

Drive for Deirdre



PEKING TO PARIS 2019



Newsletter No. 3

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"Pleased to support this worthy cause"

"In memory of an inspiring woman and a great friend"

"For Mom"

"Such a worthy cause and a beautiful way to remember Deirdre"

"Wishing you and Chris a perfect drive in every possible way, and remembering Deirdre with love"

"In memory of Deirdre and Tricia's friendship. They will be watching on in delight as you tackle this amazing adventure"

"In memory of Deirdre ('Nanna'), on behalf of grandchildren Ashley and Ryan, Joe and Amanda"

"We are and will be following your adventure with extreme interest!"

Thank You Once Again!

Thank you to all those who have made donations to the Arthritis Society since our last newsletter went out. We are delighted to report that we have reached about 41% of our goal. While the campaign will continue into 2019, those who wish to make a donation for 2018 can do so online at:

<http://arthritis.ca/hostyourown/DriveForDeirdre>

As can be seen on the left, we would like to share with you some of the comments that donors have made.

Rally Orientation Weekend

The organizers of the Peking to Paris 2019 Challenge offered participants an orientation weekend in mid-November to practice their navigation skills and spend a day on the logistics of the run. It was a valuable, if sobering, two day event that answered many questions, but raised a few others, including the often asked "... and why are we doing this?"

Held at the British Motor Museum in Gaydon, about 90 minutes north of London, the weekend started with an overview of the navigational aids offered to participants. Most of the route will be set out in coil-bound books using the international system of tulip diagrams. Tulips, or ball and arrow diagrams, set out the route with the ball indicating where you come from and the arrow indicating where you are going to. Simple. Or not, as the case may be. Participants will also be provided with GPS coordinates loaded on to the approved device once in Beijing.

Saturday morning was a classroom session going over the basics, followed by a 40km run on country roads in the area. Driving on the "other side" of the car and road, and using a six speed manual transmission, proved to be little challenge to John. Chris, on the other hand, offered some directions at intersections that resulted in unintended sight-seeing excursions.

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Saturday morning rally practice; at the checkpoint the Beresford brothers rental car is behind the real rally cars





Above: A couple of completed rally cars at Gaydon

Below: The route



Rally plate for car number 42, 1956 VW Beetle

At the end, the Beresford brothers finished within two minutes of the target goal and were still speaking to each other. Just 14,000 kilometres to go!

A fortunate meeting with the Clerk of the Course provided sound advice for the weekend - "pay attention to everything!". Sunday was a day for attention. Each segment of the run was covered by a different member of the organizational team. China/Mongolia covered the recovery of the vehicles after shipping to Beijing through to camping nights in the Gobi desert and in the country beyond the capital of Ulaanbaatar. The Russia/Kazakhstan section will cover days 11 through 26, and present some of the more challenging and lengthy drives. The run enters the EU at the Finland border on day 27, the last of the controlled border crossings. A night in Wolfsburg, the home of Volkswagen, will be a highlight.

While each team is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of their vehicle, the organizers do make available mechanical support teams who can provide emergency assistance to get to the next service location. The affection for the mechanics expressed by those who had previously completed P2P was genuine. There are also two medical teams that accompany the participants, but fair warning was provided that all entrants should be prepared to look after themselves, or their fellow competitors, until help can arrive.

Shipping arrangements for the car were started at the meeting and have been finalized. The Beetle will leave Vancouver at the end of March and will be stored in a Beijing warehouse until the participants arrive at the end of May.

There are some logistical issues that remain outstanding. Bulk oil cannot be imported into China. Only the oil already in the crankcase will be allowed and teams are on their own to locate the necessary supply once in Beijing. Visas must be obtained for China and Russia. And the process of taking what is required, and nothing more, is now underway.

Future newsletters will preview some of the roads, and non-roads, that we are headed to. And continue to answer the question of why we are doing this.

Season's Greetings

In closing this newsletter we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and all the best in 2019!