

Cyclist Chris tells of travels



● New author: Chris Smith, of Bewdley, who has written a book about his 18,500 mile journey to China.

■ By HEATHER LARGE

AN adventurous writer who cycled 18,500 miles from his home in Bewdley to China is celebrating the publication of his story.

Chris Smith, of Welch Gate, spent 13 months making his way to Beijing after he was made redundant in 2001.

When he returned, he spent 18 months writing his first book called *Why Don't You Fly?* after he was asked the question by a friend.

The 44-year-old author said he kept his book in mind while he was travelling. He explained: "It was always the way I was going to do it. I kept a diary and every single day I would sit down and write a page about what happened during the day, who I met and how I felt."

He added: "I think it was a fantastic experience and I want to share it with people. Writing the book was my passion."

After he was made redundant from his management job, the keen cyclist decided he wanted to travel, having become bored by office work.

Mr Smith explained: "I started to feel I wanted to do something a bit different. I wanted to go as far away as possible and I was free to do it for the first time."

"For years, I cycled to and from work, from Cleobury Mortimer to Kidderminster, which is a round trip of 25 miles, so I was very fit before I went on the trip."

"I wanted to challenge myself physically and mentally – 25 miles is nothing compared to riding a heavily laden bike."

The Bewdley resident, who is a lorry driver for Safeway in Droitwich, explained that one of the most challenging parts of the journey was trying to make himself understood when he was in China.

He said: "It was the only place where I needed to have a dictionary. Everywhere else I was able to make people understand me. I had to go into a restaurant and just point at the menu or go into the kitchen and point at the food. That was a challenge but it was quite fun."

For further information about the book, which is published in August, visit www.cycleuktochina.com or contact publishers, Pen Press, on 0845 1080530.