JOURNEY TO THE ‘ROOF OF THE WORLD’
AN UNFORGETTABLE, HIGH-ALTITUDE EXPEDITION THROUGH CHINA, TIBET AND NEPAL
Rally Round returns to the ‘Roof of the World’ in 2020 for the second outing of the epic Trans-Himalayan Adventure. An event for the most adventurous, this 26-day expedition journeys from the Sichuan region of China into the vastness of Tibet where we drive ‘up and over’ the world’s mightiest mountain range of the Himalayas into Nepal. Join us on what we believe is the world’s most epic drive.

22ND APRIL – 17TH MAY 2020
JOURNEY TO THE ‘ROOF OF THE WORLD’
In 2019, a group of 44 people became the first westerners to drive their own vehicles along this route up and over the Himalayas, journeying from China through Tibet and into Nepal.

This incredible drive had challenging terrain and high altitudes but all that paled in comparison to the stunning scenery, breathtaking landscapes and incredible wildlife the crews saw. Standing 8km away from the Base Camp of Mount Everest is a day none of them will ever forget.

Now it’s your turn to join us on this outstanding adventure and follow in their tyre tracks.

Our route is not for the faint-hearted and, given the elements, altitude and terrain, is a non-competitive event.

Accommodation is the very best available in all areas, with two nights under canvas as part of the adventure.

Numbers for the 2020 event are limited so please contact the rally office at your earliest convenience to reserve your entry. Please note that although the rally will be supported by expert mechanical and medical personnel, it is only suitable for experienced crews in well-prepared cars.

**ITINERARY**

**THE FORMALITIES**

Following arrivals on Wed 22 April, we will be attending the local hospital on Thursday 23 April for your general health check which is necessary before receiving your Temporary Chinese Driving Permits (TCDP) from the local police station, where we will also attend a short briefing. During this time, the cars will start to be delivered to the hotel ready for your return. We’ll enjoy a welcome dinner that evening ahead of the business of signing-on, scrutineering and a crew briefing on Friday 24 April in preparation for the start line the next day.

**THE FACTS**

- 26 days
- 5,540m (approx.)
- 24 major mountain passes
- Altitudes up to 5,600km
- Open to all cars
- Non-competitive event
PRE-START: CHENGDU, CHINA

The Chengdu Hotel Shangri-La will be our home for the next three days as we conduct the necessary formalities. The hotel has all the usual facilities in the rooms, several bars, places to eat, business centre and spa. Secure underground parking has been allocated for the rally and there are several petrol stations nearby. Positioned by the famous Anshun Bridge that spans the Jin River, there are several shops, bars and restaurants in the area to enjoy.

DAY 1: CHENGDU TO LESHAN (165KMS).
START ALT 400M, OVERNIGHT 450M.

A relatively short day to ease crews into driving and to iron out any mechanical issues, we leave Chengdu and take the expressway for 165km towards Leshan. This is an excellent road with mountains in the distance and very little traffic. The Sichuan region is beautiful and is predominantly agricultural. Our night halt is Leshan, located on the southwestern fringe of the Sichuan Basin in southern Sichuan. We aim to arrive early enough to enjoy a trip to the famous Leshan Giant Buddha, the largest stone-carved buddha in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
DAY 2: LESHAN TO KANGDING (347KMS).
START ALT 450M, OVERNIGHT 2560M.

As we leave Leshan, the climb begins in earnest as we cross into the Tibetan regions using China’s longest National Highway, which runs between the mountains and Dadu River. Locals grow loquat fruit, mulberries, cherries and tea here and you will start to see the first peaks before we tackle our first of many passes. The pass has chortens and prayer flags by the thousands and we can see Gongga Mountain at 7556m and a further group which all reach over 6000m. Kangding will be our home for the night.

DAY 3: KANGDING TO BATANG (440KMS).
START ALT 2560M, OVERNIGHT 2577M.

