



Race night for rare disorder

By Daphne Chamberlain
A "race night", hosted by Paul and Julie at the Constitutional Club earlier this spring, raised £1,000 for the battle against a rare neurological disorder. Organiser Sally Rodohan, who lives on The Grange estate, was herself struck down by transverse myelitis at the age of 12.



Sally Rodohan. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

At first paralysed from the neck down, it was months before she began to recover. The illness was virtually unknown in Ireland, where she then lived, and it was initially thought she had polio. Eventually diagnosed by a visiting American doctor, she was told: "The good news is we know what it is. The bad news is we don't know how to treat it."

Nowadays, if diagnosed within 10 days, the usual treatment is by steroids, followed by physiotherapy. The therapy that worked for Sally was alternate hot and cold baths, suggested by a student. While most people eventually improve significantly, about one-third are left with some permanent disability, and some sadly do not progress.

Sally told *THE ARCHER* that every sufferer is affected differently. The many symptoms include muscle weakness, nerve sensations, fatigue, depression, and paralysis. TM can strike people ranging in age from five months to 80.

The condition resembles multiple sclerosis, but usually there is only one attack, with lesions on the spinal cord, whereas with MS there are repeated attacks, with lesions on the brain.

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Traffic calmed by speed tables

By Gill Steiner
It is a fact of life for some drivers: straight wide road, go fast. So, despite 20mph signs on Woodside Avenue, we were used to cars, vans and motorbikes flashing by at top speed. Now, it's different because speed tables have been installed, forcing drivers to curb their speed.

It has taken years to get speed calming measures in our road. However, demand from the local community, including Councillor Martin Newton, sparked the changes to make Woodside Avenue a safer place, particularly for the schoolchildren.

Residents had their say

The existence of an active residents' association has resulted in the selection of speed tables, a mini-roundabout, a raised junction table and a zebra crossing. It was far from easy to obtain an agreement when hundreds of people were involved. Nobody really wanted obstacles in the road, particularly when you consider the physical impact of lorries or vans on a speed table, but we had to find ways of slowing down vehicles yet permitting traffic to flow.

There is always a drawback with speed-calming measures: the noise that is generated by some lorries bouncing off the speed tables can be truly terrible. But residents must be relieved that at long last our road commands the respect from drivers that it deserves.

Support for sufferers

Because TM is rare (officially about 300 cases a year) someone could go all their life without meeting another sufferer. This is why the Transverse Myelitis Society was set up in 1994. It offers support and information to sufferers, their families and carers.

Sally, as the Chair and one of the founders, has noted that TM sometimes occurs in clusters. She says: "There is a cluster around Telford, and three in one road in the Bournemouth area. It's classed as a disorder of the immune system, but could environment have something to do with it as well? We need much more research."

For further information, ring Sally Rodohan on 02088832721 or visit www.myelitis.org.

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Do not pass "Go"; do not collect £200. Picture by Guy Welch.

Monopoly motor

To launch their latest TV advert promoting a campaign based on the traditional Monopoly game, an open-topped bus load of Monopoly men made its way through London from the Old Kent Road (where the board game starts) to the McDonald's head office on the High Road. Fifteen foot-high Monopoly game pieces such as the old boot and a Scotty dog were made for the commercials, as well as a giant old-fashioned car seen parked in the car park adjacent to East Finchley station.

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