



# Dan's Fund for Burns

Registered Charity No: 1098720

Web: [www.dansfundforburns.org](http://www.dansfundforburns.org)



**MY DREAMS**  
**A SHORT COMPILATION OF WORDS**  
**WRITTEN BY A BURNS SURVIVOR**



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## PRELUDE

Burns a nasty subject, very painful and quite disfiguring, but not all is lost.  
Life goes on for us all.

I have had hard times since the accident but that won't stop me getting and being what I want in life, I won't let it.

This book is just a very small insight to my accident and life in hospital; I hope it can help some people to understand what burns victims have to go through.

We cannot change the opinions of the public those that frown at us, someone made a very good statement to me to help me with people staring,  
"If you look at them then they will look at you"

To anybody I would say be strong do not let them get you down there is always tomorrow and live life to the full.

**BE LUCKY...**



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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank Laura my wife, my family and the emergency services at the scene.

A special thank you to Mr J Clarke and Mr Ion for all their hard work in restoring my good looks!!!

And all at the Chelsea and Westminster burns unit.



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## THE SCENE OF THE FIRE

May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2001, I had just finished work and returned to the office for a final assessment of the day's proceedings. Upon this we all at the office decided to go for a drink over at the local pub, the Fox & Hounds.

After some hearty drinking I found myself on my own as all the others had returned home, at closing time I left the pub and headed for the my car, well driving the car was not an option, and for some reason because I felt the car or the equipment that was in the car might get stolen I decided to sleep off the drink and drive home later sober.

To this day I still wonder why I cared more about the car than me but sometimes we all make mistakes and judgements that we wish we could turn the clock back but we can't and we have to live with the choices that we make. I remember entering my car and settling down for a good night's sleep and well then this is where the story really starts.

After sometime someone decided to ignite the rear bumper of my car, in turn this ignited the rear of the car and after my tools and equipment further fuelled the fire, the fuel tank then exploded and at this point rendered me unconscious due toxic fumes and flames.

A call was made by a passerby to the fire brigade after seeing the car on fire, the brigade were local and were at the scene within a couple of minutes, after a lengthy battle to put out the car this was achieved.

But upon the head fireman opening the car to check inside for any further flames, my charred and seriously burned body was found, as you can imagine the fireman did not know that I was in the car, and it all came as quite a shock.

At this point the ambulance was called and I was removed from the car and doused with water for some time to cool my body, upon the ambulances arrival I was not given much chance to live by any of the services, then I was taken to the London Hospital A & E Department where I was given extensive medical care and made stable before being removed to the Chelsea & Westminster Burns Unit, where they placed me in the ITU area, under 24 hour surveillance, and again not much hope of survival was given.



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## **MY MEMORIES**

(THE SANE STUFF)

Well there's not much I do remember about the actual fire, I remembered walking to my car, settling to sleep, and bang I wake up and I am in a burning car.

I could feel the heat it was quite intense, some people ask why I didn't try to get out, well when you've just woken to find yourself on fire you panic, I did try to knock out the rear side window with my feet, but then I needed air and the only air I was going to get was not good.

I remember gasping and these two big gulps of black toxic smoke went straight into me. Well it didn't take much more before I went unconscious and that is where the sane memories end unfortunately.



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## MY MEMORIES

### (THE ODD STUFF)

There will be a lot more in this chapter I can assure you. Let me explain, because I was so badly burned the ITU team had to sedate me and this is done with an intake of morphine, and this can lead you to crowd cuckoo land and promptly did, this is how the story goes.

Aluminous armbands lots of them on a black back ground with voices saying don't worry you have been in a fire, lots of bustling going on, then I am looking at a paramedic at the wheel as I lay down in the rear.

Then it all goes blank for a while and then the dreams start.

I am in a hospital for burns and the head man is called Takiamo but it is just a front and they use people's bodies for experiments, I find myself moving on a large bed the whole building changes shape all the time.

Takiamo then proceeds to remove my brain, eyes and speech so as to replace them with a 3d image screen which operates from touch, and then he asked my parents for permission to use me in trials for his 3d games. He starts with a fighting game where I am attacked by ninjas and as I move it is all recorded for his virtual video games but when I tell my parents that I am too tired to carry on and they try to stop him he always became very angry that there was a delay with his targets.

A nurse is looking after me at this point and I believe this to have been Katie, there were further games like racing a sports car and flying a jet.

Then there was a family moment where I was in a derelict loft space with pigeons and a nurse looking after me this I believe to have been Gerri, with him where my father and two brothers Michael and David at this point David was crying on my arm and wishing me a speedy recovery.

Then came the other side to the Takiamo business, to destroy current land and replace it with his own style of living where there was no connections to current resources and replaced them with his own underground network where dead bodies were stripped of their good electrical energy, which then was connected in the ground to all other houses so as to create a complete underground network.

