

TREK ACROSS THE ALPS PAYS OFF AGAINST ALL ODDS

A pair of Bushey residents recently completed one of the biggest challenges of their lives for charity after trekking in Romania.

Darren Reuben, of Bourne Road, and Ilana Epstein, of Chiltern Avenue, recently completed a 50km trek in the Transylvanian Alps for the charity Aims 2 Cure.

My Bushey News reported back in July that Darren, Ilana and their team of 16 people were due to complete the trek in Iceland, but because of the volcanic ash that caused travel chaos across Europe they were relocated to Romania. The group swapped Landmannalauger in the Southern Highlands of Iceland, for the near Brasov part of the Transylvanian Alps.

Aims 2 Cure ran the event, which took place between 23 June and 27 June, with the charity supporting sufferers of conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis.

Darren told *My News* that many people taking part had family members with the condition but for him, the decision to do the trek was simpler. He said: "Other people on the trek had family



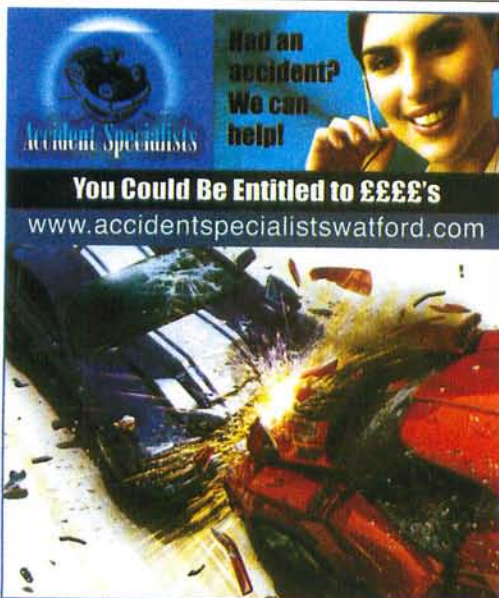
members who were sufferers. I didn't, my personal thoughts were that I was able to do it and it was worth giving up some of my time to help people."

The team trained intensely for the challenge, often as a group. Darren said: "Our training was in January. We met every weekend and walked as a group."

The six months of training helped to prepare the trekkers but there were still some surprises in store for them. Darren said: "Our training was very Iceland based, lots of inclines and declines and unlevel walking. Transylvania was a mountain trek and involved more climbing. There were days we were on all fours as it was the only way to climb!"

The group went up 4,500ft on the second day and just over 5,000ft on the last day and although were prepared for an Icelandic trek rather than a Romanian one, they all completed the challenge with no injuries and beat their target. The team have raised £50,000 between them, with Darren raising £3,668, while Ilana has raised £3,677.

Darren said the trek was challenging but rewarding and that they are all planning to do something similar again. He said: "On the plane on the way home we were already working out where and when to do our next challenge."



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