

# burnsfamilygroup

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## National Camp a success

**F**irst of all, I must apologise to the Children's Fire and Burn Trust and to Dan's Fund for managing to omit from the previous newsletter our sincere thanks to them for sponsoring the children who attended the National Camp last summer.

I realised this embarrassing fact the day after putting all the newsletters in the post, and contacted them immediately to apologise. I am most grateful for the fact that they were very forgiving about it and have kindly continued their sponsorship again this year!

From 9–15 August, Lorna, helped by Michelle, a former Burns Unit nurse, took eight children to the National Camp at

the Grafham Water Centre, near Perry in Cambridgeshire. Because we had some new children going to Camp this year, Lorna and I met up with the group for a pizza on 18 July so that no one would feel strange when they went away.

We had a great evening, quite a large party in the end, as we had parents and brothers and sisters as well. As always, our children were great at the Camp—learning new skills, making new friends, and gaining confidence in the process.

Grafham has a wonderful range of activities: cycling, sailing, kayaking, raft-building, climbing, and archery, to name but a few!

Our two oldest campers, Kaylie and Mary are now both 17, and so will be too old for Camp in the future. We shall miss them, as they have both achieved so much, and have been excellent role-models for the younger children, but perhaps we shall see them return as volunteers in a few years time. I know Mary is hoping to do this after she finishes university.

Thanks again to Dan's Fund and to the Children's Fire and Burns Trust, who have, once again, sponsored some of our children for Camp.

Sarah Howarth (Burns Dressing Clinic, Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PN)





## New Year Party



It has been another busy year for the Burns Family Group. We started on 2 January with our **New Year Party** which was a well attended event. Some new families joined us which was lovely.

Once again we have to thank the Starlight Foundation who funded the party and provided the food and goody bags, a very gifted facepainter, and a wonderful entertainer in the person of Rickymagic who had the children spellbound throughout the party (and managed to baffle some of the adults as well) with his splendid tricks.

## Annual Sponsored Walk



On 20 June 2009 we had our **Annual Sponsored Walk**, ending up as usual, in Richmond Park with the Family Picnic. We had a good turn-out and were again joined by several of the Adult Support Group. It was also good to have two of our Consultants, Greg and Isabel, and their families with us this year.

We had an extra excitement, as our walk concluded with a special parade of

boats up the Thames to celebrate King Henry VIII's birthday, so we were able to watch the flotilla of boats, and the folks in historical dress in them, on our way back to Richmond after the picnic.

The walk is always a very happy social occasion, as well as raising funds for our activities. Thank you to all the people who walked and raised money for us by doing so.



## Swimming party

We had intended to hold a **swimming party** in the February half-term, but due to a mix-up over dates (we had got half-term wrong!), we had to postpone it. Fortunately, we were able to reschedule it for the Easter holidays and so, on 15 April, 17 children and their parents met at the Latchmere Leisure Centre, Battersea.

We had exclusive use of the teaching pool, with our own lifeguard and a collection of floats and inflatable toys for the children to use. The older children were also able to go into the wave pool if they wanted to.



The swimming was a great success—all the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and were very confident in the water.

We followed the swim with a session in the soft play area, and a snack in the café, which gave everyone a chance to chat and share experiences. The café was able to provide several high-chairs, and one of my abiding memories of the day is of the row of toddlers sitting together.

## Camp and Jamboree 2010

We have many children eager to go to the **Camp and Jamboree** and we try to make sure that they all get a chance to do so several times, as it is important that they build up relationships with other campers and staff.

The age-group to attend the National Camp is 8–18 years, and the week-long camp is always held in August.

The Jamboree is always Thursday to Sunday, and it is usually held at the end of the October half-term.

Please would anyone in that age-group who is interested in going to the next Jamboree get in touch with me:

Sarah Howarth (Burns Dressing Clinic, Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PN)

We may not be able to fit everyone in immediately, but we can get names on the list of people wanting to go!



# National Burns Camp Jamboree

At the end of October, Lorna and I took five children to the **National Burns Camp Jamboree**.

