

● Hidden Journeys – From Bangkok to Borneo and Sulawesi to Sydney

As featured in the Spring 2012 Bulletin

Speeding airborne at hundreds of kilometres per hour between destinations, it is easy to forget about the environments and cultures that are passing beneath on the ground. Sprawling cities, vast wildernesses, country borders and isolated communities are all part of the changing landscapes that are 'hidden' on the journey when the in-flight map is the only guide.

The Society has been revealing these [Hidden Journeys](#) through a website of the same name since May 2010 – and 2012 is set to reveal even more new routes and multimedia content to bring alive new journeys from boarding to destination, or even from your armchair!

International air journeys and geography are brought to life through the fascinating stories of the people, places and environments below. The 7,500km journey from [Bangkok to Sydney](#), for example, crosses some of the most isolated, biodiverse and beautiful landscapes on Earth. This amazing variety is split into two distinct regions, each with their own evolutionary and geological history. The western half, from Bangkok to Borneo, has developed over millions of years as part of the Asian continent, whereas the eastern half of the flight path from Sulawesi to Sydney has developed with an Australian heritage. This divide is reflected in each region's animals, plants and landscapes: from the active Indonesian volcanoes, to the red, flat sand seas of ancient Australian landscapes.

There is also a fascinating human history. Between the regional hubs of Sydney and Bangkok exist modern cultures, indigenous tribal groups and the curious history of *Homo floresiensis* – a unique species of human discovered in 2004 on the Indonesian island of Flores.

Equally stimulating are the other 'hidden journeys'. [London to Vancouver](#), another example, takes in Iceland, the Greenland glaciers and sea ice, Inuit communities, exploration of the Northwest Passage, the forests and tundra of the Canadian shield, the beautiful Rocky Mountains and more.

The Hidden Journeys website now features 12 of the more frequently travelled international and trans-national flight paths. New routes are being added every month. The Hidden Journeys team is just starting to make the content searchable by theme and to add audio slideshows.

Using vibrant modern and historical images, explanations and stories, key points are highlighted on the journey. Travellers can explore from their seats at different flying altitudes giving the project an extra dimension. Information supplied at heights of 11km, for example, provides an overview and visitors can 'explore' great mountain chains or the world's megacities. From 1,000 metres or less, however, viewers can get closer up and 'discover' indigenous villages and local wildlife.

At the moment the website is the only outlet for this innovative project. In the medium term and as airlines begin to bring internet access on to aircraft, the website should be available for everyone on their journey. Meanwhile the Society is exploring other avenues to get the project on board aircraft much sooner.

President of the Society, Michael Palin, said: "Hidden Journeys is, literally, about seeing the world. And you'll never want an aisle seat again."

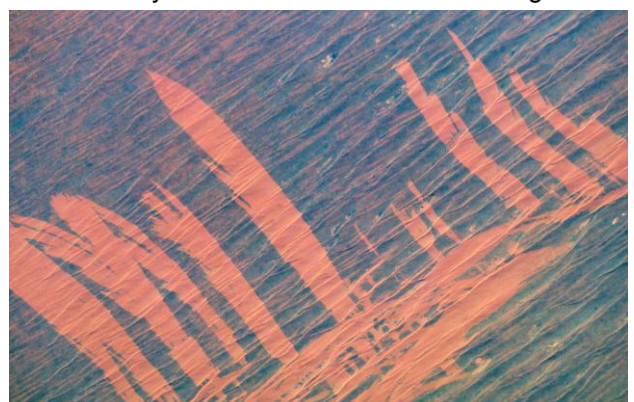


Image: Simpson Desert © NASA/JSC

"If you enjoy the natural world this website is worth a look and you can see the great work



they are doing. Type in the address and explore! I think it's amazing and for a photographer, the imagery is inspiring." Charlie Bolden (photographer)

"I know most of my school classes will be interested across all year groups – I think especially years 7 and 8... I like the idea of people contributing to it so it grows with people's photos and images as well as new routes." Antonia Prestney (teacher)

Website: www.hiddenjourneys.co.uk