



The BSG Newsletter

The newsletter for members of The **Birthmark Support Group**

April/May 2006

email: sec@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk

What a difference 3 months makes! It was a very dreary February when I sat at my desk wondering how on earth I was going to fill a newsletter (no problem, as it turned out!) – now I am looking out on an altogether different landscape. The trees have actually got leaves, the sky is blue and there is sunshine – yes, it's still unseasonably cool but it does give us all a bit of hope.

Thank you for your feedback on the last newsletter and for keeping us updated as to your changes of address etc.

Not quite such a heavy tome this time – you'll probably get away with half a cup of coffee – but we'd still would like to let you know what's going on and how we can all make a difference.

Look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Birmingham on the 14th May 2006. If not, enjoy the summer.

Kind Regards
Alana

STOP PRESS – we will continue to publish our three newsletters on the website – please don't forget to look at our TeenTalk and FIT (Face It Together) newsletters.

Birmingham Fun Day

Full details of this day are on the website but just in case:-

Date: Sunday 14th May 2006
Time: 12 noon til late afternoon
Venue: King Edward VI High School,
Edgbaston Road, Birmingham B15 2UB

There will be a barbecue lunch available from 12.30 but this needs to be pre-booked. Again, all details on the website.

Please let us know if you are able to join us – by post to the PO Address – PO Box 327, West Malling, ME19 6WW or chairman@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk

We do like to take photographs of the event which are published ONLY on our website. If you do not wish to be included in these photos, would you please sign a form to that effect when you first arrive at the venue. This applies to all Birthmark Support Group events.

To those of you that have never been to a Fun Day before, I would say, come along and see what you've been missing.

Liverpool Fun Day

The consensus of opinion was 'a good day had by all'. Please see the great report on the day in the TeenTalk Newsletter from Jacki Lovelidge – this was her first experience of a Fun Day – I think she's captured the atmosphere of the day perfectly – cold outside but a very warm welcome inside. Our thanks to the staff from Liverpool Football Club for their continued support – I think it was a draw between the Chaps and the children as to who enjoyed the games most! This was

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the BSG's first event since the merging of BSG and CMN (Caring Matters Now) – it was a great success and praise must be given to Jodi Unsworth for organising such a brilliant day.

For one family, attending the Liverpool Fun Day was the first event they had been to since joining the Birthmark Support Group. With their permission, I would like to share with you what the day meant to them *'just being able to talk to other people whose children had birthmarks, discuss treatments, ways of coping etc., and just totally relaxing whilst out'*; and *'from being able to talk to other people in similar situations I have become much more confident'*. The family also have a young son and on being told that they would not be able to attend the Birmingham Fun Day, he asked whether he could go on his own as he'd enjoyed the time in Liverpool so much – the young man in question is 4 years old!

So, having persuaded you to attend, we'll see you in Birmingham on the 14th May or Essex on the 17th September or Glasgow on the 18th November (please note that the date for the Glasgow Fun Day shown on the TeenTalk newsletter is incorrect, the date is the 18th November 2006).

Skin Care Campaign

The Group was invited to attend and exhibit at the Skin Information Day held on the 8th April 2006, in Portsmouth. The SCC is an umbrella organisation which aims to represent the interests of all people with skin diseases in the UK. It was established in 1992 and is a subsidiary of the National Eczema Society. There are three main objectives – 1) to support individuals through improved healthcare, 2) to educate and inform the public and others about skin diseases and the treatment of the same and 3) to support other organisations who share these common goals – organisations such as ourselves. The Skin Information Days are a mixture of exhibition/information

stands and specialist lectures for anyone from the medical profession who has an interest in dermatology.

The group relies solely on corporate sponsorship although it has no allegiance to any one organisation.

The BSG will now be hosting a stand at the British Association of Dermatologists Annual Meeting on the 6th July 2006. This will be held in Manchester and will give the BSG further exposure and highlight the issues surrounding birthmarks to a wider audience.

Thanks to Louise and her Mum for attending the SCC Skin Information Day on our behalf.

TeenTalk

You will see from the TeenTalk newsletter on the website that the group is now a year old – we are really beginning to see positive results from this and thanks must be given to Nick and Jane for their hard work over the months, this was very much their idea and they should feel very proud of their achievements. Young people are finally getting to share their experiences with one another – a simple enough idea but one which cannot be underestimated in terms of the good that it's doing.

Another aim of the Group for TeenTalk was to be able to put TeenTalk members in touch with someone older than themselves, if they expressed a wish for this to happen. We were unable to fulfil this aim until we started to train our Mentors. We held our first Training Day on 25th March 2006, and two further dates planned for June (Lancashire) and September (London) 2006. Anyone wishing to become a mentor will have to undergo a training day. Once signed off, you will be expected to attend a TeenTalk Training conference each year in London. We have set an age limit of, at least, 16

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years old – if you'd like to find out more, please e-mail us at teentalk@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk

DVD Update

We've completed some initial costings and, once we picked ourselves up from the floor, have determined that this is such an important venture for the Group that we will support it totally. Our plans now are to produce the 36,000 copies that we believe are needed over the next two years, unless, of course, anyone has a spare £36,000 sitting around?

That's about it from me – our next newsletters will be produced towards the end of August. I would love to hear from anyone that has a story to contribute or ideas for improving the newsletter. We'll be pulling together the content towards the end of July but don't wait until then to contact me.

As ever, we are indebted to the team at Great Ormond Street for the support they give the Group. We are also very lucky to have such great members who support us in our aims.

Can I draw your attention to the column opposite which gives details of some of our new BSG Merchandise.

Look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Birmingham – don't forget to fill in the forms otherwise we could run short on burgers! If you can't make it, enjoy the summer, when it truly does arrive.

Take care, and thanks for reading!

Alana

Merchandise Update

The website will soon be updated with our new range of ladies' tops. We can also supply polo shirts for men in a range of colours with a BSG logo. Please contact Louise directly for further details:

buy@birthmarksupportgroup.org.uk

Last year wristbands were the 'must-have' fashion accessory. This year we are seeing lanyards in all the shops so we have jumped on the bandwagon and are pleased to be able to supply BSG lanyards which every self-respecting person will be sporting in 2006 (or so the fashion pundits tell us!) They are deep red in colour with the BSG logo in white, along with our strapline 'smile & face it' and website address. Ideal for hanging ID cards, keys etc. and will undoubtedly be a talking point. Only £2, to order please send a stamped addressed envelope to:

BSG Promotions
PO Box 5109
Poole BH14 9WG

Here's another item you won't wish to be without – the BSG 'Pound for Life' keyring! This keyring has a detachable disc bearing the BSG logo and contact details, which can be used in place of a £1 coin in trolleys, lockers etc. Once finished, remove the token and reattach to your keys ready for use next time. You'll never have to scabble around for that elusive pound coin again with a BSG keyring! Only £1.50, to order please send a stamped address envelope to the address as above.

All profit goes to BSG funds, there are NO deductions for administrative charges as with so many larger charities - and with every item of BSG merchandise you will be doing your bit to raise awareness of birthmarks and the work of the BSG!