

## Ratna's inspiring experience

*Ratna on the mountain. "My wish is for everyone to make this journey."*



*Mount Kilash*

South West Surrey member Selvamalar Ratnasingam – known to all as Ratna – has completed a “life changing experience” by tackling a demanding trek to a holy lake and then around a mountain in Nepal.

The journey started in Katmandu and headed towards Mount Kilash, stopping on the way at Lake Manasarowar in Tibet, the highest fresh water lake in the world.

“I went with a group of eight other people I did not know, but made friends along the way” she said. They travelled first by jeep, stopping as they got used to the altitude, before setting out on horseback or on foot for the trek up the mountain.

“We all went to Lake Manasarowar first, as this is a holy lake, especially for Hindus. We immersed ourselves in the cold lake so that we could be cleansed. We prayed there and stayed there that night before leaving next day. We trekked for three days round the mountain. It is nearly 22,000 feet high and its summit is unclimbed.

“I went on foot. The second day up towards the Dolma Pass was steep and about 10 hours of walking. The next day we started the final trek. One has to walk slowly due to the altitude. The oxygen level is only 50 per cent and hydration was important.

“I am grateful to have done this trek with eight other friends. It was definitely a life changing experience and an opportunity to view some of the most magical scenery on the planet. One has to be there to experience the magic of the place.

“My wish is for everyone to make this journey. No-one is too old. If you are fit and able to walk, you should do it. I hope everyone who reads this will be inspired to do something they always dreamt of, and see the magic for themselves.”

. Ratna was also the Fellowship’s first recipient of the “unsung hero” award announced at last year’s conference, recognition for her support to the branch where she provides tea, coffee and biscuits at every meeting. “She is always willing to help in her own quiet way and always has such a lovely smile” her fellow members commented.

National chairman Margaret Moffat added: “I have seen how many ordinary members work so hard to help behind the scenes. We should say ‘thank you’ to all our unsung heroes who are still beavering away.”