



A Bewdley man who decided to cross the Eurasian landmass on two wheels has put his astonishing story down on paper in a new book. *Why Don't You Fly? Back Door to Beijing - by Bicycle* charts the experiences of Chris Smith who, not content with cycling 25 miles to work and back every day, embarked upon the marathon trip in an attempt to discover a "sense of identity" after being made redundant and splitting up with his girlfriend.

Despite the incomprehension of his friends and family, he set off on the 16,550-mile epic adventure completely alone, riding a long-haul expedition bicycle and using an on-board computer to record times and distances. He took 13 months to reach Beijing, on a route that took him through France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and India, as well as the Gobi desert.

During that time he experienced vast differences in landscape, climate, culture and religion, met some eccentric fellow cyclists and encountered various mishaps, not least when his original plan to reach Vladivostok was thwarted by the refusal of the Russian embassy in Beijing to issue a visa. Cockroaches, cyclones and crazy drivers were just some of the perils Chris survived on his sometimes lonely journey across roads, rivers and mountain peaks.

Chris had already travelled in Europe, Asia, Africa and America as a student, before an eventful career driving lorries to the Eastern Bloc, Scandinavia and the Soviet Union (before and after dissolution). However, the Beijing adventure was like nothing he had experienced before, and makes for fascinating reading. A large collection of photographs documenting the places and people he discovered along the way are displayed on Chris' website (www.cycleuktochina.com) to provide a visual accompaniment to this absorbing book. ■



Five Limited Edition readers can win a copy of Chris' book for themselves, along with a commemorative T-shirt, in our exclusive competition. Simply answer the following question: **How many miles did Chris cycle?**

Send your answer, along with your name, address and telephone number, to **Cycling Competition, Limited Edition, 5 High Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8AJ**. Entries to be received no later than **October 31, 2005**.

Copies of the book are also available to order from the website, priced **£9.99**.

Bewdley to Beijing