

The Northern Echo

Wild hogs dream for teacher

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A HISTORY teacher from County Durham is hoping to raise £2,500 for charity by riding a Harley Davidson motorbike down the west coast of America.

Marie Atherton, 42, from Consett, will be joined by 20 other breast cancer survivors from around the world.

They are taking part in the Amazon Heart Thunder United States, which is an ten day bike ride from Los Angeles to San Francisco down Route 101.

Mrs Atherton, who was head of history Greencroft Community School in Annfield Plain, heard about the charity ride while undergoing treatment at Shotley Bridge Hospital, near Consett.

She said: "The thought of taking part in this adventure has kept me hopeful, the stories of the other women who have taken part have made me feel less alone.

"All the medical procedures and treatments are wonderful but they have saved my life, but cancer has attacked my confidence and left me frightened.

"I need to shake my fist at the sky and show breast cancer that it cannot stop me.

"I need my adventure because I haven't felt brave or in control of anything for so long.

"This disease can cripple women by making them live scared.

The work of Amazon Heart will help me keep the cancer in it's place and not let it ruin the life that medicine has saved for me."

Mrs Atherton found a small dint beneath her left breast in December 2006 and was diagnosed as having breast cancer in January last year.

She underwent surgery to remove lump followed by six sessions of chemotherapy and fifteen sessions of radiotherapy.

Mrs Atherton still undergoing Herceptin treatment and will be on Tamoxifen for the next five years to remove the risk of the cancer reoccurring.

She added: "As terrifying as the diagnosis and treatments were, I have been really impressed by the spirit of fellow survivors.

"This disease can happen to young women, at a time when they have careers that are important to them, mortgages to pay and young children to support.

"So far my treatments have been successful and my health is good. I know I have been very lucky."

Amazon Heart will use half the money to fund support schemes for breast cancer survivors and the other half will be donated to Breast Cancer Care UK.

To sponsor Mrs Atherton log on to:
<http://www.amazonheart.org/AHThunder/marieatherton.html>

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