My body was then used as supports to the houses, this was done by removing my bones and lying them as towers to hold the building up, I was placed in a pre dug hole and with a guide was erected there the guide I remember had an Australian voice I believe this to have been Glen the physio, then it was time to float away to a new story.

This began with a radio station at the hospital it was heart 106.2fm it always was but there was only one D.J., his name was Paul, I can't think of a reference here anyway, if I was angry at him for not letting me go from the hospital he would always play songs that would ridicule me and say things to the listeners like oh the poor boy wants to go home well tough your mine for life. There was also a show that he would put on in the foyer where people could come and see what he called the freaks; we



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would be displayed for all to see. For some reason if I did not perform for him this would make him angry and he would say, that's it you are going to die you are costing me money, but there were two nurses that would persuade him to let me live I believe these nurses to have been two of the night staff who's names I do not remember.

Then one day Laura and her mother arrived at the hospital with my daughter Megan to try and see me but they were always sent away.

Then on this particular day they tried to get in, well Paul the D.J. now Takiamo's side kick, teased them buy turning me around in an open window so they could see me and then I would disappear, this made Laura and co. more determined, this angered Paul who then proceeded to bulldoze the street completely change its shape, and by doing this I watched him drive straight over Laura and Megan and then tarmac over the top. As you can imagine this made me very stressed and I would cry at the site of it, well if that wasn't enough he then crushed my brother David in a container and cut the throat of Laura's mother and dumped her body in a skip. Of course everybody returned but would have their fate sealed again in other episodes when Paul got angry.

Then the game show where I was part of the T.V. crew and it was like Beadle's about where we would play tricks on the public. Some of the people we played tricks on where Ian Botham where we crushed his car, Frank Bruno where we demolished his house, and there was others. Then it was time to float away to heaven well that's what I thought but it was just another dream.

This starts with me back in hospital, Mr Takiamo is still around. This time my body was being saved for cannibals, they were looking after my skin and flesh so as to prepare it for a meal, the most scary part of this dream was when I got to meet the cannibal king, well you might say, but the problem with this guy was that he ate the heads of his victims. And three or four times I had to go through watching him approach me and proceed to bite my head off and you would hear the crunching noise!! Not nice. Here again people from my work, Laura and co, would try to rescues me but they would just be captured and promptly eaten.

When Laura and Megan where caught by the cannibals they were imprisoned with me, and every time we tried to escape it would be on a flying bus but every time we did Megan was always captured again, then me and Laura would drop off the bus as we would **never** leave Megan alone, well you can't leave a baby with those cannibals now can you.

The story then went onto my work and lawyers trying to prove to the courts that this hospital was not practicing medicine but a front for different things as I have explained. Well we always lost I don't know why but the hospital always managed to prove that it was not negligent. t this point I thought I was going to heaven as I start to float away as normal but started going into a spiral and getting higher and higher this time there was someone with me, one of my bosses from work old man Brian he had died too, and together we were heading for the top, but we never reached heaven, we just floated there for ages, until we ended up coming across a funeral parade, which was a royal occasion and one of the queen's closet friends had died, as we approached we saw two of the funeral bearers where tired so me and Brian



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decided to enter their souls and help them we then proceeded to carry the coffin and place it on a burning float and the coffin was then pushed into the river. We then removed ourselves and returned to floating away, at this point we were joined by army man Montgomery and someone from the RAF, Brian then decided to fly away with them, so he wished me luck, chucked in a loop the loop and said Tally Ho! As he floated away, I missed him because he was my only companion on this mad journey.

At this point we returned to Paul, who now was putting on displays at a dock by the Thames for the public to promote films, he would use me as a display and would then tie my body up into different positions so as to look like a floating battleship and then after floating me in the water, the display would start and war planes would bomb me and I would explode into fire and the crowd loved it, I didn't, this included my twin brother Andy who was caught by Paul and made to pull live horses across the water by his hair, other things that happened was me being filled with helium until my body was round I was then floated into the air and shot at until I exploded.

Over several weeks I was gradually brought of the morphine and I was able to recognise my mother and father, and super Laura who I was told had been by my bed side every day. This prompted me to ask Laura to marry me funny time to ask someone, I know, well I have been one to pick my moments. But she was not at all deterred by the whole thing she was fully prepared to stay by my side and love me for what I am not what you see, as we have both said since the accident, it is only skin deep you cannot burn the love and commitment of two people and we have proved that as we got married on the 14th June 2002 just over one year after the accident.



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## WAS I MAD!!!

Well at the time I did not where I was, I thought I was dead and on my way to heaven and it was taken a long time, just dream after dream and no way out.

Most of the dreams do explain that brain was trying to tell me what was happening, but it was so high on morphine that the dreams were the only way, and that is why they were so crazy.

I think a lot of the cannibalism was due to nurses tending to my wounds on my head, shoulders, and skin grafts to my legs. They were not trying to eat me but they was picking at my scabs.

The point where I was blown up with helium was when my body swelled to twice its size due to the burns.

Other dreams where personal memories of people that I have met in my life.

