in magazines, Gods back yard. A valley that was hidden by fading sunlight and shadows the night before, burst through with a visual gob dropper of a view. We stepped outside to see the view, in the flesh so to speak, no traffic, no phone poles and no

towns just a green valley surrounded by grey and purple mountains with snow covered tops just scratching through the surface of the clouds. The first place we had planned to visit that day was Franz Jozef glacier off the west side of Arthurs pass. As we arrived our quest was initially dulled by a sign directing us down another dirt track that, to all intents and purposes, looked more like a farm entrance than a road to a famous tourist sight. Then through the trees a glacier flickered into view. The front face apparently blackened by what could only be described as industrial muck yet its top was white and magnificent as it squeezed its way through the mountains that frankly looked nothing more than large slag heaps. The real size of the mountains revealed themselves the closer we got. After many kilometres along the dusty graded road a busy and well used car park appeared from nowhere. We parked up and walked following the signposts for a while up to a clearing; this clearing offered us the first full view of the glacier which again looked disappointingly dark and dirty, we took a photo and marched down many steps to what could only be described, at first glance, as a stone covered, dried out river bed sporting a creek that meandered through the centre. As we reached the bottom of the countless steps, the stones became large boulders that appeared to have been washed down the river bed by a mysterious force. Some of the large boulders must weigh up to 20 tons; these boulders also left long tell tale gouges on the river bed. The walls on either side of the river bed were high and very steep; showing the scars of what was once a huge glacier and not just a river as I first thought. Walking still further towards the glacier across a very rocky footpath the dirty face became larger and yet more appealing, curiosity drove us on. We had to walk a good distance to get close enough to appreciate the shear size of the gla-

cier. At the end of the footpath lay a cordon restricting further access unless properly equipped with ice climbing equipment and a qualified guide, alas we had neither. It was at this point I understood why people are fascinated by such things, a group of people stood to one side of its base, affording me a gauge with which to comprehend its shear size. It was countless rocks and boulders embedded in the crystal blue and white ice that made the glacier look so dirty from the distance and not the effect of industrial pollution; after all there isn't any industry to speak of in the whole of New Zealand. Looking through the amplified view finder on my camera at 400times magnification I could see people walking in single file beside and on top the glacier itself. My naked eye could only just make out strings of small black motionless dots amongst the white and blue layers of ice. The same awe inspiring sights greeted us at Fox Glacier that was equally as impressive.

Moving on the following day we set off for the 400 kilometre drive to Milton Sound bypassing Queenstown. It's true to say that you can be overwhelmed by what you see. The further south we went the more spectacular the scenery became, the views we first saw at Jacksons Retreat paled into insignificance by the end of the forth day which terminated in a helicopter ride over the mountain range surrounding Milford sound. There is only one road into and out of Milford sound that can best be described as a necklace. The jewels are picnic spots and pull-ins, all with sights that have the power to mellow the hardest heart. Water falls, mirror lakes and bush walks that will leave a lasting impression for as long as I live. At the beginning of this twisty road lies the town of Te Rouwa that has only one road in and two roads out, two of the roads go to beautiful coastal features and no further Doubtful sound is one and the other is Milford sound. I was

warned by the campervan hire personnel that I may find the road to Milford sound very challenging, rubbish. En-route to Milford sound requires you to be prepared for a long uphill journey over some simple narrow road bridges crossing some magnificent water features or spanning gorges, none more difficult than a drive through mid Wales. The winding road temporarily terminates at a tunnel entrance controlled by a set of traffic lights that are only active during daylight hours between 9am and 6pm. The tunnel entrance is above the mountainous snow line.



When we arrived at this point the nearby car park was partially snow bound and some visitors spent a while making snowmen and throwing snow balls. The tunnel is very narrow, but three kilometres long and very steep. As you enter the tunnel it descends rapidly; a low gear was quickly selected and brakes were used to restrain the camper throughout. The tunnel has been rough cut with easy missable almost invisible passing places cut in the porous unlit roof, for safety I remained in the centre of the road during the descent. The remaining leg of the journey, about 20 kilometres, starts with a very twisty down hill section then off to gentle undulat-

ing curves. Milford sound is a loch of gigantic proportions leading out to the Tasman sea skirted by snow covered mountains. Apart from an airfield, a large car park, a couple of motels and a ferry terminal there's not much else there. The ferries are mainly serving the tourist trade by providing half or all day excursions for a moderate cost. The airfield was busy launching wave after wave of twin engine passenger aircraft presumably returning to their respective departure fields. After a coffee in a nearby café we went about looking for an overnight campsite and found one about two kilometres back along the road. Our campsite was pitched overlooking a fast flowing crystal clear river. We left the camper on site and walked to the airfield to negotiate a flight in a helicopter to go over the sound and the nearby mountains.

