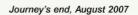


Record-setting first drive of new Asian Highway



ROAD SAFETY



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 interconnected road network capable of speeding travellers and trade to and from the markets of Europe.'