Some of the dreams was me fighting the effects and stresses that my body was going through and saying no I am not going to die I am going to live.

It has been a bit daunting really and very hard to explain you have to be there to understand and I would not wish that on any one.

One day it might be easier to realise what was going on back then because most people that I have tried to explain what happened cannot get their heads around it. One thing I can say they where the best dreams I have ever had and I will never forget.



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## LIFE AFTER ITU

After three weeks on ITU the drugs were slowly worn down until there was some normality in my life. This is where I started to realise the extent of my injuries, one thing that became obvious but not at first was that there was no mirrors on the ward, does not need much explaining why.

Well at first there were my daily sit outs in the chair the first step in getting me more mobile, you feel tired weak, lonely, confused, and once they put you in the seat you stay there for hours without moving. One thing that begins to stress you out is not seeing the outside world; you start to crave for it.

After about a week they started to let me walk, well once I was up there was no stopping me I was up and down that corridor, until I was ready to be moved into a private room.

Dressing changes could happen every day or every other day, not a nice experience at all, out comes the Oramorph, wait twenty minutes for it to take affect then into the rather large bath to have the dressings removed, painful but unfortunately a necessity then out and redressed and back into bed.

Your day may then consist of a visit from the physio where they would try and get the stiff bits moving again and try to make sure that as you heal you get the best movement possible, I did not do too bad really I have good neck movement and my arms really have the same movement as before.

Then came the big day where I had enough of people telling me "oh you look great today you have come on so much" I thought bugger it I have to see for myself, so out came the mirror well to say I was shocked was an understatement I was devastated and all these feelings started like "oh I'll never look the same", "where has my nose gone", it was a lot to take in. Well from that day on I thought well there's nothing I can do about it I'll just have to soldier on, they explained that it was possible with plastic surgery to replace most of the damage, starting with my nose.

The operation consisted of the lifting of a flap of skin on my left forearm, and preparing it for removal to my face. After around two weeks a further operation was carried out where the flap was inserted to my face and various blood vessels connected to supply blood to the flap, previous to this an artificial cartilage was erected to construct the shape of my nose and the flap was placed over the top.

Several operations later and with the help of leeches YES! Leeches the nose had taken and was beginning to heal, further reconstruction would still be necessary to shape the nose.

Life carried on with operations and dressing changes for quite a while, finally I was moved to the main men's ward where I was able to meet other people, this was a help to me and lifted my confidence greatly.

Three and half months later and the day came for me to go home, you would think I would have been elated, but I was quite apprehensive of dealing with the outside world again, as you don't know how you will cope.



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## STARING

Staring an unfortunate burden upon burns victims having to deal with the insensitive general public, but with live in a society that needs people like me to full its desire to point. Frown, and gossip, you feel that you have become the centre of everybody's day.

There are various ranges of staring from the blatant to the quick glance, what I find the worst is when someone will stare and then look at you with this frown, and you think there saying "god get me away from this freak and lock up your children", it might seem funny to be saying this but people do make you think that you have become a show freak.

I'm not going to rant on about how hard it is to cope with the staring, but it is hard and I feel our minds can put thoughts into our heads that can drive us all mad.

Some of the things that get said to you are a real eye opener to the way of life as a burns victim, once when I was at a restaurant with Laura and my daughter, a guy said there's a reason not to come out on a Sunday.

My personal motto is sod um, I am still human and it is all only skin deep the real person is still inside, I think we all forget that sometimes.

So I say to all my fellow burns victims, "be strong, let us all stick one finger up to those who frown".



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## NOW

September 2001, the month I finally left hospital, we moved into a flat got settled and started our arrangements to get married. July 2002 we were married.

Life couldn't be getting much better until two months after the wedding my mother was diagnosed with cancer to say I was gob smacked, I mean after going through what I did and then marriage just when you're up, life kicks you straight in the bollocks again.

After prolonged treatment my mother never really recovered and sadly passed away in March 2003.

All that has happened has changed my aspect on life someone once said to me that when it comes to the fact of religion heaven and hell, that the life we lead is the hell and when we die we go to heaven and when you look at what can happen to you in your life it becomes a true saying, well I hope it is true then at least you have somewhere to look forward to in the afterlife.

Well on a happier note I now have two children my second was born January 2004, called Lucy now I am complete I have a loving and devoted wife two lovely daughters and I'm still alive.

Treatment still goes on so does all the other aspects like staring and ridicule but most of the time people you meet, see you no differently than themselves which helps you cope.

Do I still feel angry, sometimes I think that's normal I do hate being this way but there's not a lot of use complaining getting all cut up about it all, I am not the only one or the worse so hey the show must go on.

I have enjoyed writing this it can help, and I am sure it will get bigger as the days go by; I hope you have enjoyed reading it.

BE LUCKY ALL MY LOVE, STEVE...



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This compilation of words were written by Stephen Gavin  
A burns patient at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital  
2001



Myself

