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**Subject:** Hello from the Long Riders

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**From:** CuChullaine (longriders@spamarrest.com)

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**To:** rett139@yahoo.com;

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**Date:** Wednesday, December 19, 2012 11:49 AM

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The reader should read this exchange from the bottom up for chronological sense. Kent Madin

To: Kent Madin - Honorary Consul of Mongolia

From: CuChullaine O'Reilly - The Long Riders' Guild

Subject: Misinterpretation of ExWeb Editorial

CC: Swedish Long Rider Mikael Strandberg, Exploration Journalist Kraig Becker, Desert Explorer Ripley Davenport

Dear Mr. Madin,

CuChullaine O'Reilly of the Long Riders' Guild here, replying to your interesting message regarding the editorial published on ExWeb.

Allow me to clarify some basic misconceptions which you have made about my article.

The Long Riders' Guild is unlike the RGS or the Explorers' Club in many ways, one of which is our consistent effort to:

- a) ensure the would-be equestrian traveller is properly educated and equipped prior to departure -
- b) never tolerate any abuse to the road horse or pack animal -
- c) confirm that the facts associated with the journey are accurate.

Sadly, the modern horse world too often turns a blind eye to mounted criminals, horse killers and prolific liars. Unlike the entrenched equestrian sports world, who tolerate abuse and cruelty so long as it does not disrupt their income stream, the Guild maintains the highest ethical standards in the equestrian world.

No equestrian traveller suspected of abuse or ethical malpractice is ever admitted. To illustrate the seriousness of this point, I can say that one of the Founding Members was ejected after it was discovered he had abused his horses. Admittance into the Guild is never a matter of mere miles. The Guild is reserved for heroes, not hustlers.

If you study the Guild website you will discover that this policy is publicly acclaimed on the well-known "Hall of Shame." Herein are listed a variety of criminals who have been caught perpetrating different types of equestrian travel crimes.

<http://www.thelongridersguild.com/shame.htm>

More names about to be added to list, including the Hungarian who was arrested while riding a wounded horse in Sweden, the Frenchman who did not feed his horse in Canada for fifty days and the American who destroyed four horses in 500 miles.

Therefore, it is inaccurate to imply that I am proposing via the ExWeb article some toothless fairy tale, wherein there are no rules of admission. In fact, the Guild's protocols are so strict that admittance is seldom approved.

Thus I hope I have laid to rest your worries about "how do you, Mr. O'Reilly, plan to do a better job of checking the veracity of your Citizen-Explorers."

They are not "my" Citizen Explorers, Mr. Madin and I resent the sneering tone in which you addressed that point.

What I did encourage was the formation of a new role model for the exploration world, one which incorporates new technology, acknowledges the power of social media, allows the admittance of all humans regardless of their sex or nationality, and divorces itself from the power mad profiteers who have corrupted the RGS and Explorers' Club into unrecognizable entities.

I also rightly praised ExWeb for its proven ethical leadership, Mikael Strandberg's excellent investigative journalism, and Kraig Becker's on-going efforts to provide much needed hard news about expeditions worldwide. Once again, your attempts to belittle these fine men does you no credit.

Finally, there is the issue of your infamous persecution of Ripley Davenport.

Perhaps you neglected to read at the bottom of my editorial that I am currently busy writing the "Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration." This massive undertaking currently has 58 chapters, 1600 pages and 650 images completed. Yet I have a dozen difficult chapters still to write. That is why my focus in life is restricted solely to the topic of equestrian exploration.

I seldom have the time to read about travellers in other fields. Nor do I have the time to monitor the exploration world at large. Nevertheless, even I have come across repeated references to your ongoing campaign to persecute Davenport. I do not wish to interact with you in this exercise in venomous spite. As Ripley Davenport has never used horses in his expeditions, nor ever applied to the Guild for Membership, my knowledge of his travels is minimal.

Yet regardless of where Ripley went, or what he may or may not have done, what I recognize in you, Mr. Madin, is a bitter person who is allowing his malice to rule his common sense. Here at the Long Riders' Guild I am occasionally called upon to deal with truly wicked mounted criminals, monsters on horseback. When such an incident arises I do dispense justice.