The view was breathtaking and without doubt worth more than the money we paid out to get there. To top it all we landed on the top of the snow capped mountain and stepped out onto the blue/white snow covered glacial cap. The view was far beyond my extreme imagination what looked like a few hundred metres away stood the tip of one of the second tallest mountains on the south island and below lay the rest of the world clear and crisp from sea to shining sea. We returned back to base completely and utterly speechless, the walk back to the camper was in silence, practically bursting with emotion with what we'd seen.

The following morning we got up early to beat the rush of coaches that effortlessly weave their way through the twisty road. We stopped off at various view points taking advantage of the early morning sunlight for some last minute pictures. Then came the task of negotiating the tunnel hill climb, only the traffic lights weren't working, and that meant we had to run the gauntlet of traffic coming the other way down in that narrow tunnel. The top nearside of the camper was perilously close to the jagged rock roof of the tunnel as we tried to

find the passing places and keep moving to avoid burning the clutch on the countless hill starts. We finally made it out into the sunlight where I had to pull over and let the engine cool and my nerves to settle, next time I'll wait until the lights start working before going that way again. The next stop was Invercargill; as named by the original Scots settlers. This was a sleepy town until one entered the town centre then things livened up. It was a town full of high powered and fancy cars of every conceivable type regardless of age. They all appeared to have been under the customizer's gas axe and spray gun. Cars are either lovingly and fully restored or hacked and malformed to new levels of customisation. The city main street was one huge cruise of Ute's 'n' Beut's laden with young men and women leaning out and waving or calling to their friends. I asked a passer by if this display of cars was a show or something, but I was told that unfortunately it's like that all the time when the weather is nice... wow. It was worth sitting outside the restaurant just watching the traffic despite the local shopper's disapproval.

We headed off to Lands End in the town of Bluff expecting to get charged for the privilege, but instead we drove right up to the signpost and got our pictures taken together and returned the favour for another couple. Parking was free just as it had been all over rest of the Island.

The next stop was possibly the most peaceful, the southern most peninsular is marked by a solitary signpost indicating that we were approximately halfway between the South Pole and the Equator. We couldn't see any icebergs from our vantage point but the air was cold and heavy, cold enough to have to wear coats and hats while stood in the southerly wind. To think, a colossal mass of land, snow and ice called Antarctica was just beyond the horizon, just out of sight. We stayed there for about an hour until the chill settled in and cold hands forced us to seek ref-

uge in the camper before heading off for our next overnight stop. Fortunately the next overnight came in the form of a B'n'B about 10 kilometres away from the coast called The Outpost. It was run by a Welsh couple who had a campervan stand next to the barn and for a measly 20bucks (£9.50) a night. Dinner was also available and I have to say it was in keeping with the rest of the Island's reputation of good wholesome well prepared food.

From here we started back towards Christchurch as we had gone as about as far as we could do without having to drive 24 hours a day to get back before the end of the campervan lease period. We headed off north toward Dunedin on the main highway along the flat lands, the roads are straight and long and almost devoid of junctions, bridges and traffic. Kilometre after kilometre of nothing, until the traffic started to thicken and lorry's started to appear with ever greater frequency, before long we found ourselves on a 3 lane motorway flying past Dunedin and eventually back to a solitary road watching black birds fighting off bird's of prey in fantastic aerial ballet's. We stopped at a picnic site for our first unsupported night camp; the name of the site was perhaps a clue as to why many people don't camp there too often, 'Windwhistle'. It was an idyllic spot with tall fir trees and small contrasting bushes either side of a gap that opened out to a similar view to the very first view we saw at Jackson's retreat. Another couple also had the same idea as us and set up camp, we chatted together for a while before night fall forced us to retreat to the campers for a rest from relentless hoards of sand flies and mosquito's. That night around midnight the wind got up, it was very strong and constant, the trees did indeed whistle and the van certainly rocked. Sharon said she felt as if we were flying, such was the noise and the strength of the wind; for a while I thought maybe we should move on away from this place. Eventually the wind died

down and just before day break I opened the curtains to find that the other couple had gone during the night, it seems' they had the same idea I had that night. One more night left and a hundred kilometres to go so we decided to head to Christchurch and stay at a local overnight stop in the city where we sampled the delights of travelling by bus into the city centre. \$2.50 (98p) and we had our return ticket and no idea where we were to get off when we returned, but get back we did. The following day we handed back the camper and climbed back onboard an aircraft bound for Hamilton.



