

Birmingham Mail

Your News: Nick Plotnek has a heart of gold

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Nick Plotnek

FOR most of us a holiday means a fortnight sunning on the beach in Spain or France.

But for 55-year old Birmingham property valuer Nick Plotnek, whose day job has him dealing with lease extensions and freeholds, this year's summer break is to take him one-third of the way across the globe to Mongolia, all in aid of charity.

On July 13, Nick will be taking part in the Mongol Rally, leaving from Birmingham Children's Hospital on a small motorbike you probably wouldn't even consider going down to the shops on.

He'll travel through 19 countries, eight time zones, across five mountain ranges, three deserts and some of the remotest places on earth.

"My aim is to raise £10,000 for the Children's Hospital Heart Unit in memory of my son, Robert, who sadly died there nine years ago," said Nick.

"It's the Queen's Jubilee year and as Robert was lucky enough to meet her when she opened the hospital in 1998, I thought it would be a great idea to do something positive in his memory."

The Mongol Rally, which has been running since 2004, is described as one of the world's last great adventures.

The object is to drive 10,000 miles in a totally unsuitable vehicle, travelling through countries you've barely heard of, driven by people with minimal mechanical skills and where the use of a map – never mind sat nav – is frowned upon.

Of the 330 vehicles that took part in 2011, only two-thirds reached the finish in the capital, Ulaan Baatar.

Nick says his chosen route will test his team, aptly named Idiots Abroad, to the limit as they visit as many amazing places as possible over the seven weeks he thinks it'll take to complete.

Leaving his wife and family behind in Solihull, Nick will be experiencing extremes of cold and heat (-10°C to +45°C), as well as climbing one of the world's highest motorable roads in Tajikistan.

Nick's biggest worry is colliding with a yak.

"When I was in India in 2007 I hit an elephant on a motorbike and I've still got the scars to prove it," he added.

* THE team's website can be found at www.idiotsabroad.co.uk, where you can follow Nick's escapades as they happen, track his progress, see photos and read his blogs which he will be posting when he's able to get a signal.



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