From Kangding, you start to climb up the mountain roads and a barrage of hairpins later you arrive at the top with most of the day’s driving at altitudes over 4000m. We will enter Litang County, one of the highest settlements in East Tibet at 4014m. Litang Chode, founded in 1580 by the Third Dalai Lama, is one of the largest temples outside the Tibet Autonomous Region. Enjoy the drive through a large village called Dela Village with beautiful Tibetan houses along both sides of the road. It is then onto the modern provincial town of Batang.

DAY 4: BATANG TO ZUOGONG (262KMS).
START ALT 2577M, OVERNIGHT 3700M.

Today the rally enters the Tibetan Autonomous Region (T.A.R) and in western eyes, Tibet. The rally will enjoy the drive through the regions where the Jinsha River, Lancang River and Nu River flow parallel. We head westward and pass Lawu and Dongda Mountain, reaching altitudes of over 5000m. Standing at the top of the mountain passes, covered with snow, enjoy the spectacular zigzag of the Sichuan-Tibet highway and the incredible Lancang River crawling through mountainous ranges. The rally will stay overnight in Zuogong.

DAY 5: ZUOGONG TO BOME (420KMS).
START ALT 3700M, OVERNIGHT 2727M.

From Zuogong, your next destination will be Bangda Grassland, the most important natural pasture in Eastern Tibet. Serving as the source of Parlung Tsangpo Lake, Rakwa Tso is a typical seasonal glacial lake in Chamdo. On the way to the day’s final destination of Bome you will see the spectacular Midui Glacier, widely believed to be the most beautiful glacier in China. Bome is nicknamed Little Switzerland because of the mountainsides covered in pine trees and the Parlong Tsangpo River running along the valley floor and through the town.
DAY 6: BOME TO LINZHI (268KMS).  
START ALT 2727M, OVERNIGHT 2940M.

You leave Bome this morning and follow the Parlung Tsangpo River, driving through valleys and snow capped mountains in the distance. After a gentle morning and a lunch halt in Lulong we ascend through the Sea of Forest to 4565m towards Linzhi. Stunning views continue and just get better whilst the forest gives way to low shrubs. It may be gently snowing at the pass and there may be some cloud cover in the afternoon. Before reaching Linzhi, the Throne of the Sun, the rally will turn south towards Milin where our rally hotel is located by Yarlung Tsangpo River – the upper stream of the Brahmaputra River in India.

DAY 7: LINZHI TO TSETANG (356KMS).  
START ALT 2940M, OVERNIGHT 3565M.

Hopefully you wake to wonderful views and a pale blue sky this morning before driving along the valley floor with beautiful mountains on the left and right. Today's drive is a much more rural road compared to yesterday with lots of villages. After lunch, the rally visits the birthplace of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama at Trongkhang. Our night halt is Tsetang, one of Tibet's largest cities. The surrounding area is regarded as the cradle of Tibetan civilization as the Zodang Gongpori Caves are said to be where the Tibetan race originated.

DAY 8: TSETANG TO LHASA (175KMS).  
START ALT 3565M, OVERNIGHT 3655M.

One of the highlights of the morning is a visit to the Samye monastery, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. This monastery symbolises the centre of the universe and is an excellent place to understand the heart of Tibetan Buddhist religion. After the monastery, for those who have extra energy, head up the road to the Samaye Chimpu Hermitage caves. We then take the old road before hopping on the new beautifully surfaced highway to Lhasa. The Shangri-La Hotel will give us a lovely Tibetan welcome as it becomes our home for the next three nights.

DAY 9 AND 10: REST DAY - LHASA – THE PLACE OF THE GODS. ALTITUDE 3655M.

