SAFETY FIRST

Stories and Key Figures on Violence, Injuries and their Prevention
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SAFETY FIRST was written to commemorate the United Kingdom hosting the 10th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion. We hope this book contributes to a better understanding of the harms that injuries and violence can cause and empowers individuals, communities and governments to prevent them.
Foreword

In the course of my career in public health, I have heard hundreds of personal accounts of lives shattered by violence and injury.

Whether from the streets of London or Maputo, the schoolyards of Rio de Janeiro or New York, the homes of Sydney or Karachi, the workplaces of New Delhi or Dakar, or the villages of Sudan or El Salvador, each story is one of tremendous pain and loss. These testimonies remind us of the long-term and far-reaching consequences of these traumatic events, which in each instance impact the lives of so many. These accounts also suggest that while people in poorer communities are at greater risk of violence and injury, no one is truly spared. Time and time again, I have been awed by the depth of the commitment of those victims, their family members and friends who with courage turn their personal tragedies to the benefit of others.

We from the scientific community should make space for listening to those whose lives have been affected by violence and injuries. Their stories deepen our understanding, and should motivate us to take action at least as much as the statistics, which show how widespread violence and injuries are in all societies. Their accounts also hint at the concrete steps that we policy makers and practitioners need to take to put into practice the many proven prevention measures and to improve the services provided to victims and their families.

The stories described in this book are the voice for the millions of others affected every year by acts of violence, by road traffic crashes, burns, falls or drowning. Let them be an encouragement for all of us to redouble our efforts to halt this unnecessary suffering.

Dr Etienne Krug
Director
Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability World Health Organization
Injuries – A Global Crisis

Globally injuries kill more people than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Across the world almost six million people die as a result of injury every year, equivalent to one life lost every five seconds. Four million of these deaths result from unintentional injuries such as road traffic crashes, falls, burns, unintentional poisonings and drowning. The remainder, over one and a half million deaths, result from violence, including homicides, war-related injuries and suicides (sometimes called self-directed violence).

For every person killed, dozens more end up in hospital, hundreds are treated in emergency departments, and thousands see their doctor or try to cope with their injury without medical support. As well as facing sometimes lifelong physical and mental health problems, survivors can have difficulties with issues including education, employment and developing relationships.

The global economic cost of lives lost through violence has been estimated at US$151 billion per year.

The costs of injuries fall not just on the injured but on their families and friends who may have to live with the loss of someone close or provide them with long-term care. Communities, businesses and public services also pay the price for unintentional injuries and violence with countries spending fortunes each year on health care and law enforcement.

"If only she had just been injured, I could cope with that.”

Jean MacColl’s daughter, the singer Kirsty MacColl, was killed by a speedboat whilst scuba diving on holiday. On page 30, Jean tells of her struggle to come to terms with the accident.

In many ways the numbers of people affected are unimaginable with, globally, a population greater than that of Denmark, New Zealand or Sierra Leone losing their life to injuries every year. Such facts are stark reminders of the scale of the problem that injuries and violence create in every country but do little to reflect the tragedy that every one of these statistics represents. This book describes just a handful of those tragedies as experienced by individuals who many people will recognise. Other well known individuals talk about how injuries and violence have touched their lives and motivated them to help prevent more people suffering.

“You’ve got to accept you are something different for the rest of your life.”

Simon Weston suffered serious burns to his face and body while serving in the Falklands War. He describes his gruelling recovery on page 48.

“I didn’t know how I could protect her and I didn’t know who would protect me.”

After watching a friend suffer years of domestic abuse, the actress Kirsty Dillon now volunteers at a centre for survivors of sexual assault. Read about Kirsty’s own experiences on page 44.
A Burden on the Poorest

While much of the injury, abuse and suffering described in this book has occurred in high-income countries, an even greater burden of injury-related ill health falls on the poorest countries and the poorest individuals within them.

“In domestic violence occurs in every single strata of the socio-economic make-up in this country and any other country.”

The politician and Oscar-winning actress Glenda Jackson is a staunch supporter of the campaign to prevent domestic abuse. Read her analysis on page 22.

