



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day Six – Urubamba to Puno

You've probably never heard of Arthur Holly Compton, he was a Nobel Prize winning physicist, who is also responsible for the invention of the speed bump in 1953. Now the 50's was a decade for several remarkable innovations and fashion trends, but I think most of them have passed Peru by, except for the speed bump. They appear to be everywhere on the roads in this country, particularly today, as the Lima to Cape Horn rally ticked off 550 km's from Urubamba to Puno. They hide them well too, usually blending into the road, ready to catch out the unwary motorist and just to illustrate their prevalence, they have even installed them on dual carriageways! The Peruvian Transport Authority will be getting a bill from my Osteopath...

Onto happier matters though, today was a day that went by without major incident, which after all the excitement of the first few days of this rally was no doubt a blessed relief for clerk of the course Chris Elkins. In fact, the roads today were a real treat and began with a joyous cross country run on undulating and flowing roads out to the first-time control of the day. There was a bit of traffic to contend with, there is only really one main road around here after all but overtaking the busses and lorries that punctuated the roads became a game in itself after a while.

There was also finally a return to competition today, with two regularities to break up the afternoon, after a morning spent largely gaining ground. Before the first could begin though just after midday there was a lengthy wait for some of the cars at major road works. Such was the length of time that the cars were kept waiting, I daresay a few began to wonder if one of the chaps holding the stop and go boards had in fact expired on the job as very little traffic seemed to be emerging from the works from the opposite direction. This theory was only compounded when an ambulance emerged from the works with its sirens blaring, perhaps he really had perished?

When the first regularity did finally come it was worth the wait, a blissful run around the ridges of the mountains on a dirt road that was smooth enough to maintain speed and loose enough to enjoy. It was a real thrill to be back to business after the false starts so far, and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves in the dust, especially Matteo Kamata + Federico Ferrari in their multicoloured Porsche 911 T Safari, who rather than attempt to stick to any given average speed looked to be putting the boot in everywhere, but then again, who wouldn't in a car that looks and sounds as magnificent as their '73 Porsche?!

As exultant as the day was, there was also some food for thought as the rally passed through one ramshackle settlement after another, displaying the poverty that is so prevalent for many in this country, despite it being classed as a middle-income economy. Buildings seemed either half built, or half fallen down. As we reached the latter stages of today's route the roads took us through the urban sprawl of Juliaca, and it's 276 thousand residents, who seemingly all ride a Moto-Taxi. Joking aside, the clutter and disarray of the streets of this apparent centre for economic investment was plain to see, and the packed rush hour streets seemed to be filled with both excitement and abandonment.

The promise of gold and adventure bought men west to this continent in the 16th century, following the path of the setting sun and in Peru we have certainly found adventure, but also witnessed those that are fighting for something more. As we head to the border and fresh adventure in Bolivia tomorrow, I hope these children of the sun find their El Dorado and those that are the future of this country can flourish.

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