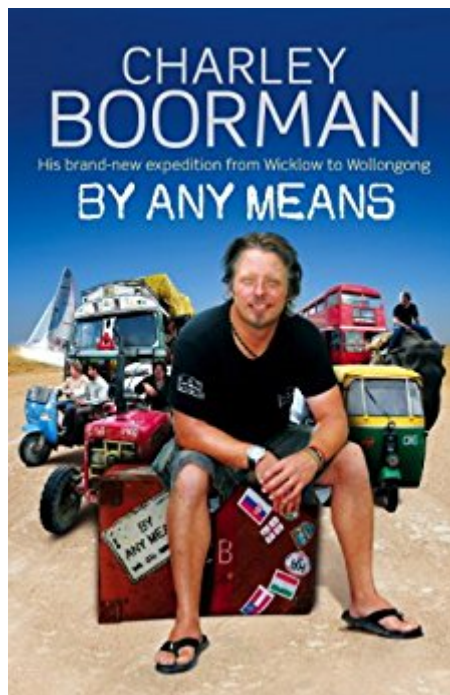




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By Any Means: His Brand New Adventure From Wicklow To Wollongong



Synopsis

Four million captivated viewers watched Charley Boorman complete his last adventure - LONG WAY DOWN - which took him from John O'Groats to Cape Town. Along with Ewan McGregor he achieved not only this amazing feat, but also circumnavigated the globe on the LONG WAY ROUND. In between these two incredible journeys, he found the time to compete in the Dakar Rally, telling his story in his bestselling book RACE TO DAKAR. Charley's passion for travel and adventure continues in his new challenge - BY ANY MEANS. Travelling from his home town in Co Wicklow all the way to Sydney, he will use any means he can to reach his destination, via transport as diverse as steam train, horse, boat, kayak, truck, and tuk-tuk. And of course his beloved motorbike! Whether crossing the Black Sea, trekking through Tibet, riding an elephant in India or hiking through the forests of Papua New Guinea, this will be a unique opportunity to meet fascinating people and explore extraordinary places. With trademark enthusiasm, dedication and good humour, Charley's new trip is set to be his most challenging yet.

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Customer Reviews

excellent, on the lookout for more Charley Boorman stories.

Ok, I'll admit it, I'm a huge Charley Boorman fan, I've seen and read most of his material, but I enjoyed this book immensely, it was easy reading in true Boorman style, you feel like you know him well, one of his old mates even, I liked it and would recommend you try it too!

What a wonderful life! To be able to travel the world the way he does is quite a gift. The writing is simple, like a diary, but gives enough information for the reader to get a feel for the adventure.

I have enjoyed Charley Boorman's Travel adventure movies and books. This is just another wonderful one. Highly recommend it!

While I was aware of two previous books by this author, involving long distance motorbike rides, I hadn't read any. I wasn't aware that his exploits had been filmed for BBC or that he's the son of film director John Boorman. All this knowledge is taken for granted by the author. I thought he might consider that his first books could attract a motorbike-specialist readership, perhaps, whereas this 'by any mode of transport' challenge held a broader appeal. I'm at a loss to know how he paid for this trip and supported his family as he doesn't say, but maybe the BBC paid him a wage and expenses. He never mentions who paid for everything. A three-month trek from Wicklow to southern Australia and to Sydney seems like a lot of travel when each leg has to be booked separately and no scheduled air flights are included unless absolutely essential. The Orient Express was a glamorous start - after the obligatory motorbikes of course. From there matters went downhill as Charley and his couple of guy pals crossed borders, experienced heat and humidity, rode in tuk-tuks and overcrowded buses and trains, floated on boats from container ships to cement barges and straddled elephants. While the author has to be admired, and met awful sea conditions including sinking boats and foul weather for days, he did seem to be constantly rushing to get to the next guide with a truck and not taking in that much of the life and environment, which had been his stated aim. He does show us the most polluted town in the world - on a lake of oil in Eurasia - and he feels uncomfortable in a religious state where women are veiled, all but his plucky female taxi driver. His observations are almost all about people, not nature. I liked seeing the two medical runs that the crew participated in with UNICEF, a great charity. This group uses public transport and local staff as much as humanly possible, so nobody gets helicoptered in to a New Guinea hill village - it's a five day boat and climb trek with vaccines which are in a dry ice box and must not get warm. We start to

wonder whether the people in extremely remote areas are really doing the right thing by staying there instead of coming to where there are education, medical care, food and employment opportunities for their children. But while they are there, they are being helped. This is a reasonable read for the variety, lads-outing, friendships and many alternate and basic lifestyles shown. The writing is peppered with sentences beginning 'it had' or 'there was' so not wonderful, just jotted observations. Given that the author regularly bemoans having left his wife and two kids for three months, he may not take off for a while on any more trips.

