

Ten years on the road



Ride the World motorcyclists Simon and Lisa Thomas are in Australia as part of their globe-spanning journey

By MARK HINCHLIFFE

THERE is no end in sight for world travellers Simon and Lisa Thomas of England.

Now in their 10th year of riding around the globe, they have set four world records and spent more than half of their married life on their motorcycles.

Over the past 400,000km they have visited 77 countries, six continents, had four bouts of malaria, three bouts of dengue fever, Simon has broken his neck and he has acted in a Hollywood movie, *Vikings*, due out next year.

They have now arrived in Australia determined to set two more world records here, but they still have no

idea when or if they will ever finish their journey.

"We thought two years ago we would have another couple of years on the road and now we still think we have at least another couple of years to go," Mrs Thomas said of their adventure.

"We said we would stop when we ran out of money – well, that hasn't happened. Or if we had a big crash – but that's happened and still hasn't stopped us. Or when we started taking all this for granted – but we haven't had that happen.

"And returning to the UK with absolutely nothing at our age is not an attractive option, either."

After spending a year in Australia, they will head to

New Zealand, then Antarctica, which will give them another world record for being the first couple to ride bikes on seven continents.

"That will be a logistical nightmare," Mr Thomas conceded.

Their epic journey started in 2003 when they decided that, since Lisa couldn't have children because of a heart problem, they would sell up and travel around the world for 18 months.

"It was meant to be a short career break," Mr Thomas said.

"After we sold everything and paid off our debts we only had 32,000 (pounds, \$48,000). We don't need much and it's pretty cheap to live, but this is looking



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like the most expensive part of our trip."

They finance their exploits by selling photographs online and doing graphic design work, skills they developed since they started travelling the world.

Mr Thomas admits they miss some of their friends and relatives, but stay in regular contact through

their laptop computer.

"Thank god for Skype, which wasn't invented when we left. Neither was Facebook or Twitter."

They now have a website, YouTube and Facebook pages that also direct viewers to charity websites – World Water Aid, The British Heart Foundation and CancerBACUP.

However, they have no idea how much money they have raised as the funds go directly to the charities.

Their favourite places for riding have been in the lonely deserts in Mongolia, Africa and South America and they agree the worst place to ride is in India.

"You know what India stands for: I'll never drive it again," Mr Thomas said.

The couple will share their experiences and travel tips with other riders today at BMW Motorline, Daisy Hill, before heading north and anti-clockwise around the continent.

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