

# Life put on pause with ME

A WORCESTER ME sufferer has spoken of the debilitating effects the illness has had on his once active life and the problems facing sufferers, following the recent ME Awareness Week.

## Catherine Phillips

Edward Rooke had always been very sporty, choosing to cycle to work every day and kayaking every weekend, up until two years ago when he began to feel the effects of ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis).

The previously active 24-year-old now finds walking half a mile difficult and his sporting hobbies have been replaced by reading books, listening to audio stories and watching films in his bedroom of his parents' house on East Comer.

Mr Rooke had been working in Reading as an electrical engineer after gaining a first class degree in Engineering from Cardiff University.

However, as the symp-



toms of ME began to take effect he was finding it too difficult living on his own and had to move back to the St John's family home in July 2004.

ME, also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, is a long-term and disabling physical illness affecting around 240,000 in the UK with no known cure.

ME Awareness Week took place from Monday, May 8 until Sunday May, 14 with the aim of highlighting the problem and also raising funds for the charity Action for ME.

Mr Rooke said he was

fortunate as his employers had left his job open for him but added that other sufferers were not so lucky.

He also felt that the benefit system did not support those with ME enough after he was forced to go to a tribunal to claim incapacity benefits.

"It is difficult for people with ME to get work because they have trouble committing to the hours due to their illness and the benefit system does not take into account that the effects vary week to week or that it's the accumulation of tasks that is tiring," he said.

"There is such a misconception about the illness and people expect there to be a miracle cure but there isn't - your life just has to be put on pause," he added.

For more information on ME, visit the Action for ME website at [www.afme.org.uk](http://www.afme.org.uk).

**ME sufferer Edward Rooke has spoken out about the effects of the illness on his once active life. Picture by Ben Dalby. 20.06.001.BDW**

## Put the kettle on for charity in June

TEA lovers have been told to enjoy their usual afternoon cuppa throughout June but to make sure they are raising money along with their teacups.

Tea at 3 is an annual fund-raising event organised throughout Britain by national charity Help the Hospices and Acorns Children's Hospice is asking kind-hearted Worcester people to brew up their

own Tea at 3 ideas to support the Bath hospice.

Organisers have suggested organising a tea quiz, holding a cake baking competition, running a raffle or even going teetotal to raise some much needed cash.

Previous events have seen people host Mad Hatter's Tea Parties, teddy bears' picnics and even tea and golf sessions called 'tee'd off',

but merely asking friends and colleagues for a donation at tea break could also see the pounds pile up.

The money raised will be used to help Acorns provide respite, emergency and end-of-life care for families and anyone who wants to organise an event or donate should call Jayne Charles on 01386 554848 or email [jayne.charles@acorns.org.uk](mailto:jayne.charles@acorns.org.uk).

## All the fun of the fair in Pershore

THE GREATEST Show on Earth is the theme for this year's Pershore Carnival on Bank Holiday Monday (May 29).

Marching bands, drummers, stalls, a procession and the carnival princess and her two attendants will all entertain visitors who are expected to flock to the event and line the streets for a good view of the parade.

A dog show, fairground rides and a host of other attractions will also be on offer in the town's Abbey Park throughout the day.

Carnival chairman Dave Shaw said: "This year's carnival theme has inspired many novel ideas for participation in the procession.

"The carnival princess and her two attendants are now enthroned and we are now busy selling Carnival Draw tickets, and putting the finishing touches to the plans."

The procession is due to assemble at 12.15pm in the Brandy Cask gardens in Bridge Street, where entrants will be judged.

It will set off at 1pm along Bridge Street, High Street, left into Church Street, and round onto the Abbey Park, at the bottom of Newlands.



**Cheers - Acorns volunteer Pat Burston and junior Acorns supporter Sam Fowle, 5, will be raising their mugs to Tea at 3. (s)**



**Taking action - Sam Hill from Worcester pictured here with a young child in Delhi. (s)**

## Dalai Lama tops bill in ActionAid trek

LISTENING to the Dalai Lama give a speech in Tibetan was one of the many incredible experiences a Worcester man savoured during a charity fund-raising trek in India.

Sam Hill spent two weeks in the country raising money for the international development charity ActionAid which helps to fight global poverty in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.

The 27-year-old, who is a soft-

ware developer for city-based firm Namesco, and his fellow 23 trekkers raised more than £32,000 for ActionAid projects from their efforts.

Aside from being in the presence of the Dalai Lama, Sam also saw the Taj Mahal and visited an ActionAid project working with street children in Delhi.

"When I told my friends and family I was going to trek across the Indian Himalayas, staying in tents,

and travelling on Indian sleeper trains, they thought I was insane," he said.

"But to be able to go to a place like India and experience such an amazing culture while also helping the poor was a fantastic opportunity."

Anyone who wants to find out about ActionAid projects should call 01460 238047 or log onto [www.actionaid.org.uk](http://www.actionaid.org.uk).

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**In the dock - Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College students finished runners-up in the Magistrates Court Mock Trial. (s)**

## Pipped at the post for national prize

A GROUP of city pupils took part in a nail-biting trial when they found themselves in the dock for a national competition.

Year 9 students from Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College took part in the Magistrates Court Mock Trial for a place in the national finals of the

contest.

But, after winning two previous regional rounds in May, they lost out to Chipping Norton School by just two points out of 600 and were placed runners-up.

The Worcester college was in the Regional Final for the third succes-

sive year and this time prosecuted in a case of alleged racially aggravated assault on a spectator at an international football match. They defended a second case which focussed on joy riders and the difficulty of identifying people in poor light and visibility.

Principal Sean Devlin said he was disappointed but very proud of the pupils who participated and thanked William Simpson, a local magistrate, who has helped the pupils over the last four years.

He added that his school will certainly be entering again in 2007.