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News release

## **It's the long road for Loudon**

Uddingston co-driver Stuart Loudon's on the road again. And it's a long road this time. Potentially, a *very* long road to the next round of the Chinese Rally Championship, which starts on Saturday (September 28).

Lanarkshire's globetrotting rally co-driver is heading to China for his third event alongside former British Rally Champion and World Rally Championship star Alister McRae. The Scottish pair are bound for Dengfeng in the province of Henan. In terms of rough geography, they're halfway between Hong Kong and Inner Mongolia and inland, north-west from Shanghai.

Dengfeng City sits at the foot of Songshan Mountain, one of China's five sacred mountains. Beyond the rally, Dengfeng is known as a region of great religious significance, with some of China's most renowned and important schools for Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism in the area.

As well as religion, martial arts feature highly, with Dengfeng reckoned by many – including the local population of 700,000 – to be China's hometown of martial arts.

After the stifling heat of Chinese competition earlier in the year, Stuart and Alister can relax with temperatures expected around 25 degrees, but the humidity will remain high at around 50 per cent later this week.

The rally, which starts on Saturday and finishes on Monday (September 28), will include four separate gravel stages. The route measures 191 miles in total, 100 of which are competitive.

### **How many wafers make the G207?**

How long's a long road? Is it the A9? Possibly, 270 miles from Falkirk to Scrabster's a trek. Or the A1 – that's a bit more like it: Edinburgh to London in 410 miles.

Actually, they're a hop, skip and a jump by comparison with the G207 or China National Highway 207, to give it its full name.

The 207 runs from top-to-bottom in China, from Guangdong in the south to Inner Mongolia in the north. That's one road running 2,323 miles. Now, that's a proper road – and it heads through the heart of Dengfeng, Henan, rally route for Stuart and Alister this week.

Measuring long roads in miles or kilometres works fine for the roadbook and paperwork on this week's latest Chinese Rally Championship qualifier – but the best way to measure distances is in Caramel Wafers.

Here's the first fascinating fact, every Tunnock's Caramel Wafer measures 0.00009 kilometres. And here's the next... it would take 41,517,853 biscuits sitting end-to-end to line the length of the G207 – and it would take the world's best biscuit makers eight weeks, two days and three hours to make them.

### **Leveling the learning curve**

Caramel Wafer talk done, Scotsmen Stuart and Alister will be keen to capitalise on the strong podium finish they achieved last time out, when they were third on last month's Rally Beijing Huairou on only their second event together.

Stuart said: "It was a great result to be on the podium after only two rallies with Alister. We had quite a tough event first time out in May, but that result in Beijing showed the real potential for the team.

"On a personal level, I was pretty chuffed too. Going to China's like nothing I've done before in the sport. Everything is so completely different and getting used to all of that has been a fairly steep learning curve. I'm under no illusions that I've flattened that learning curve, but I'm becoming less and less surprised by what I see in China and more accustomed to expecting the unexpected.

"The good thing for me is that this is really broadening my international rallying experience, which is a fantastic opportunity. And I get the chance to co-drive a McRae, which is brilliant as well!"

### **For Teacakes, read Jiaogai Shaobing**

There can be no doubt Stuart's gastronomic tolerance has been developed since he started competing in China, but this week he's delighted to learn that baking – something he's pretty familiar with – forms a big part of the Dengfeng cuisine.

Jiaogai Shaobing are baked white rolls, crisped with sesame seeds on the outside and soft on the inside.

"I'm looking forward to trying them," admits Stuart, "and that's not something I can honestly say about everything I've seen and eaten on these trips! Being a biscuit engineer, working ovens are part and parcel of my daily life, so it's going to be interesting to take a look at how these things are baked.

"As usual, I'll be taking some Tunnock's out with me, which will give me a chance to show the Dengfeng locals what we use our ovens for."

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