That day we went off in search of a motorcycle hire shop and found one almost immediately, there were a variety of machines on offer from 250cc to 1200cc, mostly BMW trail machines and Harley derivatives. I refused to ride with feet forward afforded by the Harley copies and Sharon couldn't touch the floor while astride the GS1150 leaving us with no option but to hire a Honda Hornet 900 with a back packer bag and rack and a pair of slightly large waterproof riding jackets. We brought our own helmets with us from the UK as well as some summer gloves, stout boots and a pair of Kevlar lined 'sponge' jeans. Because sponge is exactly

what they were when it rained. 17 days for just under £800, sounds a lot and it is but the roads more than made up for the cost of around £45 a day including 'no worries insurance'. You've got to read the small print - 'No worries' can still cost the earth, if you hit a tree for instance, as you will still be liable for the cost of the damage to the bike but not the tree, insurance companies in New Zealand regard hitting a stationary object like a tree, wall or parked car as negligent and you will end up paying the bike owners for the repair or replacement.

You must drive with your lights on at all times, carry your licence with you at all times and wear a safety helmet, other than that, obey the rules of the road. You will regularly see bikers hooly-ing down the main roads wearing nothing more than helmet, shorts and flip-flops. We got some funny looks when we rolled up at a café on a hot day, all wrapped up as if out for a trip around Antarctica. Another thing, if you are tempted to salute a biker coming the other direction make sure you can see he/she is not wearing a face mask first. I'll try and be diplomatic here and say they are not interested in you, they have more pressing things on their plate, when upset they will Eat you!! They ride very nice custom choppers mainly Harley's with very expensive custom pedigrees, look at the bike to your hearts content, but say nothing, and look no-one in the eye. That sorts out almost everything about riding in NZ except for the killer road rule - when turning left give way to the driver from the right treat the junction as if it where a roundabout - meaning before you turn left at a junction or crossroads check over your right shoulder, if there's a motorist waiting to turn down the same bit of road, look out, because he has right of way over

you and he will run you over... one simple rule. When you first get a vehicle in NZ give way to anything that moves on your right. I have heard that some Kiwi's will run into you to get a replacement car. So be warned.



Another thing, you must use your indicators but remember to switch them off after the hazard or you face a double whammy from both sides of the road. The police look for the indicator switch position after an accident and apportion blame very quickly, judge and jury fashion.

Something else you should know, while on a bike, you are sport. Young male car drivers think they can beat motorcycles, on the straight, from a standing start or on the twisties and will prove it, whether you are a willing participant or not. My advice is don't bite, they will almost certainly win especially on the twisties. Most young people here have a tuned up cars with engines that are either blown V8's or race tuned turbo rotary's almost all go like they are running on nitrous oxide.

When we returned the bike we managed to clock up about 3000 kilometres mainly hooly-ing around as many mountain passes we could find, sometimes more than once, we did stick to the speed limit and in some places even that was impossible

to achieve at times. We visited various places up and down the North Island on our own but most of the riding was with Sharon's brother Stu who owned a Suzuki Hayabusa, on a couple of occasions her other brother Graham(TUG) came along on his Suzuki 109R.

For the most part Stu rode very well and in a well structured fashion but when I got going on the twisties he found he'd got his work cut out. The motorways in NZ are really dual-carriageways, but in the centre of Auckland the road can widen to four lanes and it is not illegal to overtake on the inside, as a result traffic flows quite well even at rush hour, mind you, kids walk or ride bicycles to school reducing the need for the school run beside that there isn't any traffic anyway.

Within the four lanes the system is as follows, the leftmost lane is for the next available filter and the road name is clearly marked, the next lane from the left is the filter to the following junction, again the road name is clearly marked the two right hand lanes are the motorway proper.

One day, while Stu was at work we decided to head off up north toward the most northerly point in NZ and on the way while passing through Auckland a cloud sprung a leak, it only lasted an hour but in that hour we managed to take on board our own body weight in water, thanks to our Kevlar sponge trousers. We stopped at a café for lunch and a hot cuppa much to the dismay of the proprietor who watched as several gallons of rain water leaked over the edge of our boots on to her nice clean shinny floor. After lunch the sun came out and we splodged over to the bike and set off in the warm drying wind. Despite the rain earlier we rode along the notorious highway 1 in an attempt to get as far north as possible, but night fall threatened to beat us as we caught a ferry to the town of Russell to find a motel to get a bath and a good nights sleep. That night, the rain pored mercilessly, our apart-

ment was on the first floor but that didn't stop us from hearing it rattling against the steel roof two flights up.

The weather report on the following mornings TV gave out dire weather for the northern most point and our trip was cancelled, but by way of compensation we elected to visit Auckland and the sky tower. On our way we elected to use the back road instead of crossing the lake over to the Hwy1 and the road we found was one of the best roads I have ever ridden. 60kilometers of twists and 'u' bends just asking to be ridden and I gave it my all. The speed limit of 100kph is all but impossible to achieve but I would guarantee anyone riding it would be hard pressed not to be grinning like a Cheshire cat at the other end...fantastic.

