

THINGS TO DO BEFORE I DIE

Probably the most interesting thing I did in my life was to travel overland. Lots of young Australians did this in the 1970s. It was the idea of my partner, Johan van Vloten, prompted by a much publicised car race from London to Sydney. We did it twice in a Volkswagen Combi-Van, 1970 and 1974. Colleagues in the law condemned such frivolity. They predicted an end of my legal career, if not civilisation itself. But Johan and I both agreed that these were the magic times in our lives. Remarkable how one can live in such a tiny space when surrounded by the wonders of the world.

Travelling through India, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and the former Soviet block was a big eye opener. It taught the unity of humanity and the individuality of the people who make it up. I would like to do it again and so would Johan. But it is not so easy now.

In India, the cows on the roads have been replaced by countless cars. Through the Khyber Pass is Afghanistan. But the King is gone. The Russians have been defeated. The Taliban are in rebellion. It is too dangerous.

The Shah and his family have disappeared from Iran and the Mullers seem to be in control. The Soviet block is no more.

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Travelling in Eastern Europe beckons. But the great road overland presents a challenge.

Perhaps we will solve the conflict and create peace again in Afghanistan. Perhaps Iran will welcome travellers once again. When the great overland route is open and safe, Johan and I will be amongst the first to take it. There are few ways better to spend a day than to witness the world in its variety; to read of the local history and culture; and to eat in the open as the sun sinks in the Arabian sea. Is this nostalgia for lost times? Before I die, I would like to be on that road again, free of daily cares, just to see.