

THE LONELY PLANET STORY

Tony & Maureen Wheeler



The Lonely Planet Story
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Introduction

Lonely Planet began because people kept asking us, ‘How did you get from Afghanistan to India? Not get sick? Hitch a ride on a yacht?...’ This book came into being for the same reason – people kept asking us, ‘How did two backpackers with 27 cents to their names end up running a multinational company?’

In much the same way as our initial journey sparked a great deal of interest in the minds of those people who dreamed of hitting the road, so the story of Lonely Planet seems to resonate with anyone who has ever dreamed of turning their passion into their work. Over the years we have given many interviews and public talks and we have often been asked the same questions: How much do we travel? How have we managed to remain business partners and married? How have we integrated our children into this lifestyle?

Lonely Planet has been on a journey for nearly 40 years and as it has evolved, so have we. We’ve travelled a long way from being 20-something backpackers with no money but, although many other things have changed, the same passions are still there.

Lonely Planet has been our life – we’ve lived it, breathed it and loved it – and while it hasn’t always been easy or fun, it has never been boring. We’ve learned many lessons about business, about working and living together, about taking risks, working hard, and about what can happen if you throw yourself at the world with open arms and a lot of

curiosity. So our story encompasses all of that: travel, work and relationships.

Tony was responsible for getting this book down, but the period of writing it was one of intense discussion and debate between us. We decided it made sense for the book to have one main voice (Tony's), except where the incidents being described were about me or had been observed by me.

Tony and I continue to travel. We still believe it is important to encourage others to go and see the world and we continue to love what we do. Of course, we could not have done it without all those travellers who've put their trust in all of us at Lonely Planet. For every person who has used and abused our books, sent us letters from the road and thrown one of our guides into their bag as they set out on an adventure, thank you.

Maureen Wheeler
Melbourne, August 2010



7 October 1971 – Maureen and I had known each other for precisely one year so we celebrated by getting married at Hampstead registry office in London.

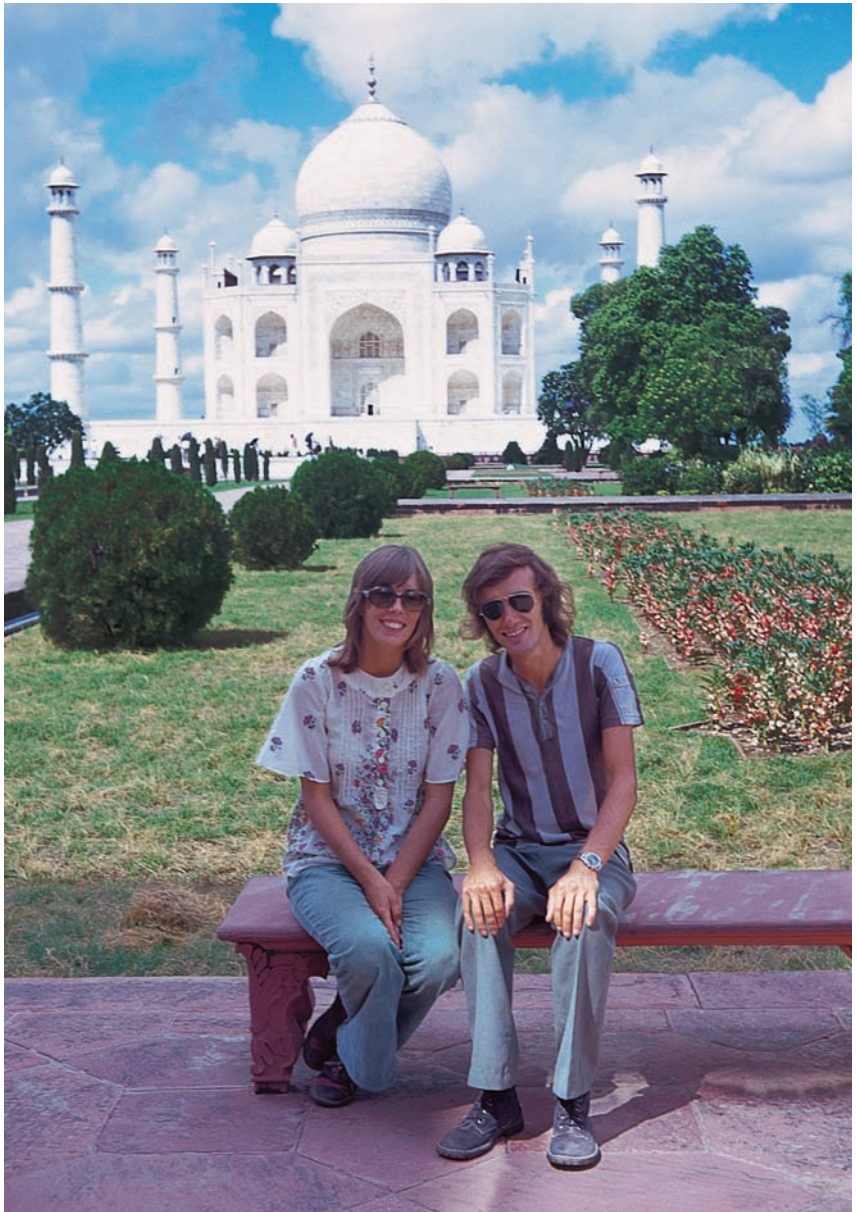
(photo: Peter Schulz)



At the London Business School's end-of-year ball in 1972. Maureen looks more like sixteen than 21, and I certainly don't look much older. A few days later we set off to drive to Asia.



Maureen on the riverbank in Isfahan in Iran with the Khaju Bridge behind her. Today she would have to be wearing a headscarf and something all-enveloping. I returned to Isfahan in 2004 and the city is as beautiful as ever.



7 October 1972 – We managed to arrive at the Taj Mahal (that symbol of enduring love) on our first wedding anniversary and began a tradition of having our photograph taken on every anniversary, in some interesting new location, we hoped.



Moored at Benoa Harbour in Bali: the yacht *Sun Peddler* out of Auckland, New Zealand, was our transport to Australia. Maureen is perched on the rail talking to another of the volunteer crew members.



Our arrival in Australia on the beach at Exmouth, Western Australia, in early December 1972. When this photograph was taken we had been in Australia for 30 seconds and Gough Whitlam had been prime minister for about one week.