Once cars have been serviced and laundry organised, Lhasa has some incredible sights including the stunning Potala Palace, seat of government and the Dalai Lama’s winter residence. Also make time to head to the Jokhang Temple (Temple of the Lord), also known as the Qoikang Monastery, which is the spiritual heart of Lhasa. Join the Tibetans and walk the Barkhor circuit around the temple, before heading off to explore the old town. There are lots of shops and cafes selling locally-made trinkets and wares.
DAY 11: LHASA TO SHIGATSE (362KMS).  
START ALT 3655M, OVERNIGHT 3853M.

Leaving Lhasa behind, follow the banks of the beautiful Pramabutra River before climbing the pass for your first sight of Yamdrok Yutso Lake at 4000m, one of three sacred lakes in Tibet. The route follows the northern lakeshore and be sure to stop and admire the blue-green lake before lunch in Nakartse County. Climb again to the Khari La Glacier (5045m), before descending to the historic town of Gyantse and straight roads leading to the night halt in Shigatse.

DAY 12: SHIGATSE TO TINGRI COUNTY (231KMS).  
START ALT 3853M, OVERNIGHT 4315M.

A day of new highs, the route uses roads mostly over 4000m. Your first mountain pass is Tso La at 4530m, then Gyatso La at 5240m, before we get to the viewing platform for your first sight of Mount Everest. Twisting and winding roads lead us to various viewing platforms as we head as near to Everest Base Camp as allowed. At Kya Wu La at 5200m, you will see the Himalayan range including four peaks above 8000m. The Rongbuk Monastery, the highest monastery in the world, is 8km away and is an ideal picnic spot and photo opportunity.

DAY 13: NEW TINGRI TO SAGA (339KMS).  
START ALT 4315M, OVERNIGHT 4505M.

From New Tingri, take time to visit the hot springs and stop in the villages we pass on the way. The drive will be beautiful through this very dry area which every now and then has Tibetan style dew ponds. There will be more opportunities to view Mount Everest as well as spotting local wildlife and birds. Look out for the Shishapangma mountain, which looks like a horizontal face, and the bright turquoise Pai Ku Lake, on the way to Saga and our last night in a hotel before heading into camp.

DAY 14: SAGA TO CAMP 1 (4505KMS).  
START ALT 4656M, OVERNIGHT 4820M.

With a night under canvas ahead of us, the day starts with two of the highest mountain passes yet crossed, giving breathtaking views of the Himalayas. Hot springs, wild deer and eagles are just a few of the sights to behold as you head to the Takyel Tso lake before climbing the Sangmo-La mountain pass. After lunch in the town of Tsochen, its time to head off the beaten track to the first of our two campsites, situated by a clear blue lake.
DAY 15: CAMP 1 TO CAMP 2 (300KMS).
START ALT 4820M, OVERNIGHT 4600M.

From the camp, we cross an epic valley to our first summit of the day with plenty of twists and turns to get the blood flowing. The descent takes us to the famous salt lakes, Drabyer Tsakha, where you can see the workers evaporating Himalayan salt for export. As we head further west, the terrain becomes tougher as we arrive at the infamous Boulder Pass, a series of around eight steep switchbacks on gravel with boulders either side, hence its name. Tonight’s camp is another lake-side venue where crews can share stories from the day.

DAY 16: CAMP 2 TO GEJI (300KMS).
START ALT 4600M, OVERNIGHT 4520M

After another night under canvas, the nearby town of Yagra will offer a warm welcome for supplies and fuel. From Yagra, the roads open out into vast plains where you can ‘choose the best track’ as you meet sand and snow. With the Indian and Nepalese mountains to guide you, smooth tarmac roads suddenly appear and after a climb over some low mountains, you will find yourself driving along the Indus River. This will lead you all the way to the night’s hotel in Geji where a hot shower and warm bed awaits.

DAY 17: GEJI TO ZHADA (300KMS).
START ALT 4520M, OVERNIGHT 3757M.

As we return to the tarmac roads, the slow climb starts as we drive over major passes towards the stunning Clay Forest, which is Tibet’s own version of the Grand Canyon. You must stop to take in the view as the Himalayas spans the entire horizon. The perfect picture opportunity. Just as impressive is the drive from the Clay Forest down through the valley to our night halt in Zhada.
DAY 18: ZHADA TO DARCHEN (354KMS). 
START ALT 3757M, OVERNIGHT 4656M.