In the poorest countries, governments can lack the resources to provide safe environments, resulting in people living in dangerous homes, working in hazardous environments and not always having the protection of effective criminal justice or health systems. Consequently, death rates for injuries through drowning and fires, for example, are at least four times higher in low- and middle-income countries than in high-income countries.² Within the European region alone there is a greater than thirtyfold difference in youth homicide rates between the country with the lowest (Germany) and highest (Russian Federation) rates.³ Yet in many Latin American countries, youth homicide rates far exceed those even of Russia – almost one in every 1,000 15-24 year olds in El Salvador was murdered in 2005.⁴

Regardless of whether people live in more affluent or deprived countries, members of the poorest communities in every nation typically suffer the greatest burden of injuries and violence. In Bangalore, India, for example, deaths from road traffic injuries are six times higher among people living in poor rural areas than in those living in more affluent urban settings.⁵ In Australia, children living in the poorest areas are more than twice as likely to be hospitalised with a burn injury than those living in wealthier communities.⁶

Anywhere between 500 million and 1.5 billion children worldwide have been affected by violence.⁷

Globally young people, and young males in particular, are at greater risk of many types of unintentional injuries as well as violence. In fact, road traffic injuries are the number one killer of people aged 15-29 worldwide with suicide and homicide also in the top five.¹

“Men in working class areas have no access to therapy.”

The comic David Baddiel decided to help raise awareness of male suicide after suffering from clinical depression since he was a student. He tells his story on page 10.

Even under the age of 15 more than 2,000 children worldwide,⁸ often the most destitute, lose their lives through injury every day. Each loss can tear families and communities apart. Increasingly however, work in many countries is identifying how injuries and violence, and so the deaths and illness they cause, can be prevented.

Top 10 causes of death in young people worldwide¹

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Violence  Unintentional injuries  Other
Injuries and Violence in the UK

There is a temptation to think that affluent countries like the UK do not suffer substantially from avoidable injuries and violence; that safety legislation, policing and education provide people with the necessary protection and knowledge. As a nation, the UK does have some of the lowest death rates from injury in the world and over the last century has seen major advances in injury prevention. For example, in the 25 years since legislation on seatbelt use was introduced in 1983, an estimated 60,000 lives were saved which would have been lost through road traffic injuries.10

Injuries have been estimated to cost the UK up to £36 billion annually, including £2.2 billion in direct medical costs.11

Yet every year in the UK injuries still claim around 20,000 lives,12 cause around a million people to be admitted to hospital13 and result in millions more emergency department and GP attendances. With such injuries often affecting young, active and employed individuals, the sometimes life-long costs of their treatment and reduced contributions to work can be astronomical. In fact, from the age of five, road traffic injuries are the greatest threat to life for children and young adults in the UK.14 Children living in the relatively poor city of Liverpool are around five times more likely to be injured in a road traffic collision than those living in the more affluent area of Kensington and Chelsea in London, which has the lowest levels of such injuries in England.15

Each year around two million child injuries require a visit to an emergency department with half of these resulting from an incident in the home.16 Many are the consequences of falls, but poisonings, burns and scolds, drowning, animal bites and recreational injuries also take their toll.13 Across all age groups, hundreds of thousands of people across the UK are injured each year playing sport.17

Over 200 injury-related deaths occur in British workplaces each year, a figure dwarfed by the 250,000 work-related injuries that do not result in a death.18 Up to one in three people over the age of 65 suffer a fall each year.19 The costs of falls in older people have been estimated at around £1 billion each year.20

After road traffic injuries, suicide is the second most common cause of death in older teenagers and young adults.14 As a nation, over 5,000 people in the UK take their own lives each year.21 Around 800 people become victims of homicide,22–24 a third of which involve knives, rising to more than half in Scotland.

In the year 2008/09, almost five million working days were lost in the UK due to injuries occurring in workplaces. This is a substantial reduction from 2000/01, when eight million working days were lost.18

Being a victim of violence, in particular, depends on where you live in the UK. Both children and adults who live in the poorest communities are six times more likely to be admitted to hospital with a violent injury than those living in the least deprived communities.25 For instance, in 2006 residents of Glasgow were identified as having among the highest homicide rates in Western Europe.26 As a result Scotland has made pioneering efforts to develop new community-based approaches to violence prevention.27 However, while homicides attract major public and political attention, far more violence and abuse is hidden from the public gaze.

“If anyone had told me I would lose someone so close in such a horrific way, I couldn’t have imagined living another day.”

