



Rear, doctor Chris Parsons, mechanic Richard Wood, comms Kiko Matthews, navigator Ben Matthews. Front: Chrissy Prydun, PA, and Colin Javens, expedition leader, during the 2006 trip.

COLIN IS IN LINE FOR HERO AWARD

A GRUELLING 22,000 kms fund-raising drive across Africa by a wheelchair-bound Herefordshire man has earned him a place on a national magazine award short-list.

It was in July 2000 that Colin Javens, then 21, dived off the pier at the Isle of Wight to rescue a pair of binoculars – which resulted in severe spinal damage.

Wheelchair-bound as a tetraplegic Colin discovered he could still drive, and decided to spearhead the 'Driving Home' expedition to South Africa, and the Colin Javens Spinal Injury Trust was born.

Legs scalded by a spilt cup of tea, agonising burns and a forced two-week rest in Egypt failed to deter Colin and his party, and they drove on with him in an improvised harness in his Land Rover.

"It took us five days to do the last 2,300 kms – we arrived at Cape Point on Easter Monday, April 17, 2006.

"It was a magical feeling to have made it - a triumph for the disabled generally and a huge accolade for my team

without whom it wouldn't have happened. My ungainly and unsightly body sat in that undignified Land Rover chair but my spirit soared.

"I might not be able to physically feel anything below the shoulders, but in that magical moment I could spiritually feel the kindness and generosity of everyone", he said at the time.

Nominated

Now back at home at Moreton-on-Lugg, Colin is hoping to encourage enough votes to win a Readers Digest Local Hero Award competition, having been nominated by freelance journalist Anthea Rowan, who met him in Tanzania during his epic 2006 trip.

Meanwhile, Colin has just set up the West Midlands Branch of Spinal Research and continues to work towards raising funds and awareness of spinal injury.

Votes for him can be emailed to local hero award@readersdigest.co.uk, or to Local Heroes, Readers Digest, 11 Westferry Circus, London E14 4HE.