



Face It Together

The newsletter for adult members of The Birthmark Support Group

Welcome

Welcome to the third edition of the Face It Together Newsletter. It seems like a long time since the last newsletter, by now hopefully most of us have been on our summer holidays and spent time with our families. Soon the kids will be back at school and the usual level of traffic will be back on the roads.

So why not cheer yourself up by attending the next Fun Day in Chigwell? See all the details below and to know what will be in store please read my review of the Birmingham Fun Day.

Email faceittogether@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk if you wish to write an article for the next edition or post your bio to the address below.

BSG 'Fun' Days

Sunday, September 17th in North London. This will be held at Chigwell School, Chigwell, Essex from 12 noon to 5.30 pm.

The day will include the Birthmark Support Group AGM, a mentor training session, Emily Johnson's dissertation interviews, a mini "Trip to the Pub", Swimming, The Clinique Team, BBQ and obviously the usual selection of games. I'm definitely going to give the Bouncy Castle a go this time!!

Saturday, November 18th in Glasgow This will be held at St Brides Church 21 Greenlees Road Cambuslang Glasgow G72 8JB between 1.00pm and 5.00pm.

Further details about the programme, travel directions, etc for these events will be available on the website and on request via the PO Box address.

FIT Trip to the Pub

Our first "Trip to the Pub" in London was a lovely event. We found a nice pub, with a beer garden and spent the afternoon enjoying the sunshine (while sitting in the shade of course protecting our birthmarks). In the background we could hear the "Ooohs" and "Aaahs" of the England game. It was their first outing against Paraguay! Of course it all went downhill after that.

We are also hoping to take advantage of the lovely pub across the road from the Chigwell School and stage a second Trip to the Pub! So please join us.

Carry the Card - Alex R Pratt (Leeds)



Like many other BSG members, I often felt that I was the only person on the planet with a facial PWS, until around 20 years ago when I saw other patients at Leeds General Infirmary's Laser Clinic. In fact I didn't get to chat to another PWSer until last summer when I joined the BSG.

I wish I'd had the support of a group like the BSG during my formative years. I've made some good friends in our group and we 'clicked' straight away, because we have had so many common experiences.

During the last couple of years I have seen young children with a facial PWS, for example, one in Marks and Spencer's in Leeds, and the other in King's Cross station. I considered introducing myself to the respective parent, but I didn't feel confident enough to approach them.

I could have stumbled up to them and said "Hi, as you can see, I've got one of those!", then I would be at a loss as to what to say next. The obvious answer is - a Birthmarks Support Group Business Card!

It would help to break the ice, and show that the bearer is genuine and is offering help and support. Some people may not take too kindly to the 'intrusion', but I feel that it is a risk worth taking.

The cards were suggested to the Committee and they have printed a stock of the cards. I carry some in my wallet, just in case I see another child or adult who might benefit from our knowledge and support. I have already given one to a friend, whose child has a birthmark on their leg.

I recommend all BSG members to carry our card. Hopefully it will attract high rates of interest!

If you would like one of the cards please send a SAE to the PO Box and 10 cards will be sent to you.

Front View



The Birthmark Support Group

Registered Charity No. 1090952

Tel: 0845 045 4700

website: www.birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk

Back View

General Information:	info@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk
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Announcing The Birthmark Support Group E-Shop: www.buy.at/birthmarksupportgroup

Here's a great way to get some great online bargains, and with Christmas just around the corner this is just what we need. It can also help with more practical things like finding cheaper gas and electricity services, and booking your holidays. Please remember that anything you buy through our webshop will help towards our fundraising targets.

So go on, top up your CD or DVD collection or, if you're making business purchases, why not make them from our webshop? For example, you can buy computer equipment from Novatech, great value broadband from BT or stationery from Eurooffice. And there are plenty of offers on DIY products, clothing, and lots more from our high street names.

Some of the most popular shops available: Marks & Spencers, Early Learning Centre, John Lewis, Amazon, Littlewoods, La Senza to name just a few, Log on to find many many more! There is a great search engine to find exactly what you are after.

Meet A FIT Member:

Karon Crawford – FIT Member



Hi my name is Karon and I am 37yrs old. I was born with a port wine stain on the right side of my face, arm, shoulder, chest and top part of my back, yep greedy I know. I was taken away from my Mum and she wasn't allowed to see me for 3 days, as in the sixties, or so I'm told, port wine stains were very unusual especially the size of mine. I count myself very lucky, as by the time I was one, the birthmark on my face had completely gone.

I have never met another person with a port wine stain, which is why I have become a member of BSG FIT. Growing up with a port wine stain was pretty tough, so if I can share any information or experience with anyone then I will. I am the youngest of 4 and whilst I was growing up my brother and sisters were very protective of me because of the stares and name calling.

Until probably the age of 11 I was a regular visitor to various hospitals and various students examining my pws and umming and arhhing. But when I reached my teens I was very embarrassed to keep taking my top off to a room full of strangers, when all they could offer me was more camouflage make up, so I stopped going, I have always been aware of peoples stares and whispering but I just think they are ignorant about birthmarks. It's because of people like them that I and others like me are very insecure about the way we look. Although now finally at the age of 37 I can honestly say I don't feel insecure any more.

When I was 25 laser treatment had just been introduced at a hospital in Milton Keynes, so my then Dr, grudgingly put me forward for a consultation. I was told I was a good candidate for Laser BUT my treatment would take probably between 10 to 12 years to complete and in this time I was not allowed to expose my top right side of my body to sunshine. (Hard decision for me as I do love the sun and being olive skinned I tan very easily) So I went ahead and had the first session of laser treatment. (Obviously this was 12 years ago and I do not wish to put anybody off) The Drs decided to start on my chest which disappointed me as I would have liked them to start on my back as this is where it is most prominent. I have not had any more laser sessions since that day. Using the technology at that time meant I would have to have the same area treated at least 3 or 4 more times and, to be honest, I was not prepared to put myself through the discomfort and pain when there was no guarantee of my birthmark being completely gone.

So here I am 12 years down the line and a lot more confident with my body and my birthmark has actually shrunk. By that I mean where my birthmark covered my whole right arm I have lots of normal skin colour too. Although in the winter when I am cold and my birthmark turns purple it seems much worse than it really is.

I must just tell you what my 8 year old son asked me last week when he found a tiny strawberry birthmark on his bottom. Mum he said why haven't you got a birthmark, an innocent question like that brought tears to my eyes as I know my son will never judge people by their looks, and on that note I will leave you and hope to meet you soon.

Email: crawfinch@ntlworld.com

BSG Fun Day – Birmingham 14th May 2006

The Birmingham Fun Day was held at the beautiful King Edward VI High School for Girls, Edgbaston.

The weather was certainly with us and a very sunny day made the outing even more pleasurable for all.

Nick and Jane were on the BBQ and kept us all well fed. The queue was kept to a minimum due to their culinary skills. There were no complaints.



The **Clinique** team were on hand to provide beauty advice to all, and Jodi was among those who took full advantage. This was definitely worth taking time away for the food from.



The **FiT group** was well represented along with a few strays we adopted! See it isn't just about the kids it is a great way to get to know other members of the group. So please make time to come along to the next Fun Day at Chigwell in September.



The swimmers were also out in full force and given that it was the first summer day a quick dip was just what the doctor ordered.



There was a raffle with lots of prizes, I think practically everybody got lucky, including me who never wins anything.



The Busfield family were also kind enough to bring the BSG merchandise on the train so that we all could stock up on goodies!



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