On page 26, the actress Brooke Kinsella talks about losing her brother to knife crime on the streets of London.
Across the UK, over 850,000 women and 500,000 men are estimated to suffer some form of intimate partner abuse each year. At least 750,000 children are exposed to domestic violence at home, while seven percent of young adults report having suffered serious physical abuse themselves at the hands of their parents or carers during childhood. The consequences of a child living in a violent home can be devastating and include not just physical or sexual injury but also long-term mental health problems, reduced education and employment prospects, and increased risks of substance use and poor physical health later in life. Children who grow up in abusive environments can also be more vulnerable to being both a victim and perpetrator of violence later in life.

Some forms of violence are still very poorly understood. An estimated four percent of older people suffer some form of maltreatment at the hands of their family, carers, friends or other acquaintances. This excludes those living in nursing homes who may, in some cases, be neglected and unnecessarily restrained or drugged. Within 25 years, a quarter of the UK population is expected to be over 65. Understanding and reducing levels of elder abuse is just one of the major challenges the UK faces for the future of injury and violence prevention.

“We will eliminate domestic violence if we redress the balance of power in our society.”

Refuge’s Sandra Horley asserts on page 14 that discrimination against women lies at the heart of the debate on domestic violence.

“I’d had to keep it secret for so long and I didn’t want to keep it secret anymore.”

Campaigner Heather Mills explains on page 34 how an unhappy childhood helped her to deal with losing her leg to a motorcycle accident.

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The Good News - Injuries and Violence are Preventable

Over the past 100 years, the experience of many countries has shown that a mix of appropriate legislation, the right interventions and technological improvements can reduce injuries and violence where there is the will to do so. For instance, despite growing levels of road traffic, the UK has seen a steady reduction in road traffic injury deaths. These have been achieved through a range of road safety measures including improvements to vehicle safety, legislation requiring the use of seatbelts and child restraints, measures to prevent drink-driving and road safety engineering measures.

Levels of deaths from child injury have reduced dramatically in Sweden over the last few decades. Thanks to a broad range of measures, Sweden now has the lowest child injury death rates in the world.

In the USA, child physical and sexual abuse rates more than halved between 1990 to 2008. Although there is no clear understanding of what caused this decline, increased social support (e.g. social workers, child protection officers and policing), economic improvements, growing public awareness of child abuse and improved family and mental health care are considered important developments. Gradually however, well designed research programmes are beginning to reveal more detail about the formula behind such successes.

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“"The proportion of men who think it’s acceptable to use physical means to impose their will is shockingly high.”

Cherie Blair believes that changing social attitudes is key to tackling domestic violence. She argues her case on page 14.

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“"If people don’t understand the reason for rules, the social context, they are less likely to obey those rules.”

Racing driver Michael Schumacher is proud of his efforts to improve road safety around the world. Read about his personal campaign on page 18.

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For many years, for instance, violence was considered simply a criminal justice issue with a range of different punishments, often prison, being seen as the answer to dealing with those who commit violent acts and deterring other individuals from turning to such violence. Now, the use of parenting programmes and pre-school enrichment programmes have been shown to successfully reduce not only risks of child maltreatment but also risks of youth violence when infants and children move into adolescence. In essence, the right support helps to reduce the impact of abusive and neglectful childhoods where children learn to use aggression to solve problems. At the same time, such support can help them to develop skills to negotiate their way out of potential conflicts.

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“From violence to road traffic crashes, burns, drowning, falls and other causes of injury, more and better researched solutions to preventing millions of injuries each year are becoming apparent. However, as with the burden of injuries, there are also inequalities associated with the development of solutions. Most of our understanding of what works has been developed in the world’s wealthiest countries. In such countries, the application of this knowhow to the most vulnerable communities is critical to the successful prevention of injuries. However, adapting what works and understanding what else is needed in poorer countries, where the toll for injuries and violence is highest, has an even greater potential to prevent suffering and save lives.”

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Changes in road transport deaths and the number of licensed motor vehicles in Britain

Child injury deaths in Sweden
DAVID BADDIEL

THE TROUBLE WITH DEPRESSION
The British comic and writer has suffered from clinical depression since his university days. He acts as patron for the ‘Campaign Against Living Miserably’ and helps to raise awareness of depression and suicide among young men.

“Physically I was not very well. It has a huge toll on your physical health.”

After leaving Cambridge University with a double first, David made his name as a stand-up comic on the club circuit and writing comedy for radio. In the 1990s he became a fixture on British television with shows such as The Mary Whitehouse Experience and later Fantasy Football League, which he co-hosted with his then flatmate Frank Skinner. He has also published three novels dealing with the perennial themes of love, death and infidelity, as well as Jews interned during the second-world war. More recently, he wrote and co-produced The Infidel, a feature film about a Muslim who discovers that he was adopted and is actually Jewish. At the film’s premiere last April, David chose to highlight CALM and arranged for the evening’s profits to go to the charity.

