

Adventurer Noel falls victim to a mystery virus



by MARY MAGEE

LOCAL adventurer Noel Hanna has been struck down with a mystery virus after returning from one of his latest ventures.

Noel (33), from Dromara had just completed from a ten day ECO Challenge trip in the Borneo jungle when he fell ill.

He returned home last Thursday suffering from symptoms including high temperature and headaches.

His GP referred him to the Royal Victoria Hospital where he is currently undergoing tests.

It is believed Noel may have contracted the illness from rats or bats which had been in caves where he and other members of the team had to stay.

Doctors have prescribed a course of antibiotics but

are keeping a close eye on the Dromara man. They fear he may have contracted the disease during a part of the long trek where humans have never been before.

Most of his 300 mile journey was undertaken in 42 degree heat.

This is the just the latest in a long line of endurance events in some of the most inhospitable parts of the world which Noel has taken part in.

He has previously been to the Himalayas, Sahara, Death Valley and Argentina.

Members

Other members of the team this time were Ian Cummings, Alison Morris and Tony Flaven. They managed to come in 27th out of 78 teams after completing a number of events including paragliding, walking, climbing, canoeing and running.

Noel, who said he was feeling fine, pledged the latest setback would not stop him taking part in further

ventures.

"I feel fine at the moment and can't wait until I get back into training," he said.

"I don't think the doctors are unduly worried about me but because our team have been in places where humans have never been before and because of my high temperature and headaches they want me to remain in hospital for observation.

Undergoing

"I first became unwell after the challenge in Malaysia and I wasn't feeling 100 per cent.

"Then when I came home that they sent me into hospital where I am undergoing tests."

Noel, who has already been in hospital for over a week, is not expected out for a few days.

"This certainly won't stop me," said Noel. "When I get out of here I would like to do some more training and waiting for next year's ECO Challenge."