We rode into Auckland city on the motorway and filtered off to the sky tower and got there without any real bother. Parking is a doddle, just find a gap where bikes are parked and that is about it, that's what we did and the bike was still there after a few hours parked in an alcove in front of a magistrate's office window. Sky tower is not as tall as CNN tower in Toronto but it is still impressive. It was, at the time, reputed to be the tallest structure in the southern hemisphere; it's amazing what they can get to stay upright in a city frequently rocked by earthquakes. While we were on the north Island a town not too far away was hit by an Earthquake of 4.7 on the Richter scale during the night and I slept through it.

Over the remaining few days we rode around the middle bit of the north island the Cormandle Mountains provided much entertainment as did Rotoroa. One day we visited the Maori Heritage centre and I found myself representing the visitors that day as 'Chief Paul'. I was being prompted by a Maori woman as to what I must do during the ceremony and the things I must not do. Do not take my eye's off the warriors eyes when he approaches, do not laugh at his somewhat unusual

approach, pick up the token fern sprig as presented while watching his eyes then I was to return to the woman's side without looking away from the warriors eyes. That successfully done I was spared the potential clubbing that I was told 'could' ensue if it were badly done. Apparently, the Maori take this ritual welcoming (Kia-Ora) very seriously indeed and are not above showing displeasure to anyone who laughs out aloud. The entrance to the meeting hall was just as dramatic with four warriors chanting and bidding me to enter. I removed my shoes first then I walked into the hall.



At the far end was a stage and I was given the best seat in the house along with Sharon, our sister in-law and her daughter. All the others, except the children, had to sit behind us, the kids were allowed to sit on the floor in front of me facing the stage, what a relief. The warriors and four women dressed in traditional beaded skirts and frocks chanted for a while longer then I was called on to the stage to finalise the welcoming ceremony. All four warriors came to the front of the stage and I had to go up and shake the hand touch noses twice then shake the hand again with all of them. I knew they were not really full blown warriors, but

never the less, as they took their roll very seriously, it left me somewhat humbled. Retuning to my seat the chanting and story telling got underway. The story of how Maoris' got to New Zealand and the Whakka (pronounced fakka) was played out with dance routines that use every muscle in their body including the tongue and eyes (the all blacks use this too), it was a spectacular display. After the show we walked around the grounds of the heritage centre and watched the geysers spout off with surprising frequency, one thing that did surprise me was the temperature of the ground under foot, people have been known to get burned. Other features of the heritage centre are the mud pools, seared rocks and pools of alkaline water bubbling away leaving a multi coloured caustic coating on the nearby rocks. Time flies by so fast when enjoyment is to be had and December whizzed by for us. Before we went home we both had a go on both the Hyabusa and the Suzuki 109R. The Hyabusa lived up to its name and provided crotch rocket style entertainment, but I had to hand the keys back to Stu for fear of losing my licence. I handed the keys of the 109R back after a very short time because I valued my life, I'm not saying the bike was unsafe it wasn't, it's just that the 109R's riding position did nothing for me. Sharon also had a go, she set off and momentarily had trouble finding the foot rests despite first sitting astride the bike and checking she could safely reach the pegs beforehand. She did however get on very well with the Hyabusa. On our last but one day we heard that GWRRA-NZ members were having an end of year ride out and BBQ, as I am a member of GWRRA I asked if we could join in and we were warmly welcomed. We met up at a garage on the outskirts of town and set off west. We all rode about 200km and ended up at a park in the middle of a town called Cam-

bridge about 30km away from Hamilton. A few things surprised me about that day, the first was that 20 or so bikes some with trailers rode in perfect zigzag formation and never once got separated by any other vehicles, in fact we saw very few vehicles coming the other way either. The second thing was, we all polled up and drove through the car park and drove into a public park grounds and parked up. One of the trailers opened up to reveal a fully prepared BBQ kitchen and they just lit it up. In contrast, here in Britain, we would not be able to stay together as a whole group while out on a run due to traffic. We also have to pay to park in most car parks. We would certainly be escorted out of a public park by police if we took our bikes in and we would also be fined for lighting a fire in a public place.

New Zealand is a wonderful experience if you don't mind riding a bike, driving a camper or roughing it with a backpack. Many places do require a little driving or riding discomfort to get to them, but that's the fun bit. Food is off this planet, its freshly cooked and from every corner of the globe. Apart from McDonalds and Pizza Hut almost all food is cooked on demand, so you have to wait a while, even for 'Fush'n'Chups'. If there's anything to gripe about it would be them dammed sand flies and mosquitoes, they eat all day and night long, and they particularly like me.

*We walked on the roof of mountains  
and stood on the earth's thin crust.  
We marvelled at crystal clear lakes  
and stood at the source of blue rivers.  
We shivered in Antarctic winds  
and shaded from the suns fiercest heat.  
It's a land of plenty.  
A land of wonder.  
New Zealand...  
Land of the long white cloud.*