The day starts retracing our tyre tracks to the Guge Ruins, an ancient deserted city in the side of a mountain. Take time to explore this incredible city before heading back to Zhada and the Tholing monastery in the centre of town. We then journey back through the canyon to the Clay Forest to return to Darchen at the base of Mt. Kailash. There are two other monasteries, one built into the side of a cliff, and more hot springs to enjoy en route to the hotel.

DAY 19: DARCHEN TO SAGA (492KMS). 
START ALT 4656M, OVERNIGHT 4505M.

With Mt. Kailash and Nemo Nanyi snow peak in your rear-view mirror, we ascend to Mayum La before reaching the small town of Baryang. You’ll notice the terrain has changed yet again and you will see sand dunes as you drive towards Drongpa. There is a small temple where the walls inside still bear some of the newspapers from the dates of the Cultural Revolution (1966) that is well worth a visit before you climb two more passes to get to Saga.

DAY 20: SAGA TO JI LONG (179KMS). 
START ALT 4505M, OVERNIGHT 2830M.

We will journey through wide valleys and then up to Jakhyung La, the highest pass of the whole event, this morning before starting our major descent down incredibly engineered roads before reaching the town of Dzongka. Following the Kyirong Tsangpo River, you descend further into Kyirong Valley, which forms one of Tibet’s most beautiful alpine regions. Snow peaks, alpine bushes, forests, villages and farms spread vertically step by step. It feels like time has stood still as you end the day in Ji long.

DAY 21: JI LONG TO NEPAL BORDER (TBD KMS). 
START ALT 2830M, OVERNIGHT 1298M.

What goes up must come down, so the day starts with a very steep descent to the valley floor on a road that outshines the Stelvio pass. Travelling through a nature reserve, we follow the valley road to the hugely imposing Chinese border building as we cross into Nepal. This is an experience in itself with the trucks lined up both sides preparing to cross. Once into Nepal, we will head to our night halt.

DAY 22: NEPAL BORDER TO KATHMANDU (TBD KMS). 
START ALT 1298M, OVERNIGHT 1400M

Having driven ‘up and over’ the Himalayas, we begin our journey to the finish line in the city of Kathmandu. Twisting roads that go up and down the mountain sides, with lush green forests, are interrupted by welcoming villages and town folk. The nearer we get to the finish, the more the terrain and traffic changes until you reach the chaos of the city. The Yak and Yeti Hotel in Kathmandu will be ready to welcome you with open arms.

DAY 23: KATHMANDU FINISH LINE

To make sure crews can celebrate in style, the gala dinner and prize giving will take place the day after we arrive at the finish. This allows time to sort your vehicles and enjoy some local sight-seeing before the celebrations kick off in earnest.
Who can take part?
The Trans-Himalayan Adventure is designed to suit moderate to experienced crews. The route will be set out in a detailed road book containing distances in kilometres and miles, written instructions and tulip diagrams; there will be no hazardous speeds, night driving, trick navigation or map work. We offer assistance with event and car preparation, rally timing and navigation, and hold a special briefing for novices before the start; you will also find lots of advice on the www.rallyround.co.uk website.

Do I need a competition licence?
An International Driving Permit might be required for Nepal, depending on your nationality, but you do not need competition licences, helmets or fireproof overalls. This is not a speed event but a road rally, operating within normal traffic rules. There is no competition on this event. With relaxed schedules and numerous rest days you will have plenty of time to socialise with your fellow participants and enjoy the scenery and other attractions en route.

What sort of car do I need?
This event is open to all ages of cars. If you service and prepare your car properly, upgrade its suspension and fit a sump shield for protection, it should be able to cope. Your car must be fitted with a trip meter. You will also need to carry a few items specified in the regulations, such as a fire extinguisher and first-aid kit; comprehensive advice on car preparation and equipment may be found on our website.

