



# Face It Together

The newsletter for adult members of The Birthmark Support Group

## Welcome



Welcome to the fourth edition of the Face It Together Newsletter. 2006 was a very busy year for FiT. Our membership has continued to grow so much so that the Face It Together co-ordinator has been added to the Committee to represent our interests going forward. Yes I am the FiT co-ordinator so yes it sounds like I'm congratulating myself here, but I'm not really. The only reason this has happened is because of your attendance at the Fun Days, your email correspondence so thanks to all of you.

## BSG 'Fun' Days 2007

**Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, Liverpool** This will be held at The Bridge Street Chapel Centre, Heath Road, Garston, Liverpool, L19 4XR.

**Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> in Dorset** This will be held at Clayesmore School, Iwerne Minster, Blandford, Dorset. DT11 8LL.

**Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup> in Chigwell** This will be held at The Drama Centre, Chigwell School, The High Road, Chigwell, Essex, IG7 6QF.

**Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup> in Glasgow** This will be held at St Brides Church 21 Greenlees Road Cambuslang Glasgow G72 8JB.

Further details about the program, travel directions, etc for these events will be available on the website and on request via the BSG postal address below.

## FIT Trip to the Pub

Yes we did squeeze in a trip to the pub at the Chigwell Fun Day, only trouble was it was too short as we had to head back for the AGM. It was great to see some new faces and of course the familiar ones too. We all sat out in the sunshine. Yes, as usual we had the perfect weather for the day.

So the question is what are we going to do this year? Shall we have more FiT Trips to the Pub? Does anybody have any other suggestions? One thing that was mentioned to me recently was would we consider a weekend away somewhere? Don't know how you all feel about that? I would be happy to try and find a suitable venue and try and get a group discount. Let me know who this appeals to and what kind of things you would be interested in doing and we will take it from there, you know the email address.

## BSG Promotional/Information DVD

As some of you will know this year the BSG is putting together a 20 minute DVD for distribution to GP's and Secondary Schools. Funds allowing, we will try and send out to Primary Schools too, but it was felt that the priority had to be what is commonly regarded as the toughest times for families affected by a birthmark.

The filming took place at Great Ormond Street Hospital on the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> January. Along with all the people that gave their precious time to this venture were FiT Members Suzanne Notley, Stanford Jeffrey and TeenTalk co-ordinator Jacki Lovelidge. We were interviewed to represent the adult view of living with a birthmark.

The official launch of the DVD will be held in April. After the launch you too can help by "buying" a DVD. Why is buying in quotes you ask? Well in order to raise the funds for the production and distribution of the DVDs we ask that you buy a certificate which will show that your money went to produce and distribute 1 DVD. We suggest that you buy the certificate for all your friends and family this year for special occasions. Their birthday, wedding anniversary, congratulations on passing their driving test, their exams or just because it is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday... Or maybe you would just like to buy a certificate for yourself? Guess my family now knows what their presents are going to be this year!

## The Birthmark Support Group E-Shop:

[www.buy.at/birthmarksupportgroup](http://www.buy.at/birthmarksupportgroup)

This is a great way to get some great online bargains, and make a donation to the BSG. Every time somebody makes a purchase using the link above the BSG automatically receives a donation. Not only are there many of the high street retailers but it can also help with more practical things like finding cheaper gas and electricity services, and even booking your holidays.

Some of the shops available: Marks & Spencer, Early Learning Centre, John Lewis, Amazon, Littlewoods, La Senza to name just a few.

I actually bought the envelopes the Newsletter arrived in on the E-Shop!

## BSG Fun Day – Chigwell 17<sup>th</sup> September 2006 – Alison Merrick (Herts)

The Chigwell Fun Day was held at the beautiful Chigwell School in Essex. We had a great day with all the usual attractions, Bouncy Castle, Swimming Pool, BBQ (always my favourite bit of the day!), Clinique Makeovers for all the family and of course the slightly frightening Marco the Clown, who donated his particular talents for free to the BSG. The kids loved him and the adults certainly seemed to be having fun with him too. You will see what I mean when you look through the photos!