The Jamboree is a long weekend (29 October – 1 November) at Grafham Water, attended by groups from Burns Units from all over England, Scotland and Wales.

Our hectic weekend included sailing, cycling, swimming, climbing, canoeing, and a Halloween fancy-dress disco!

Our children were again splendid—two of our girls reached the top of the climbing wall for the first time, overcoming moments of panic on the way up!

Another of the children overcame an initial fear of sailing, and ended up taking the tiller on the return crossing of the lake.

Another mastered cycling well enough to join in the 10-mile cycle ride for the first time, unaided.

It is these kinds of achievements which help to build up confidence, and are consequently so valuable.

Thanks again to the Childrens' Fire and Burn Trust who funded this event, including our travel from London and back.



## Summer Outing



On 26 August 2009, we had our **Summer Outing**. The swimming had been so successful at Easter, we decided to make having a swim part of the day.

As Latchmere Pool is close to Battersea Park, we combined a visit to the Childrens' Zoo in the morning with a picnic lunch in the park, and then a swim in the afternoon.

We were incredibly lucky with the weather—despite a terrible forecast, we had beautiful sunshine for the zoo visit

and picnic. The rain just started once we were at the pool!

This was a great combination of activities, and proved a very good, and varied, day out. The zoo was delightful, and a very easy size to walk around.

We were also able to picnic close to a large playground, which ranged from a toddlers area to a large adventure playground for the older children, and provided lots of fun for all the children.





Burns patient Katie Piper pictured with her surgeon Mr Mohammad Jawad

## Documentary about Burns patient nominated for a BAFTA

**K**atie: *My Beautiful Face*, a Channel 4 documentary about a patient whose face was rebuilt thanks to the expertise of staff on the Burns Unit at Chelsea and Westminster following a horrific acid attack, was nominated for a BAFTA and featured in the awards ceremony hosted by Graham Norton at the Palladium on Sunday 6 June and broadcast on BBC1.

Katie Piper, a model and aspiring TV presenter, has always been quick to pay tribute to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital staff who saved her life, rebuilt her face and continue to provide ongoing care.

Katie, who suffered horrific burns in the attack on 31 March 2008, discarded her anonymity to tell her amazing story of personal courage in the documentary which was screened on Channel 4 in October 2009.

The depth of the burns from the sulphuric acid penetrated all layers of the skin on Katie's face and elsewhere on her body. The extent of her burns was so severe that they destroyed all four layers of the skin down to the fat. Surgeon Mr Mohammad Jawad used an artificial skin substitute to rebuild the epidermis and dermis layers on Katie's face before grafting skin from her back and bottom onto her face.

Katie said: "I owe my life to the doctors, nurses and all the other staff in the Burns Service at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. I would have died without their amazing efforts immediately after I was attacked and they have supported me every step of the way during my treatment.

"Coming to terms with the fact that my life as I knew it before the acid attack was over, and that my facial appearance

had changed forever, has been incredibly difficult. I wouldn't have been able to rebuild my life without the support of all the staff at Chelsea and Westminster.

Mr Greg Williams, Service Lead of the Burns Service at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, said: "As the only specialist Burns Service in London, we treat many patients like Katie who have suffered horrific injuries. Surgery and ongoing treatment is a long and painful journey for these patients and our role is to provide not only medical and nursing expertise to heal their injuries but also empathy, compassion and emotional support.

"Burns medicine is a little-known specialty which isn't often in the public eye and so I hope the Channel 4 documentary has helped raise public awareness of this vital NHS service."

## New Burns Family Group leaflet

**A** new leaflet has been developed to promote the Burns Family Group, including a sign-up form for those wishing to join the group.

The leaflet outlines the aims of the group, including organising events such as parties, outings, sponsored walks and picnics, and parents' get-togethers, the annual National Burns Camp, and

the annual Burns Camp Jamboree, as well as keeping a register of parents willing to be put in touch with parents of newly-injured children.

If you or someone you know would benefit by joining the Burns Family Group, come to the Burns Unit and pick up a copy of the leaflet.