What about fuel availability?
There may be a shortage of fuel on the rally route, you will definitely need a range of at least 400km (250 miles).

What will the weather and road conditions be like?
We will be travelling in the spring so the days will be warm but turning cold in the evenings. Due to the altitudes, you may also experience snow showers and high winds. It can be cold at night so you should bring warm clothes for early-morning and evenings, especially for the two nights camping. The roads we use are generally good tarmac with some gravel sections. The two days off-road are on gravel from well-graded to rough.

Do I need to arrange insurance?
Personal travel/accident insurance is compulsory. We are an Introducer Appointed Representative of Tyser & Co Ltd (Tysers), an Insurance Intermediary authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (registration number 308648) and we are confident that they will be able to make any insurance arrangements you may require, including comprehensive cover. An application form will be sent to you upon receipt of your deposit or entry fee; having received the completed form, Tysers will issue quotations for Motor, Transit & Travel insurance. You are free to arrange alternative cover if you wish; your shipping company may offer optional Marine Transit Insurance to cover vehicle shipping, for example.

What about visas and a carnet de passage?
Visas are required throughout and will be advised. Carnets de passage (permitting the temporary import and export of your car) will be arranged on your behalf by your shippers. The carnet fee is based on the estimated value of your car; the lower your estimate, the lower the fee.

What support services are provided?
Rally Round prides itself on first-class customer care and we will do our utmost to assist you at all times. The Trans-Himalayan Adventure 2020 will have a fully qualified and highly experienced Rally Doctor who carries an extensive supply of medical equipment and has lived and worked in India for several years. We also have our own team of skilled and resourceful mechanics and mobile workshops, well equipped to keep you on the road or tow you to a garage or place of safety if your car is beyond immediate repair. You will also find your fellow competitors more than willing to help. Nevertheless everyone is entitled to the same support, so we expect you to be reasonably self-reliant and at least capable of routine maintenance and changing tyres, oil and fuel filters without assistance.

How much money should I carry?
Hotel accommodation, breakfast and evening meals are included in the entry fee, as are many lunches and some coffee halts. However, we cannot supply free alcohol, so you should bring money for drinks. Cash is useful for swift hotel checkouts and fuel stops, tips, snacks, souvenirs and so on, and we recommend keeping an emergency cash reserve for any roadside assistance that might conceivably be needed.

Anything else I need to know?
Read the advice section of the www.rallyround.co.uk website, and raise any questions with the Rally Round office. We will send you frequent updates in the run-up to the rally, providing specific recommendations and anything else you need to know in order to prepare for a wonderful adventure. If you have any other questions, please email info@rallyround.co.uk or telephone +44 (0)1252 794100. We’re here to help!
Mark Robinson, Car 10:
Just brilliant!

James Hall-Smith, Car 11:
Great route - I really enjoyed the central section.
I also really enjoyed the camping – it made it a proper adventure!

Treacy & Lloyd Reddington, Car 5:
It was a true adventure, a real endurance test.

Richard Cunningham, Car 20:
It was a truly unique experience, loved every moment.

Barbara Shooter, Car 24:
One of my best rallies ever – you achieved something miraculous.

Phillip Haslam, Car 15:
When we signed up for Trans Himalayan Adventure, we knew it would take us to some amazing places, but we never expected every day to be quite so exceptional.

David Royds, Car 4:
It was challenging, stimulating, exciting, freezing, frustrating, terrifying and generally surprising.

Mark Molyneux, Car 28:
The event far exceeded my already high expectations in every regard. The organisation and planning which lay behind the adventure was evidently stupendous and a great credit to the Rally Round team.

Julia Little, Car 2:
We have had the most amazing few weeks full of excitement, challenge, awe and a great deal of fun. We wouldn’t exchange one second for the world.