

Around the world on a motorbike ... at twenty-two

On 11 July 2019, twenty-two-year-old Jack Groves rode his motorbike from his home near London in the **direction** of Europe. Then, 693 days later, he arrived back home again. He was the youngest person to go around the world on a motorbike. We spoke to Jack about his experience.



Why did you do it?

After university, I wasn't ready for a nine-to-five job. I read about a guy who, at twenty-four, was the youngest to ride a motorcycle around the world. I did the maths and thought, 'Wait, I can beat that.'

What were some of the best moments?

I was riding in Central Asia along the Pamir Highway, on the **way** to Kyrgyzstan and then China, over some of the highest mountains in the world. One night I slept at the Everest base camp under the stars and the brightest moon I've ever seen. Then later, the most exciting moment in the whole **trip** was in November. I was at Machu Picchu in Peru and for the first half hour, I was the only tourist there. It was a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

And the worst?

That was right at the beginning of the trip, a short **distance** from the start, maybe 100 kilometres. I crashed the bike badly. I was OK, but the bike needed repairing. I started the **journey** again soon after.

What was the coldest place you went to?

That was on the **border** between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the second-highest international border in the world. There was a small building there with three border guards. One of them invited me in, gave me a cup of tea and a seat by the fire. So, that was the coldest place, and it was also one of the kindest moments.

And the hottest?

The hottest place was definitely Australia when I was riding along the Eyre Highway, the longest straight road in Australia. It goes along the south coast. It was boring and amazing at the same time. Anyway, they had the three hottest days on record. One day it was forty-five degrees Celsius. When I stopped at a petrol station, I bought two litres of cold water – one to drink and the other to pour on my head.

Did you have any other problems with the weather?

Yes, one problem on a motorbike is the wind. Patagonia was windier than I expected. The wind comes off the ocean with amazing power. It's really difficult and dangerous to ride there.

I'm sure you met a lot of people. How did people react to you?

People on my **route** were friendly everywhere, but as I went east, I felt that the people became friendlier. In Central Asia they were so friendly and invited me into their homes, let me sleep there. They work very hard, but they have more time for other things.

Finally, how has the experience changed you?

Travel is the best way to learn about yourself. Before the trip I was very sure about everything. Now I know that I don't know everything! But I do feel better about talking to people who are older and more experienced than me. I also know that the most important things in life are people, and of course, saying yes to new things.

1. Read the interview and choose the best title.

- a) A difficult university life
- b) A journey around the world by motorbike
- c) The most dangerous roads in Europe
- d) Life in Australia



2. Read the interview again. Are the statements True (T) or False (F)?

- 1 No one has ever been around the world on a motorbike before.
- 2 Jack stayed at the Everest base camp in November.
- 3 He had a bad start to his travels.
- 4 He had tea in a café at the border of Tajikistan.
- 5 In Australia, Jack washed his hair at a petrol station.
- 6 In Patagonia, it was difficult to ride because of the wind.
- 7 Jack visited friends in Central Asia.
- 8 Jack says that he prefers older people as friends.