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Travel scholarship helps business students' tuk-tuk trek across India

Two intrepid students from Northumbria University, Newcastle, have spent their summer tackling a gruelling 2,600 mile ride across India - in a rickshaw.

Andi Bopp, 25 and Jan Reisart, 31, both from near Frankfurt in Germany, have just completed the Rickshaw Run. The Newcastle Business School students jumped at the adventure-of-a-lifetime opportunity thanks to the Faculty's travel scholarship scheme. As part of its focus on nurturing global graduates for international careers, Newcastle Business School offers the scholarship to encourage students to experience international life and take part in

charitable projects.

The pair set off on the Rickshaw Run from Shillong on the 5th of August and finished in Cochin, in the south west of India just about two weeks later.

Andi said: "This was the craziest thing we have ever done. We never really broke 35 miles-an-hour apart from going downhill and being terrified, but my view is that you haven't really lived until you've survived a whole month on-board a rickshaw while having no idea what you're doing and covering 2,600 miles. The best bit was definitely experiencing the country and the people in such a genuine way – we've seen India like other tourists simply don't.

"The heat and exhaustion of starting every morning at sunset and usually finishing long after dark, plus the challenging nature of some of the roads, did make it tough. While we had a few near misses, other teams bore the battle wounds of head-on crashes and somersaulting rickshaws. We never told our parents this! But highlights including visiting Darjeeling and seeing the sunrise of over the Himalayas more than made up for any hardships. The trip was also incredibly eye-opening and humbling. Seeing people living on \$1 really shakes up your priorities."

Newcastle Business School's travel scholarship scheme is open to all students in the faculty with funding available up to £1,000.

Andi added: "We were fortunate enough to find out about the scholarship and I would encourage anyone considering doing something outrageously random to apply. It was a huge help, especially in financing unforeseen costs that arose on the road."

Dr Julie Crumbley, Associate Dean Academic, Faculty of Business and Law, said:

"The value of the experience to their personal development and a broadening understanding of the wider world is evident in the report/pictures. They will make their mark on the world I'm sure, great ambassadors for Northumbria."

Andi and Jan are enrolled on the MSc Business with Management course. As a dual award they also spent one semester at Newcastle Business School's partner university Heilbronn University in the German state of Baden-

Württemberg and they will receive two full Masters degrees from both institutions upon successful completion.

The Rickshaw Run is a pan-Indian adventure in what organisers The League of Adventurists call a 7 horsepower glorified lawnmower. For more information visit: <http://www.theadventurists.com/rickshaw-run/>

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