



No coast: Towradgi cyclists Greg McAlary and Geoff Woods on the 1300km Les Dix Alpes bike ride, raising funds for the Children's Oncology Foundation.

Ten mountains push duo to the limit for kids

By ANGELA THOMPSON

A PAIR of Towradgi cyclists have returned to their sea-level homes after a "once-in-a-lifetime" ride across some of Europe's loftiest peaks.

Greg McAlary and Geoff Woods, both 55, have scarcely been able to get aching muscles back on their bikes since completing the epic 1300km ride which raised more than \$6000 for the Children's Oncology Foundation.

The Ten Mountains Ride (Les Dix Alpes) began in Como, Italy, on June 20 and

wound up in Nice, France, 12 days later.

To train, they would ride up Mt Keira six times then, the next day, up Macquarie Pass three times. But nothing prepared them for the succession of 10 mountains, each more than 2000m, with at least one 1500-1700m col as a prelude.

"It was like doing three Macquarie passes to get to something that was four Macquarie passes," Mr McAlary said.

"What you really can't emulate is the altitude.

"Once you're at 1100-1200m, the lack of oxy-

gen really affects you."

The ride took in some of Europe's most stunning scenery, including the traffic-free village of Zermatt, at the foot of the Matterhorn, and the 2770m Col de l'Iseran - the highest paved mountain pass in the French Alps.

The pair, a regular early morning sight on Illawarra roads, consider it the highlight of their cycling history which began 12 years ago to keep fit.

Family, friends and colleagues from Pillar and Integral Energy contributed to the fundraising.



Tough ride: Greg McAlary en route to the finish line in Nice, France, after tackling the mountains from Como in Italy.