It was Alison Merrick's first BSG Fun Day and she put down some of her thoughts.



"I have been a member of the BSG for about a year, only getting involved by emails and reading the newsletters. I was very pleased when the next fun day was at Chigwell just 20 minutes from my home.

A few days before I felt a bit uneasy about meeting other people with birthmarks, in fact I nearly changed my mind. Just before I arrived I felt very anxious, but as soon as we found the school and a welcome BSG banner, I was ok. My husband and my 4 year daughter came along with me. A friendly face met us and gave us information for the many activities of the day. My daughter, Louise, headed straight to the bouncy castles, played games with the many school pupil helpers, she had great fun. I could then relax and go off to meet everyone. I could hardly relax as so much was going on. I grabbed a quick yummy hot dog from the BBQ, then down to the pub to meet Orla and the rest of the Face it Together group, then back by 2pm for the AGM. At 3pm I found Louise, had a cooling swim in the outdoor school pool. As soon as we were changed, Marco the clown was starting his very lively entertaining show. Whilst I watched Louise, having more fun and the raffle being drawn, I was treated to a make over by the friendly Clinique team from Debenhams. Then 5pm, time to go, I only had 5 minutes to have a coffee and buy some merchandise before it was packed away. My husband and Louise were tired and were waiting to go home, but I didn't want to go I wanted to chat some more and to meet everyone. I will have to wait until the next fun day to carry it on!

Louise and Paul fell asleep in the car on the way home. I had a headache but felt good and more confident about life.

Thank you to everyone that organised the day and to all those who donated their time." - Alison

And here are some photos that were taken on the day:



Julia Higley and Alex Pratt



The Raffle Table



The Clinique Team



Marco the Clown and his Fans!

## BSG Fun Day – Glasgow 18<sup>th</sup> November 2006

The Glasgow Fun Day was held in the St Brides Church Hall. Our good luck with the weather ran out. It was very cold and wet in Glasgow all weekend. We didn't risk booking the bouncy castle for this event as we suspected the November weather would let us down. We made up for it though, or rather Anne MacIntyre and her family who organized the day did, with lots and lots of lovely food and fantastic arts and crafts for the Kids and the Dads.

There was only one FiT member apart from myself that made the trip. Thanks Alex for keeping me company all day.

Glasgow has historically been a CMN venue for a get together but now that we are all part of the BSG we have made this a new BSG venue. Surely we must have some FiT members in that part of the world who will come along next year! Remember the date 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

We look forward to seeing you!



The Crafts Table



Lots of Chatting



The Tidying Up!

## What Are The Aims of the Group for 2007?

We have to continue to grow the FiT membership as we have been. One of the ways we can do this is to "Carry the Card" that we can give to people we meet who have a Birthmark. The card gives the website address and the main contacts for the various types of birthmarks and age groups. If you would like a supply of the cards to keep in your bag then please send a S.A.E. to BM The Birthmark Support Group, London, WC1N 3XX and a supply of cards will be sent to you.

Also we need to raise money to fund the production and distribution of the DVD, so please use the E-Shop, have coffee mornings, sell cakes, buy the DVD gift certificate... One other way of donating to the charity is to use the Give as you Earn Scheme. This is a way of making charitable tax-efficient donations by giving directly from payroll, so money that would normally go to the taxman goes to charity instead. It is managed by the Charities Aid Foundation. Their website is [www.cafonline.org](http://www.cafonline.org). So if you are a basic rate tax payer donate £5 and the group get £6.41p.

The next newsletter should be with you in late March early April. If you wish to write an article or send in a biography so other members of the group can get in contact with you please do. This newsletter is meant to be all about our membership and what we are about so the more we put in here the more we can get out. Special thanks to Alison Merrick and Alex Pratt who both submitted articles for this edition.

If you wish to write an article/your bio for the next edition or if you have any questions on anything mentioned in the newsletter email [faceittogether@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk](mailto:faceittogether@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk)

Hope to see you during the year at one of our events!

