

Record-setting first drive of new Asian Highway



Journey's end, August 2007

In June 2007, local writer and traveller Richard Meredith (left) set off from Tokyo with co-driver Phil Colley in a sponsored Aston Martin to complete the first-ever car crossing of the new Asian Highway. They arrived in London (and then Newport Pagnell) via Beijing, Istanbul and 17 countries after 49 days and 10,000 miles – bang on schedule.

Richard compiled an *en route* illustrated travelogue with charity proceeds donated to UNICEF in Beijing to help their programme for saving young lives.

From Richard's website on www.mercurybooks.co.uk:

'Day 4:

After two countries and 1000 miles we'd not seen a single sign to announce the Asian Highway road network that will undoubtedly become one of the world's most important road systems since the Silk Routes... Then, suddenly, there it was – a sign across the motorway which said: 'This way to Turkey!'...

'Day 24:

A nightmare 400km drive from Korgos, China, into Kazakhstan...Unlit, unmarked and un-maintained for years, whole sections were rutted and pitted. Driving in the road-hugging Aston Martin was like riding a switchback or surfing a wave...

'Day 42:

At precisely 4.32pm local time, we reached the ancient suspension bridge that crosses the Bosphorus at Istanbul – the end of Asia and the beginning of Europe. We'd shown that after 50 years' planning, the 32 nations of Asia have an inter-connected road network capable of speeding travellers and trade to and from the markets of Europe.'