

# Colin's a hero to Digest readers

► Colin Javens pictured before setting off on the 22,000-mile Driving Home expedition.



BY ANNA NALBORCZYK

A HEREFORDSHIRE fundraiser who was determined not to let his physical disability hamper his sense of adventure has been named local hero of the year by a national magazine.

Colin Javens, from Moreton-on-Lugg, has won *Reader's Digest's* Local Hero of the Year award.

Colin, aged 27, was paralysed from the neck down in July 2000 after a diving accident but has been determined to actively raise funds for spinal injury research. After his accident, he spent just under a year in rehab before returning to college to complete his degree and re-passing his driving test.

Last year, he achieved his goal of driving from Britain to Cape Town. The five-man team set off in winter 2005 and crossed 12 countries during the 22,000-mile Driving Home expedition. Colin drove his modified Land Rover using the tiny movement in his arms and braved extreme heat, severe burns

to his legs caused by a spilt cup of tea and pressure sores.

After 164 days, the team arrived in Cape Town and Colin became the first person with his disabilities to drive the length of Africa, raising almost £500,000 for spinal injury research.

The magazine's two million readers were invited to say which person they felt deserved to be the overall winning hero from the previous 12 months and Colin received more than half the votes.

Colin said: "I think it's excellent, I wasn't expecting to win at all. I think it's pretty amazing that so many people voted for me."

Hardworking Colin has just launched a new charity, Spinal Research West Midlands branch, and hopes to raise £100,000 in two years. His first fundraising event, a clay pigeon competition, will be held on May 5 and will run from 9.30am to 4pm at Holme Lacy College.

In order to take part, teams of four will need to raise £220 and register by April 21. For more information go to [www.colin-javens.com](http://www.colin-javens.com) or call 01432 761967.