Having previously travelled on motorbike from London to New York via Europe, Central Asia, Siberia, Alaska and Canada on Long Way Round, and from John O'Groats to Cape Town on Long Way Down, Charley Boorman sets out on another adventure. This time the motorbikes (and previous wingman Ewan McGregor, who was busy filming) have been left behind as Boorman sets out from his childhood home in County Wicklow, Ireland, aiming to get to Sydney, Australia, travelling by any means of transport he can find. The result is a 20,000-mile odyssey through twenty-five countries. Having enjoyed Long Way Round when the book and TV series appeared in 2004, I was disappointed with Long Way Down when it appeared. Aware of the mishaps and problems they'd had on the first journey, Long Way Down had been timetabled and planned to such an extent that a lot of the fun spontaneity of the earlier mission was lost, and the strict timetable meant that Ewan and Charley had to skip interesting areas they were passing in order to hit certain locations at certain times. This proved to be a point of contention on the African trip, and it wasn't until past the halfway point that they could finally relax and chill out a bit. For By Any Means the goal was to reinstate this sense of spontaneity. As well as that, the decision to ditch the bikes was taken because travelling by motorbike through some of the areas they were heading to - particularly island-hopping from Malaysia down through Indonesia to Australia - would have been logistically difficult. Dropping the bikes and travelling through mostly inhabited areas along the way also meant that there was no need for the support vehicles and teams which, although important from a safety perspective, had eroded the 'two guys against the elements' feel of the two trips, particularly the second. Finally, whilst the bikes had been important for eating as many miles as possible per day (particularly on the first trip, which almost circumnavigated the globe), it also meant that contact with the locals was fairly limited. The new approach conversely relied on talking to local people and making use of local means of transport. The book successfully complements the TV series. Interestingly, the book relates stories not mentioned at all in the TV series, whilst skipping some elements that were much more heavily focused on in the series. Charley's visit to Angkor Wat was a

major part of the TV show but is here covered only briefly, whilst a visit to another, lesser-known temple wasn't even mentioned on the show but is given coverage in the book, for example. This avoids the problem of repetition between the two mediums, and is helpful if you're planning to get both the book and the DVD. The steps taken by the team do mean that *By Any Means* is a more engaging story and trip than *Long Way Down*. Many of the locals they meet whose stories they hear simply wouldn't have been encountered with the bikes roaring past at 70mph. Logistically the expedition isn't perhaps quite as spontaneous as it first appears: a support team in London arrange several modes of transport ahead of time and at one point the gang is defeated in their attempts to enter Burma and have to take a commercial flight to get to China instead. Still, the journey is an impressive achievement, and Charley Boorman's down-to-earth style is readable and entertaining. 'Proper' travel writers appear to be a bit snooty about these expeditions (a sequel to this journey, in which Boorman travels on from Sydney, up through Papua New Guinea and the Philippines to Tokyo, is currently airing on BBC-2 in the UK) since Boorman doesn't really get to grips with the politics or socio-economic backgrounds to these countries, but that's not really the point. Boorman's concern is meeting the local ordinary people and finding out how they live their lives under different circumstances. This 'theme' is actually successfully handled, as the way of life between bus drivers in Turkey, one of the few female taxi drivers in Tehran and cattle drovers in Australia's Outback is contrasted. The conclusion - people are people wherever you go - might not be shockingly revelatory, but it is nicely handled nonetheless. There's also some ironic interest to be gleaned from the fact that Iran, the country the team was most concerned about crossing, turned out to be one of the friendliest and most welcoming they visited and had possibly the least security concerns. *By Any Means* (*** \hat{A}) is a breezy and entertaining account of a genuinely impressive journey around the world. The book is available now in the UK and USA. *By Any Means 2* is currently airing in the UK and a new McGregor/Boorman motorbike trip, possibly through South America, is being planned for next year with the working title *Long Way to Go*.

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