You sir, are not dealing with that sort of criminal. From the tone of your email it is apparent that you have used my fine editorial as a flimsy exercise to address me, a perfect stranger, all the while you slur the name of a man I have never met. You should be ashamed of yourself for having written me such a message.

What I can tell you with perfect confidence, Mr. Madin, is that the Long Riders' Guild is a mounted brotherhood. And we never sit down at a table with a person we neither trust nor respect. You sir, I neither trust nor respect. You take tourists on mounted holidays and then have the nerve to come to the Long Riders' Guild and preach "responsibility."

I am concluding this conversation, blocking your email address, and making a note to inform the Senior Long Riders of your actions.

Regardless of how many miles you may have ridden as "Honorary Consul of Mongolia," there will never be a place for you among the equestrian explorers of the Long Riders' Guild.

Regards,

CuChullaine O'Reilly

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Dear Mr. O'Reilly,

I commented on your article that just came out in Explorer's Web but not being sure whether it will make it past the powers that be, I offer it to you directly.

Please understand that I do sympathize with many of the points you make. I was rather amazed, during my research on Ripley Davenport, to learn how ludicrously low the bar is set for membership in RGS. It's little more than an exploration themed LinkedIn.

Still, I hope you will take my point about the need for standards and some kind of transparent verification method. In the case of Ripley Davenport there may be the germ of a model. Much of the information that appears to point to Davenport's faux CV was crowdsourced by myself and several others working on different continents and in different languages. No single person doing the research saw all the possible connections or contradictions, it was a genuine collaboration. Much like Wikipedia, there might be a model there for volunteers with interest who would scrutinize claims, raise questions that would clarify points, etc. Most importantly, the existence of such a system, even were it informal, would deter those who might choose to pull the digital wool over the community's eyes.

Here's the comment I posted:

I quizzed the RGS not long ago about just how they assure quality control in their membership and the answer was simple. They don't. They claimed they can't afford to fact check and verify that their members are authentic. As disheartening as that statement is perhaps true, how do you,

Mr. O'Reilly, plan to do a better job of checking the veracity of your Citizen-Explorers (particularly in this age of solo-adventurers)?

At least there WAS a time when clubs like RGS and Explorers served to filter out the posers and the fakes. I'm not sure that your prescription of an internet driven community of explorers is any more likely to be credible than the ossified clubs you disparage.

But I wish you well. And I would point (as illustration of the challenge that faces any internet-driven, de-centralized Citizen-Explorer approach to the future of exploration particularly one fueled by commercial sponsorship) to the comments section where we have the phantasm explorer Ripley Davenport solemnly declaring he is giving up his RGS membership (after being a member for barely a year) in spite of the fact that he provided not one iota of documentation for the perilous and "record breaking" explorations he claims made him a "renowned adventurer, humanitarian, and motivational speaker". O'Reilly's "Citizen Explorers" laudably use the latest in technology and communication to free themselves and their activities from the constraints of hidebound traditions and ossified organizations intent only on their own perpetuation. Davenport is arguably the other side of that coin, leveraging the naivete, gullibility, thirst for content and lack of fact checking inherent in the internet to create an explorer's persona with virtually no quantifiable substance. And who will keep the Citizen-Explorer honest, who will vet their claims? Certainly not the very same Becker and Strandberg (lionized in this article for their principles and ethics) since both have turned a blind eye to glaring questions about the veracity of Davenport's claims.

May I suggest that while you foment Citizen-Exploration you also establish some unequivocal guidelines which, using the ubiquity and versatility of the internet can quickly and accurately substantiate exploration claims. You could start by saying that the expedition didn't happen unless there are immigration documents, photographs and at least two disinterested witnesses. And explorational claims should be open to free and full disclosure, questioning and discussion via the internet.

Sincerely,

Kent Madin

[www.boojum.com](http://www.boojum.com)

Honorary Consul of Mongolia for the Northern Rockies