



# Face It Together

The newsletter for adult members of The Birthmark Support Group

## Welcome



Welcome to the seventh edition of the Face It Together Newsletter.

This time round I am happy to include an article from Ian Powell, who has recently joined the group and wants to share his experience of volunteering with you. I am also happy to report that Jane Walker has joined the FIT Team so you won't have just me on the other end of an email from now on. Jane has written an article explaining why she has decided to get involved and a little bit about herself to help you get to know her.

## FIT Outings 2008

We are now confirmed for our trip to Chigwell on Sunday, **September 21<sup>st</sup> 2008** and as those who have been to Chigwell before know, there is a lovely pub over the road where I'm sure we can enjoy a "swift half" either before or after the AGM.

I haven't had any requests for FIT events so please let me know if we should be doing something in your area next year.

## An Update from Veil

As some of you will already know Carolyn McDermott from Veil attended the Fun Day in Birmingham. Carolyn brought along some of their products but at the time Carolyn was not a trained practitioner of the make up variety. However, after her British Association of Skin Camouflage (BASC) course in Chester, she will be joining us in Chigwell to show us all how it is done!

Veil are also happy to offer all BSG members the opportunity to purchase the tester selection and then have the price refunded when they purchase their first pot of Veil makeup. On top of that BSG members are also entitled to a 10% discount on all future orders. Remember Veil is also available on prescription from your GP so this is a great opportunity to experience the product and then when you visit your GP you know the colour you require etc. I personally would like to thank Veil and especially Carolyn for this kind offer. Simply quote BSG08 when you place your order by telephone 01207 279 432. You can view and price the products at [www.veilcover.com](http://www.veilcover.com)

## Say Hello to Jane!

Greetings All, Just a few lines to introduce myself to the FIT group as Orla's glamorous assistant! I discovered the BSG back in 2002. It is wonderful to see how it has developed since then and the specialised groups that have formed. As you can see, I was born



with a portwine birthmark on my face. I have been through many experiences, as we all have, of living with a birthmark, and I understand how comforting it can be to have a chat with someone who really knows where you are coming from. I have also experienced various treatment options both here in the U.K. and overseas. Sharing our experiences and our coping strategies will, I am sure, be extremely beneficial to all.

I am really looking forward to hearing from everyone about anything they wish to talk about. Email: [faceittogether1@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk](mailto:faceittogether1@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk)

## Stanford's Diary

Stanford has been very busy since the last newsletter. He went along to the Walk for Skin flagship walk in London on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and here is his report on the day:

"The weather forecast was not much help - it could go either way. True to form, we managed to get a little of everything. The marquee(s) was easy enough to find. Registration was straightforward. We were expected and a space for the BSG stand was already prepared. A good start. The official start time was pretty much adhered to and the supporting celebrity was there in plenty of time. BSG had just two family groups in evident support of our section of the attendees and others, such as the Ichthyosis Support Group seemed to be very well supported indeed. In total, I estimate that there were perhaps up to 150 walkers (difficult to be accurate given the stuff going on) who took part.

The weather turned from sunshine, to cloud, to rain as the walk progressed. The jazz/swing band - who were impressively good - added a very festive air to proceedings, as did the two stilt walking/balloon sculpting entertainers. The goody bags provided to each participant seemed to be very well received."

### Stanford's Diary contd...

Stanford also went to the Ball and collected the £1,000 that Crawley Ridge Infant School Association (CRISA) very kindly donated to the BSG! Please see a picture of Stanford (aka James Bond after this photo) with his partner Margaret.



### Ian Powell goes to Africa

I couldn't believe it, I had done it! The tearful goodbyes to the family, through check-in & on the plane. It was a weird feeling of adventure, excitement & complete fear. I couldn't help wondering what I was doing!! Could I really spend a whole year without my usual comforts of friends & family? I was on my own!

First of all I better tell you a little bit about myself. I'm now 24 and I was born with a port wine stain which covers the right side of my face. I had extensive treatment as a child, through to my teens but to little effect. I'm also blind in my right eye with glaucoma. One of my dreams growing up has always been to travel and see the world. When I was 22, I thought why not!!

I decided right from the start I wanted to experience it on my own. I suppose I always had difficulty with my confidence when meeting new people growing up and found it easier to hide behind friends and let them do the talking. Doing it this way I had no choice, it was something I had to do.

I wanted to do something a bit different so my first two months was spent volunteering in South Africa. I would be teaching kids sport and English in a remote region in the north of the country. I have to admit I was bit worried what type of reaction the kids were going to give me and yes the first few days all the kids were curious, asking the same questions we all get but after a few days I had the time of my life. There is something so satisfying having fun with kids, seeing their smiling faces everywhere but on the other hand I have no intention of taking a class of 25 kids swimming ever again! 5 piggy back rides ok, 25 piggy back rides has given me back problems for life!!! (Only

kidding) loved it really. When it was time to say goodbye, it was one of the hardest things I had to do.

I went on in the next ten months to travel over Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and South East Asia. Trying activities I thought I would never have the guts to do in the past from sky diving in Africa, scuba diving in Australia, skiing in New Zealand & hiking in the jungles of Malaysia.

I look back now with a big smile and think of all the great times I had, the new friends I have from around the world and I can say not once did my birthmark stand in the way, not once did I hide. I'm proud of what I did and proud of whom I am. I just wish I could do it all again.



If anybody would like to know anything more about Ian's trip or how to volunteer please email [faceittogether@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk](mailto:faceittogether@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk) and I will forward on your emails to Ian.

And if a trip to Africa isn't a possibility remember you can always volunteer to hold a coffee morning, ride a bike, walk a mile, stay silent for 24 hours and ask people to pay you! I know my family would be glad of 24 hours of silence! Then you can donate the funds to your preferred charity! Obviously I hope your preferred charity is the BSG!

#### Media Enquiries

Medavia is a team of journalists who work with national newspapers and magazines on a daily basis, writing features on a whole range of subjects. Working with the BSG they have already placed some of our members' stories in the national press and are interested to speak with anyone else who would be happy to talk about their experiences. If you would be interested in talking to them please email [emily@medavia.co.uk](mailto:emily@medavia.co.uk) or call 0117 985 8709.

Medavia's aim is always to write sensitive and thought-provoking pieces for the national press, including the contact details of the Birthmark Support Group. Magazines and newspapers will also make a financial offer to you for your story.