

# PRESSRELEASE

## **Aston Martin Tokyo - London record drive memorabilia up for sale**

A UNIQUE record of one of the last great motoring adventures over the most important new highway development in centuries has been put up for sale.

Certain to be of interest to car enthusiasts, Aston Martin collectors and armchair explorers alike, the treasured memorabilia was gathered by globe-trotting Brit Richard Meredith when he and co-driver Phil Colley drove 9,500 miles (15,300 km) across the new road network from Japan to the UK.

They were the first to make the east-west passage by car of the Asian Highway, the 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalent of the legendary Silk Road.

They crossed continents in an Aston Martin V8 Vantage, the personal transport of Aston Martin Chief Executive Dr Ulrich Bez and built in Meredith's home town of Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, England, completing it in 49 days in a blaze of international publicity. It was loaned for the trip by the iconic luxury sports car maker which also sponsored the ambitious venture.

The epic journey in 2007 put the highway, the result of 50 years of planning, construction and tortuous international agreement between 32 countries, quite literally on the map.

It also showcased Aston Martin in the valuable Asian market and raised Euro 85,000 for international child road safety charities, causes close to the heart of Richard Meredith, a veteran of long-distance motoring adventures which have included driving a Daewoo saloon from Luton, England to South Korea.

Now, he is offering his collection of almost 100 items to international collectors in the UK and Asia in a sealed bidding process.

For a catalogue: [www.mercurybooks.co.uk/AHDcatalog](http://www.mercurybooks.co.uk/AHDcatalog)

It includes memorabilia, maps, documents, signed and framed photos and an important image archive – the ultimate souvenir of the journey. Items in *The Asian Highway Drive Collection* include carnets, waivers, letters of introduction and signed declarations from the UN and Aston Martin officials certifying the trip.

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There are the Chinese and International driving documents, official Aston Martin clothing worn on the journey and even the car's unused spare throttle pedal, jokingly marked by Aston Martin staff as being sourced from the 'China Parts Dept'.

Sadly, not in the sale is the key which opened the secret James Bond-style compartment specially built into the body for cash and valuables. It is still with the car which was sold after the trip with proceeds going to the charities, but a scale model is among the items for sale along with the official Aston Martin Accident Witness kit with branded camera – unused.

Alongside the vast image archive (with rights of use) and a media clippings library there are books on the history of Aston Martin as well as awards and gifts made to the driver for his achievement, even Aston Martin postage stamps and the car's Chinese temporary registration plate.

"The complete collection is the closest anyone could get to actually driving this incredible journey," Richard said.

He said the trip with its highs and lows had left a deep impression but it had also left him with debts.

"That it is now possible to drive from London to Tokyo has huge implications for all the nations along that route in terms of trade, migration and politics. I am delighted we raised so much for UNICEF and road safety charities and pleased that we raised the profile of Aston Martin cars across the world and especially in Asia just when sales in Europe and the US were hit by the recession," he said

"The car performed impeccably, never missing a beat despite extremes of temperature and, to put it mildly, some demanding road conditions," Richard said.

"Aston Martin was the lead sponsor of the trip with others but unfortunately the funds did not meet the costs. The trip left me with debts and it is very sad but I must now let the Asian Highway Drive Collection go," he said.

**The Aston Martin *Asian Highway Drive Collection* is to be sold by Sealed Bid, closing date June 22, 2011.**

**NOTICE:** Sealed bids for the complete *Asian Highway Drive Collection* must reach the vendor's publishing agents by the **Closing date: Wednesday June 22, 2011.**

Bids should be sent to their Registered Office address: **The Company Secretary, Word Go Ltd, 29 Bibury Crescent, Boothville, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 6AG, United Kingdom**

A further 7 days will then be allowed for inspecting and receipt of cleared funds. The Company Secretary's decision will be final.

**Ends**

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**Notes to Editors:** Richard Meredith is available for interview about the *Asian Highway Drive Collection*.

For all media inquiries please contact Steve Lerner of PRESSRELEASEPR on +44 (0)7790 244542.

**Richard Meredith is a former magazine publisher who has written several books based on his travel adventures and has helped to raise more than £400,000 for charities in the UK and abroad.**

**The Asian or Greater Asia Highway project was begun in 1959 by the United Nations to promote the development of global transport between East and West. Find out more:**

**<http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/index.asp?menuname=asianhighway>**

**Co-operating countries are now working on a similar programme for integrating the railway networks of Europe and Asia.**

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Images from the Asian Highway Drive Collection:

