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News release

## **China's Caramel crisis is over, Stuart's coming with the Tunnock's**

Uddingston rally co-driver Stuart Loudon's world tour continues this week as he heads to China for the first time to compete with Alister McRae.

Stuart and Alister will contest the Chenzhou Rally, the opening round of the Chinese Rally Championship, in a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X later this week.

As a former FIA Asia Pacific Rally Champion, Alister has plenty of experience of rallying in China, but for Stuart, everything will be new in the east. And he can't wait.

"It's so exciting to be going to compete in such a different culture from what we have here in Europe," said the 27-year-old. "And, of course, the chance to work with Alister is fantastic. I co-drove for his father Jimmy a few years ago and that was a real privilege – it's going to be the same with Alister next week."

Stuart flies out of Scotland on Tuesday (May 26) for his Far East debut.

"We've got a day out there to acclimatise to the place and get used to the eight-hour time difference," said Stuart. "Then we'll be working with the team and getting ourselves ready for the rally."

Not knowing much about China, Stuart admitted he would be leaning on Alister in the early part of the season-long programme.

He added: "Alister has competed very successfully out there, winning the Asia Pacific Rally Championship is the highest award you can achieve in the region, so he knows the lie of the land a little bit and I'll take my lead from him – particularly when it comes to ordering from the menu."

Fortunately, Stuart's not heading east empty handed.

"I'll be travelling with Tunnock's, of course," he said. "I can't leave home without them, nobody should. Admittedly, this is a long journey, so the Teacakes might prove a little bit fragile, but we'll be fully loaded with Caramel Wafers and, definitely, some Caramel Logs – I could see China going for the sprinkled coconut."

### **Chenzhou Rally**

Next week's opening round of the Chinese Rally Championship runs on a concrete surface, with widely varying grip levels. The event is based in Chenzhou city in the Hunan province.

Hunan is in the south-central area of the People's Republic of China and Chenzhou is in the south of the province. Stuart can expect temperatures in the mid-20s in what is a humid sub-tropical climate. And, once you're outside the city, the countryside's rugged enough to keep a Scotsman happy, with the Nanline Mountain Range nearby.

In terms of size, Hunan is China's 10<sup>th</sup> biggest province, but it's only the 13<sup>th</sup> most densely populated. Stuart's backyard is Scotland, a place of 30,000 square miles and 5.2 million people. The province he's popping out to next week packs 72 million folk into 80,000 square miles.

### **You've got to hand it to Han Han**

It goes without saying that rallying and Teacakes make the world turn, we know that. But it's not often that Stuart gets to compete against somebody voted one of the world's most influential people by *Time* magazine. He will next week, when he and Alister line their Mitsubishi up against renowned Chinese rally star Han Han.

Much as Han Han is celebrated on the stages, it's actually his writing and blogging which have earned him global recognition and the unofficial tag of the voice of a generation.

And he's achieved all of that before he's even tasted a Caramel Wafer.

### **Rally of Portugal**

*Stuart's first World Rally Championship outing of the season was cut short last week after he and driver Keith Cronin crashed at the pre-event test for the Rally of Portugal. While the pair were uninjured, there was insufficient time to fix the Citroën DS 3 R5.*

*"I can genuinely say we were very unlucky in this accident," said Stuart. "A few other people went off at the same place and got away with little or no damage. Obviously, it was very, very disappointing for Keith and I that we couldn't take the start in Portugal."*

### **Stuart Loudon media enquiries**

Sandra Evans

+44 7887 693993

[Sandra@wordspr.com](mailto:Sandra@wordspr.com)