



A run to overcome the curse of chronic fatigue

By Julia Lawrence

Chronic fatigue syndrome is a disease most people don't really understand. Much scepticism and suspicion still surrounds this cruel illness which is thought to affect 250,000 people in the UK today.

Sadly, Amy Carter, a 15-year-old Wren Academy student, who lives in Leicester Road, N2, is one of them. Also known as Myalgic Encephalopathy, or ME, the disease has seriously curtailed her life, meaning she hasn't been able to attend school since January 2016, and can find the simplest things like climbing the stairs utterly exhausting. She also suffers terrible migraines, brain fog, dizziness and has trouble regulating her temperature and fighting infection.

Three tackle 10k

That is why Amy's mum Claire with Robyn and I, her friends, are going to be running the British London 10k on 9 July to raise much-needed funds to try and find a cure or effective treatment.

"It is still massively underfunded," explained Claire. "Any contribution, however small, might find a way to give Amy and other sufferers their lives back."

Home study

Amy developed the condition after a particularly nasty viral infection wiped her out for several weeks. Since then, she has been under the care of a specialist team at UCLH. She also receives private home tutoring, funded by the Department for Education, so she has been able to continue with her studies. Despite everything she



ME time: Claire, Robyn and Julia get ready to run for Amy, second left.

has to endure, she will sit five GCSEs next month, at home.

"We've been extremely lucky with the help and acceptance we've received," says Claire. "But others have not been. You hear terrible stories of parents being criticised for not sending their children to school when they've been taken ill."

For her part, Amy remains quite stoic and hopeful she will beat ME. "She's brilliant," says Claire. "Of course she gets fed up, but she knows that when she's feeling better, her life will continue."

Support

So if you see three ladies in purple T-shirts running for Amy and ME, give them a wave and a cheer. Or better still, give them a few quid for this very good cause. To support Claire and the team go to: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Team-AmyandME.

Full steam ahead for June festival

Preparations for this year's East Finchley Community Festival on Sunday 25 June between 12 noon and 6pm in Cherry Tree Wood are on track and going full steam ahead.

Bands are booked for the main stage, community acts are gearing up to perform on *The Archer* stage and the food stalls are sold out although organisers are still taking bookings for non-food stalls.

Give a little whistle

The theme this year is the celebration of 150 years since the railway came to Finchley in 1867. To mark the event everyone is invited to meet up at 11.30am on the Sunday morning opposite East Finchley Tube station in railway-themed fancy dress. Bring a whistle, too! There'll be a celebration photo and a mass whistle to start the festival off, ahead of a short parade through Cherry Tree Wood to the main stage.

Roger Chapman, one of the organising team, said: "We are delighted that this year Finchley Film Makers will be filming the festival. We have wanted a film made for some years and are looking forward to the final product which we will put up on our website and hope to have shown at the Phoenix during the year."

The popular owl visitors from last year will be flying back in to the festival itself,

more big slides will be on their way and free tennis taster sessions will be returning to Cherry Tree Wood's courts.

Be a Festival Maker

This free community festival is entirely run by local Festival Maker volunteers who can always do with more help. Before the event they need help on marketing, organisational skills, fundraising, secretarial and social media coverage.

Why not come to the next festival meetings on Monday 8 May, Monday 5 June or Monday 19 June to offer your help? All the meetings are held at Martin Primary School on the High Road and start at 7.30pm.

Roger added: "On the day festival organisers are looking for help selling raffle tickets, litter picking, selling merchandise and giving out information. If you can help, even for just an hour, that would be great."

Find out more on the festival's new website myEastFinchley.org.uk. Make contact by email at: festival@myEastFinchley.org.uk and follow news on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @myEastFinchley.

A pheasant evening stroll

Thanks to reader Brian Marchant for sending us this photo of a cock pheasant strolling nonchalantly

onto the High Road outside Robertson's the monumental mason in the early evening of Easter Sunday.

Pheasants are occasional visitors to gardens around Coldfall Wood but perhaps this one was in the mood for a spot of window shopping.



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