



The BMW Club
United Kingdom & Ireland

John Cameron's American Adventure

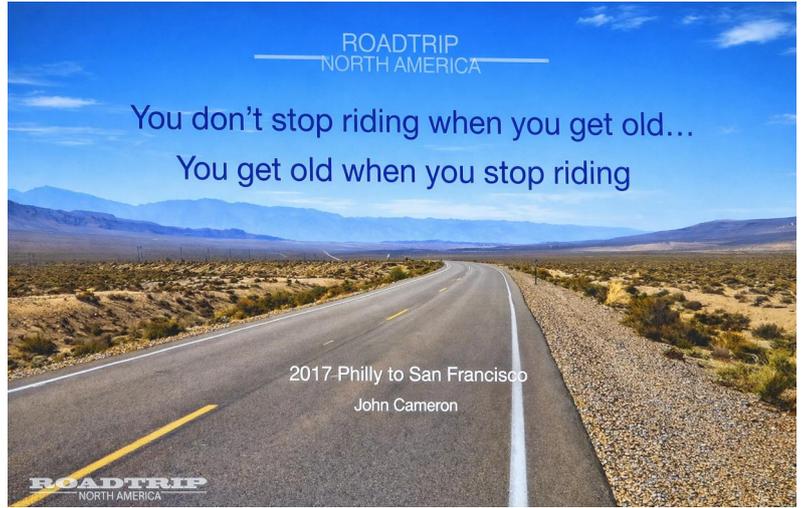
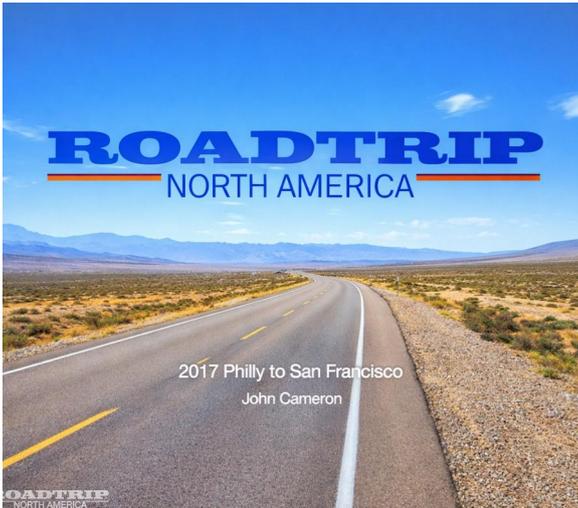
Words by Photos Alison Bailey

Illustrations by John Cameron

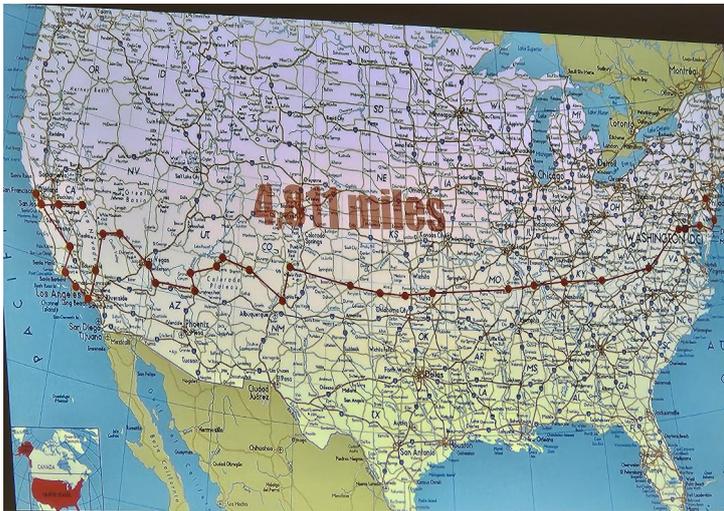
Date: 1st March 2026



Winter Talk Finale – John Cameron's American Adventure



On a rather dreary **Sunday 1st March**, members gathered at **Rake Village Hall** for our **final Winter Talk of the season** (until we start again next January). Thankfully, although the weather outside was a little gloomy, the talk inside was anything but!



Our speaker for the afternoon was **John Cameron** – graphic artist, illustrator and self-confessed petrolhead – who treated us to a fascinating account of his **4,811-mile motorcycle ride across the USA**, travelling from **Philadelphia to San Francisco**.



John chose to make the journey on a **1975 BMW R60/6 Airhead**, explaining that its **simplicity, solid engineering, comfortable riding position and reasonable fuel economy** made it the perfect companion for such a trip. Perhaps most importantly, it's a machine that's **easy to fix on the road** – and, as John pointed out, not a great deal has changed with the design in over forty years.



