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Page: 9
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Fiona gets back in the saddle

East Lothian: Cyclists urged to take on Three Peaks Challenge in aid of brain injury charity Headway

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A woman who survived a devastating brain injury has vowed to raise funds for the charity which helped to rebuild her life.

Fiona Grant-MacDonald (36), from Prestonpans, is gearing up for a 70-mile cycle in aid of Headway East Lothian, based in Dunbar.

With charity volunteer Claire Dunn (30) at her side, she is aiming to climb Arthur's Seat, North Berwick Law and Traprain Law as part of a Three Peaks Challenge on Thursday, August 20.

It was in 2013, after being found unconscious in bed by her partner, that Fiona was diagnosed with a brain haemorrhage, which left her severely brain injured. She underwent life-saving treatment at the Western General Hospital, where her family were told she had a 50-50 chance of surviving the ordeal.

It wasn't until ten months after Fiona had been discharged from hospital that she was able to return full-time to her job as a Physics technician and hockey coach at Stewart's Melville College.

Although the injury still impacts upon her ability to process information and her daily activities, she has finally managed to regain control of her life with the continued support of Headway's local support group.

"I consider myself extremely lucky to be here today, though it was difficult going from being a fit woman

who loved cycling to someone facing a long and uphill battle to recovery," said Fiona. "My memory has been massively affected and the headaches I suffered in the early stages of my recovery are still really painful even today, meaning I have to take painkillers on a daily basis."

It's not long since just a one-mile bike ride left Fiona lying exhausted on the pavement.

"Before my haemorrhage I was very active, and I've had to learn to pace myself and reign myself in a lot when taking on physical challenges," she went on. "Members of Headway East Lothian can get quite depressed by the long-term challenges they face after their brain injuries. I'm hoping our challenge will motivate them to join in or help out at the food stations along the way."

The challenge will start with a cycle from Musselburgh to Edinburgh before tracking the John Muir Way through East Lothian and finishing at The Goth in Prestonpans. Anyone wishing to donate or take part in the cycle should contact Headway East Lothian on 07895 193974.

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Fiona Grant-MacDonald from Prestonpans and Headway East Lothian volunteer Claire Dunn train for their fundraising challenge, which they hope others will get involved in.