

Long Rider Legends to meet in Hungary



Scottish Long Rider Gordon Naysmith prepares to set off in 1972 on his 20,000 mile ride from South Africa to Austria, via Hungary.

They've ridden from opposite ends of the Earth and have survived deserts, war zones, mountains and seemingly insurmountable tangles of red tape. Now two of the greatest living equestrian explorers will meet on horseback in Hungary when Scottish Long Rider Gordon Naysmith greets Australian Long Rider Tim Cope at the conclusion of the latter's 8,000 mile solo journey from Mongolia to Europe.

After becoming the first person in 800 years to have re-traced the route ridden by Genghis Khan's mounted warriors, Tim is scheduled to conclude his extraordinary journey at Opusztaszer National Park, located on the edge of the Eurasian steppe, in late September.

There to greet him will be Gordon Naysmith, the only Long Rider to have ever ridden from the bottom of the African continent into the heart of Europe. While that Scottish Long Rider didn't encounter any of the mounted nomadic culture Tim saw as he rode across Central Asia, Naysmith didn't lack for adventure during a journey that stretched across 16 countries.

The trail across Africa brought Naysmith and his rugged Basutho horses into contact with the most dangerous predators on the continent – both men and beasts. Deserts, wars, ambushes. Naysmith rode through them all with a ferocious determination. He was trapped with his horses on board ship in the Red Sea. He nearly died of thirst in the deserts of Arabia.

Nothing stopped him.

At one point, suffering from an injury about to turn gangrenous, Naysmith "dressed the wound and gave myself a jab of vitamin B12. Heavy dose for a man but I had to ride on."

The world threw a great many obstacles at the Scottish Long Rider.

Yet as with Tim Cope, the world failed to stop Gordon Naysmith.

Now this renowned Long Rider has agreed to journey to Hungary in order to extend a hearty congratulations to Tim on behalf of all the Long Riders from 35 countries.

Doubtless there will be beaming ambassadors, smiling celebrities, enchanting children and a multitude of well-wishers on hand to greet Tim when he concludes his historic journey. Yet only one man will truly appreciate the hardships, understand the dangers and share the sense of accomplishment which will occur when Tim Cope swings down from his Mongolian saddle onto European soil. That man will be fellow Long Rider, Gordon Naysmith.

This story appears courtesy of our editorial comrade, Geoff Young, the publisher of Horse Connection – www.horseconnection.com.