The first time David suffered from a severe bout of depression was at university. He was involved with the Cambridge Footlights comedy group and also under exam pressure. “My granddad who lived close by was dying and my grandma was crying all the time,” he adds. “It was incredibly awful.” By his early thirties, he realised that he had clinical depression and needed to seek professional help. “Physically I was not very well. It has a huge toll on your physical health.” He also suffered from insomnia – a “restless mind” – which he believes...
is an underlying symptom of his condition. “Depression is a time bomb you carry within you and insomnia is a sign of what’s coming.” Although he has never considered suicide, he has some empathy for those who have. “I never really thought I got to the point where I would, but I could see how you would want to do it. I could see how life could become unbearable.”

David does not fully understand why young men have become more prone to ending their lives than women of the same age, but he thinks that suicide has a “statement-making” element to it that appeals to the male psyche. “It says something manly about you. It’s very macho, very violent.” As an example, he refers to Kevin McGee – the former husband of Little Britain comedian Matt Lucas – who hanged himself in October 2009. Three hours before he died, Kevin posted a message on the social networking site, Facebook: “Kevin McGee thinks that death is much better than life.”

A large part of CALM’s work is to encourage young men to talk about their problems as research suggests that they struggle to be as candid as women in times of crisis. David also observes that male suicide attempts are often driven by some form of sexual shame, or a relationship break-up, where the man is unable to talk about how hurt he is feeling.

In the long-term, David hopes that the stigma of admitting to depression will be eroded by a higher awareness of its symptoms. “More people might say ‘What’s wrong?’ thus encouraging people to talk about it,” he says. “Raising awareness diminishes the stigma.”

He secretly believes that many people suffer from symptoms of clinical depression, but prefer their condition to be diagnosed as something else, such as the illness ME which is associated with chronic fatigue. “They would rather think they have something else than admit to mental health issues,” he says. In his own case, when filling out insurance forms, he is now obliged to check the box indicating ‘mental health illnesses’ and as a consequence faces higher premiums. He also has to be insured for every show he does. On the same theme, David sees a dichotomy between admitting to depression (and the need for therapy) and committing suicide. “[Suicide] is more noble... a very serious gesture, and it has gravitas,” he says. “Therapy feels a bit unmanly.” In 2001 David created a sitcom Baddiel’s Syndrome for the satellite channel Sky One about an architect who attended regular therapy. As part of his “research” for the show, David started to see a therapist himself. Was this simply a pretext to access something that he couldn’t ask for? “It might be the case,” he says diffidently, “to give myself a more straightforward reason to do it, rather than a more complicated reason of needing it.”

He points out that therapy is more stigmatised in the UK than France or the US, for example, and partly attributes this distaste to the British stiff, upper lip. “If you happen to be a comedian, you are going to be happier with the idea of therapy than if you’re working in a factory,” he adds. “Men in working class areas have no access to therapy.”

In the early days David also tried anti-depressants, but he says “they never really worked for me.” He disliked all the side-effects and found them very addictive. “You have to find the right therapist,” he says. “It may not cure you, but it will help you manage it.”

He believes that depression is “70% a bottled-up anxiety disorder” and that the brain has a fight or flight response. “When you come back from running, you feel better.”

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As part of his own journey to safety, David realised that performing live as a comic was aggravating his depression. During a period between 2000 and 2003, he was “working incredibly hard” on Baddiel and Skinner Unplanned, a half-hour, unscripted show, broadcasting on ITV four nights a week. As part of the format, David and Frank Skinner sat on a sofa and responded to questions from a live audience. The “stress and anxiety of doing it” contributed to his decision to spend more time writing. He is about to expand on the psychological difficulties of performing live when his two children burst into the room, accompanied by his partner, the actress Morwenna Banks, and a friend. They are back from school, full of brio and chatter. His five-year old son, Ezra, edges towards him eager to ask a question before Morwenna steers them out of the room. Did the kids help with his battle against depression? “Helped a lot,” he says, nodding.

