

# TEN COUNTRIES, TEN CAUSES, 20,000 KILOMETERS

Supporting good causes through charity balls and donations was an important part of life for BBC Old Boy and Hong Kong-based businessman Morgan Parker. But for Morgan it simply wasn't enough.

Driven by a desire to make a difference which went beyond donations, the novice motorcycle rider has spent the past five years establishing non-profit organisation Wheel2Wheel and planning an epic 20,000km, 10 country motorcycle tour from China to Brisbane, Australia, all in the name of charity.

The high-profile trip, which is slated to be the subject of a 10-part television series on the National Geographic channel, is designed to thrust philanthropy into the spotlight by highlighting 10 largely unknown charities. On 1 March this year Morgan and his BMW F 800 GS left Hong Kong behind and set off on the life-changing journey.

Morgan was initially inspired to embark on a motorbike endurance trip by the Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman documentary *Long Way Round*. When he began to seriously think about how he could put more into helping charity, the personal dream of seeing the world on two wheels and a passionate desire to be more philanthropic collided. Wheel2Wheel was

born and Morgan and his team of volunteers began searching out small charities tackling critical issues and in urgent need of more money and public awareness.

"I didn't want to be a guy who just wrote cheques any more – there's nothing wrong with that, but I wanted to go further," says Morgan. "My charity work had always been very reactionary, haphazard – I wanted to take a strategic approach." This approach included extensive research to select the 10 charities. "We wanted people to look at the list and say: 'they picked great organisations'," Morgan says. The chosen 10 are battling against a huge variety of problems including animal cruelty, air pollution, sanitation, women's rights and children affected by conflict. Each one is based in a different country, all of which Morgan will visit on his adventure.

In order to make the project possible, Morgan gave up his lucrative job as a leading retail developer in Asia to work up to 18 hours a day on Wheel2Wheel. What makes his devotion even more remarkable

is that he only learned to ride a motorcycle three years ago and has never attempted an endurance challenge before. "When I first thought of doing the ride, I didn't even have a license," he says.

Once he had obtained the all-important license, Morgan turned his attention to what motorcycle he would use for the gruelling journey. "*The Long Way Round* (where McGregor rode a BMW R 1150 GS) had a profound effect on me, they are beautiful looking bikes and BMW is a reliable company. This is the first bike I've had, but there was no other choice for me. I contacted many other adventurers who spoke highly of BMWs – they really are unrivalled."

The ride will truly test Morgan's riding skills, as he battles a series of tough terrains in countries including China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, East Timor and the Australian Outback. But having adopted the same approach to preparing himself as he took to planning the project, Morgan is ready for anything. "I trained

## THE JOURNEY SO FAR



DAY 5: Morgan crosses the banks of Li



DAY 17: Meeting the people





for two hours every day and undertook counter terrorism courses, combat training, mechanical training and first aid," he says.

Initially, there were no plans to televise the Wheel2Wheel expedition, "I thought it would be beyond our reach," says Morgan. But after repeated prompting, he contacted a friend in the industry who helped him get the backing for the National Geographic series. "The focus isn't on Wheel2Wheel, it's on the charities we are supporting. The people at the core of the organisations tell their story with such passion it will leave the audience breathless. I want people to watch and feel the urge to help, to contribute."

he says, A total of 10 episodes will be shown, one for each charity and country. And at the end of each there will be an opportunity to donate, either directly or through Wheel2Wheel. "I want to promote philanthropy and encourage people to think about how they can be active in their communities. Everybody out there has the capacity to be more philanthropic and I hope we can inspire even one person to get involved."

Wheel2Wheel combines adventure, self-discovery, philanthropy and entertainment in a never-seen-before way. It heralds a new era in social activism and networking and

will showcase natural wonders and human endeavour, bridging cultures, extending recognition to champions of charity and hopefully provide a lasting influence to motivate others.

At the time of writing, Morgan had just reached the tip of Indonesia, marking stage 10 of his journey. He is set to arrive in Brisbane in mid June.

To view a travelogue of his journey to date visit [www.wheel2wheel.tv](http://www.wheel2wheel.tv) 

**ABOVE:** Morgan Parker with Wheel2Wheel team members Joy Cheng, Levina Poon, Page Sinclair, Alan Ng and Elly Herzog



**DAY 18:** Crossing the mighty Mekong



**DAY 26:** Morgan with the Jungle Warriors

## Behind the scenes

The logistics of the journey are enormous from visas to carnets, boarder crossing in communist countries, water crossing from island to island, bike servicing and break downs, security concerns not to mention the physical and mental challenge of being in the saddle for 100 days. Morgan has been supported by a team of professionals, who are heavily invested in making his vision a reality.