## Birthmarks and the Royal Family? – Alex Pratt (Leeds)

Yes it is true! On a recent trip to Scotland Alex Pratt made an interesting discovery.

### James of the Fiery Face



"I am a member of several astronomical societies. One of my favourite events is the Scottish Astronomy Weekend, during which we usually make a trip on the Saturday afternoon to a site of general interest, as a pleasant addition to the astronomy agenda.

One Dundee-based weekend included a trip to St Andrews and a guided tour around the castle. Whilst soaking up the display of Scots history in the Visitors' Centre my attention was drawn to a display depicting the 15th century royal court. One of the mannequins had what looked like a Port Wine Stain birthmark covering the left side of his face, just like me! The caption said that the courtier was James II Stewart, King of Scotland. I was determined to find out more about him.

He was the son of King James I of Scotland and Lady Joan Beaufort. He was born in Holyrood Abbey, Edinburgh, on 16th October 1430. Due to a large red mark on his face he was nicknamed 'Fiery Face'. This is generally believed to have been a Port Wine Stain birthmark, but it has also been suggested that it could have been a symptom of porphyria.

James' father was murdered on 21st February 1437. At the tender age of 6 the little boy succeeded to the Scottish throne. (His elder twin, Alexander Stewart, had died in infancy.) He was crowned a month later in Holyrood Abbey as King James II Stewart of Scotland. He had six sisters, who were married to European royalty. The boy King spent much of his young life in Edinburgh Castle in the care of Scottish aristocrats – the boy became a pawn in a political game. Until he reached the age of majority, Scotland was ruled by an uneasy alliance of Earls.

The young adult King James II was said to feel uncomfortable in public, yet he was a forceful and determined man; he had a fiery temper to match his nickname. He forged a blood-strewn campaign to wrest control away from his many rivals and enemies within the Scottish aristocracy. He succeeded in returning power to the monarchy. James II banned the playing of 'Futebol' and 'Golfe' because they distracted young men away from essential archery practice.

On 3rd July 1449 he married Marie von Geldern in Holyrood Abbey. They had seven children, five boys and two girls. One boy did not survive his first day of life.

During the siege of Roxburgh castle – which was held by the English – an accident on 3rd August 1460 led to James' death. His thighbone was smashed when a nearby cannon exploded and he died soon after from his injuries. His troops recaptured the castle. James II Stewart was buried in Holyrood Abbey and his 9-year-old son, James III, succeeded him.

King James II of Scotland will always be known as 'James of the Fiery Face' and he lived in a time when disputes were resolved by the dagger, the sword and the axe. It should be remembered that he reformed the coinage and he introduced important legislative measures to improve the justice system and to protect the poor."

Alex

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## British Skin Foundation “Walk For Skin” & The Birthmark Support Group

Following the outstanding success of the first ever British Skin Foundation (BSF) Walk for Skin, the BSF are pleased to announce that the event will again take place in 2007, on May 13th and 20th. You can register online or by phone from 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007. Just go to [www.britishskinfoundation.org.uk/walk/registration/](http://www.britishskinfoundation.org.uk/walk/registration/) or call 0207 391 6355. Seventeen different charities, including the **Birthmark Support Group**, will be uniting for the 2007 Walk for Skin, and we really hope to see you there!

When you register you can select the charities you wish to sponsor and how you would like to split your sponsorship money among them. So please register now and select the **Birthmark Support Group** as your favourite charity.

The 2007 event, proudly supported by Sanex, will take place at the following locations:

### Sunday May 13<sup>th</sup>

Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum, near Newcastle  
Wollaton Deer Park, Nottingham  
Bramham Park, near Leeds  
University of East Anglia, Norwich  
Belfast Castle, Belfast  
Holyrood Park, Edinburgh

### Sunday May 20<sup>th</sup>

Regent's Park, London  
Beaulieu Motor Museum, near Southampton  
Cosmeston Lakes County Park, near Cardiff  
Cheddar Gorge, Somerset  
Tatton Park, near Manchester  
Windsor Great Park, Thames Valley  
Lickey Hills Country Park, Birmingham