During his talk, John shared plenty of useful advice for anyone dreaming of a similar adventure. He spoke about the importance of **choosing the right bike**, deciding whether to travel **solo or with friends**, and making sure you understand the **different laws in each state** you pass through. He also stressed the need for **good insurance** – particularly **medical cover** – when travelling abroad.

Four factors for any road trip

4 What kind of bike

Solo ? Pre-digital relaxed / low stress

Accompanied ? Comfort / high speed 2 up

Objective ? Road / trail

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1975 60/60

- Simple
- Well engineered
- Fixable (points)
- low stressed
- Good riding position
- Reasonable mpg

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If I knew then....

Travel insurance
Be absolutely sure you are covered 'motorcycling' is seen on some policies as a high risk activity
Healthcare in America is extremely expensive (twice the cost of UK)

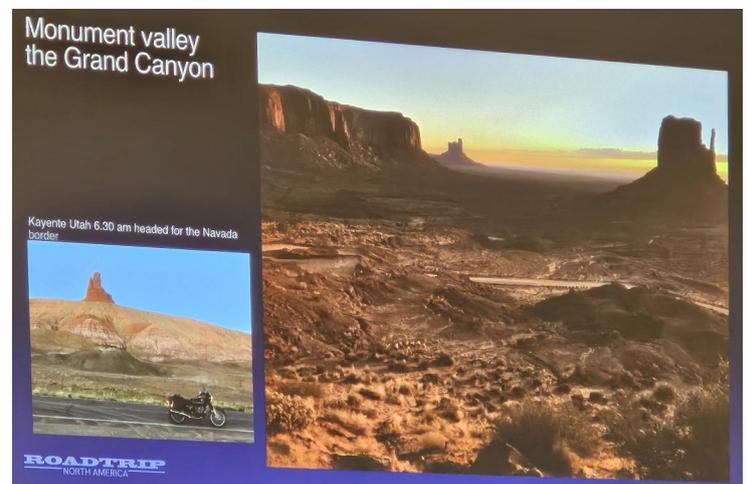
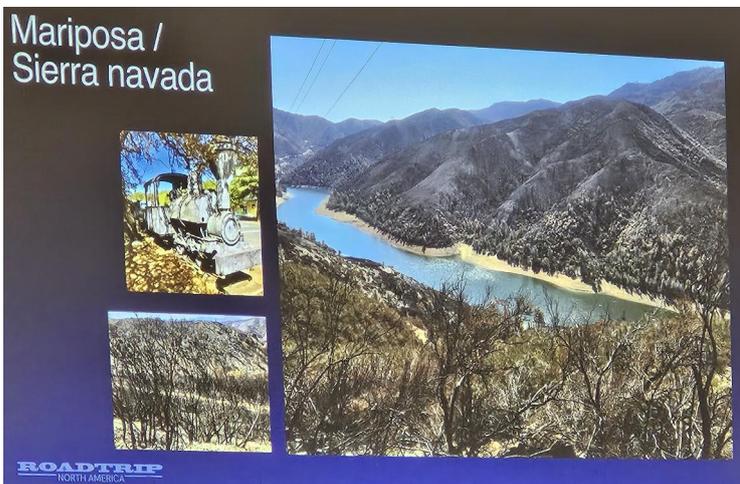
The U.S. Has The Most Expensive Healthcare System

Per capita health expenditure in selected countries 2016

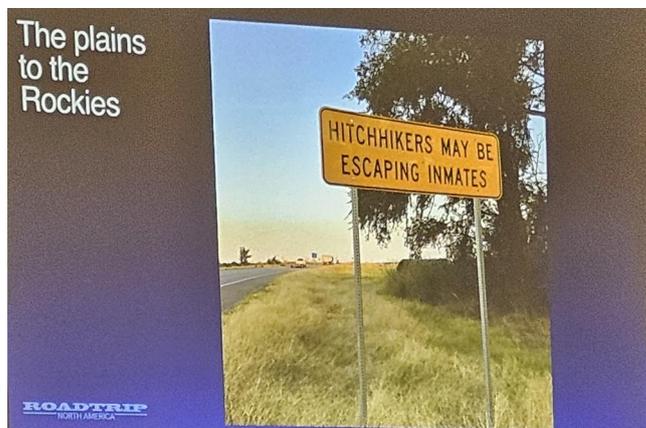
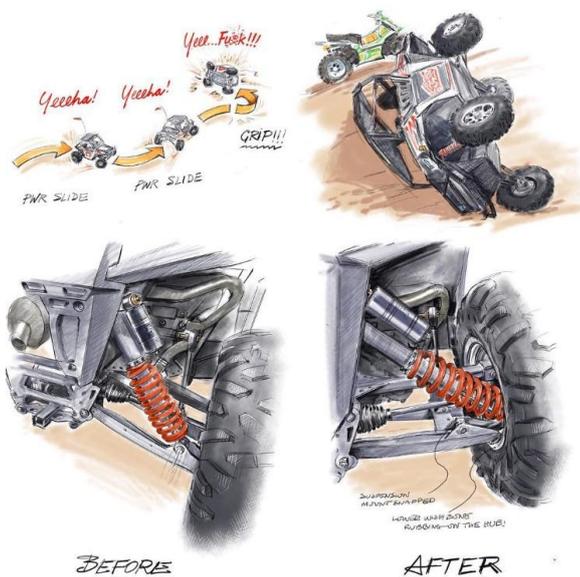
United States	\$10,584
Germany	\$5,886
Switzerland	\$5,447
Canada	\$4,974
France	\$4,862
Japan	\$4,766
United Kingdom	\$4,070
Italy	\$3,426
Spain	\$3,323
South Korea	\$3,192
Russia	\$1,514
Brazil	\$1,282
Turkey	\$1,227
South Africa	\$1,072
India	\$209

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The journey itself took in some truly spectacular scenery, including **Mariposa and the Sierra Nevada**, the iconic landscapes of **Monument Valley**, and the breathtaking views of the **Grand Canyon**.



Of course, no great adventure is complete without the occasional mishap. While travelling along the **Pacific Coast Highway**, John decided to try something a little different and went **off-road in a buggy**. Unfortunately, things didn't quite go to plan – the buggy flipped and the suspension was broken. Thankfully, John escaped unhurt!



There were also a few memorable moments along the way, including a rather alarming road sign on the route from the **plains to the Rockies** which read:

“Hitchhikers May Be Escaped Inmates.”

And if that wasn't enough excitement, John also managed to get **pulled over in Roanoke for dangerous driving**, after filtering through a **three-mile traffic jam** – something that's perfectly normal to many of us on UK roads!



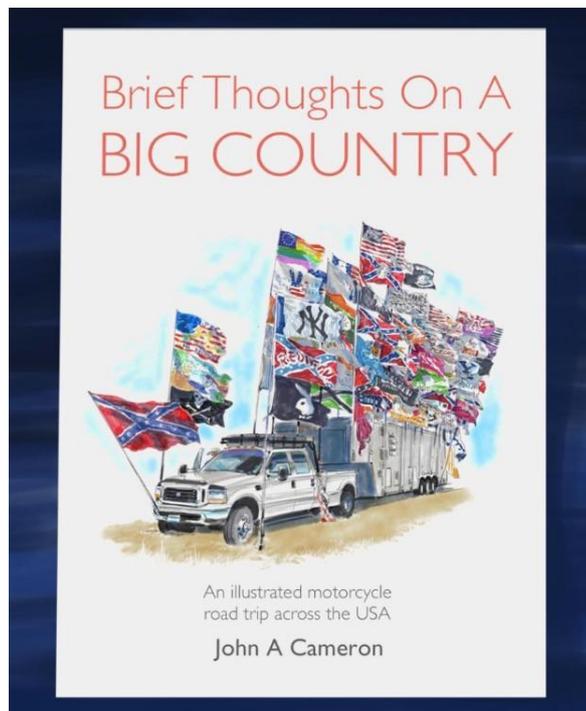
The talk was **excellent, entertaining and full of great stories**, and was enjoyed by everyone who attended.

In a particularly generous gesture, John **did not charge a fee for the talk** and instead asked for donations to his nominated charity, **Orbis**. This remarkable sight-saving charity helps provide **access to quality eye care for communities around the world**, transforming lives and restoring vision for those who need it most. Orbis is also well known for its **“Flying Eye Hospital”**, a mobile training facility that helps build sustainable, long-term eye care capacity globally.

Thanks to the generosity of everyone who attended, the **BMW Club Southern Section donated £76.80 to Orbis**. We also raised **£30 for the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance**. A big thank you to everyone who contributed.

If you'd like to see more of John's adventure, there's plenty to explore on his Instagram page [@johncameronart](#), where he shares artwork and images from his travels. John has also published a book about his journey, *Brief Thoughts on a Big Country*, which captures even more of his experiences riding across the USA.

All in all, it was a **brilliant way to round off our Winter Talks programme**, and our thanks go to **John for sharing his adventure** and to everyone who came along to support the event.



We'd also like to say a **big thank you to Chris** for setting up the AV system and making sure everything ran smoothly, and to **Lesley, Anne and Alison** for keeping everyone well supplied with **tea, coffee and biccies** – always very much appreciated!

We look forward to seeing you all again when the **Winter Talks return next January!**