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David has reached a point where he doesn’t need therapy anymore but is frightened to cut the cord. “Depressive tendencies are essentially a nightmare, but I do have it and it’s about accepting I have it,” he says, his eyes crinkling. “You just can’t live life without expecting trouble.” But he can also see the positive effects of his treatment. “The therapy has been useful – it helps me understand myself and my relationships with other people.” Despite this, he dreads the day when he is “properly old” confronted with his own frailty. “Very bad things will happen – how on earth does one deal with it, with a depressive gene?” he asks. The eye contact slips as he hesitates for a moment. But then his resolve returns and he answers his own question – by having “the armour to deal with it.”

FACTS AND FIGURES

- Depression causes a greater burden of disease in middle- and higher-income countries than any other condition. It is predicted to become the leading cause globally by 2030.¹
- Depression and other mental health problems are major risk factors for suicide.
- Over 800,000 people around the world die through self-inflicted injuries every year.²
- More than a third of global suicide deaths, mainly in developing countries, result from the ingestion of pesticides.³
- Suicide deaths outnumber those through interpersonal violence in many parts of the world.²
- In the UK, 5,706 people took their own lives through suicide in 2008. Of these, 76% were men.⁴
- A European study of adolescents aged mainly 15-16 found that nearly one in 10 females and around one in 25 males reported self-harming within the last year.⁵
- Amongst older teenagers and young adults in the UK, suicides are now the second leading cause of death, behind only road traffic injuries.⁶
- In a major national survey of mental health in England over one in eight participants reported that they had thought about committing suicide at some point in their life, and around one in 20 said that they had attempted suicide.⁷
- Mental health problems result in a huge economic cost with depression and anxiety making it much more difficult, or sometimes impossible, to do a job. The loss of output for the UK alone has been calculated at £17 billion per year.⁸
BRINGING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUT OF THE SHADOWS
Cherie Blair is a lawyer and a keen advocate of women’s rights across the world. As patron of the UK shelter Refuge, she works in partnership with its chief executive Sandra Horley to combat domestic violence and raise awareness amongst the public.

As a young barrister in 1977, Cherie was competing for tenancy at the London chambers of her pupil master Derry Irvine. Her rival was a fellow pupil by the name of Tony Blair. In the early spring, Derry took her out for a drink and broke the news: he couldn’t get both pupils taken on by the chambers and since she was a girl, it would be easier to get the boy taken on. “Of course I was hurt,” recalls Cherie in her autobiography, Speaking for Myself. “It was the first time I had ever been discriminated against because of my gender and it was hard to accept that I was being pushed out simply because I wore a skirt.” Refuge’s Sandra Horley argues that such discrimination against women, even at an innocuous level, lies at the heart of the debate on domestic violence. “Society tolerates the subjugation of women,” she says. In her opinion, conventional attitudes about the roles of men and women, giving men the upper hand and teaching women to accept an inferior status, sow the seeds for domestic abuse. “We will eliminate domestic violence if we redress the balance of power in our society.” As it was, Cherie went on to become a leading human rights lawyer and a Queen’s Counsel in spite of her setback, while her future husband found his calling as a politician.

Sandra and Cherie have worked together since early 1997 to raise awareness of domestic violence. During her tenure as Refuge’s chief executive, Sandra has deliberately courted high-profile support from people in the public eye. “They speak out about the unacceptability of abuse,” she says. “They bring domestic violence out of the shadows by giving the voiceless a voice.” Cherie became a trustee of Refuge just before Tony Blair was elected Prime Minister. “I was still recently involved in these cases, representing women who had used these services [at Refuge],” she explains. “I wanted to publicise domestic violence.” At the time, her husband’s office was “dubious” about her decision to ally herself with the anti-domestic violence campaign. “People are going to assume that the reason you got involved is that your father beat your mother,” remonstrated one woman charged with looking at Cherie’s public image. Cherie managed to persuade them otherwise. She later became a patron of Refuge when her obligations prevented her from attending regular meetings as a trustee.

Cherie’s work for the anti-domestic violence campaign dovetails with many of her other projects to improve the position of women around the world. Ornaments and souvenirs from her travels bedeck the boardroom in which we sit. She is also patron of the new Asian University for Women which opened in Bangladesh in March 2008, and during the course of our discussion she refers to research the students carried out on violence against women. “The proportion of men who think it’s acceptable to use physical means to impose their will is shockingly high,” she says. “Equally, the proportion of women who think it is acceptable.” To this extent, she believes that culture plays a role in determining what society sees as reasonable behaviour. As an illustration, Cherie recalls a debate by the spouses of European Union leaders on corporal punishment in 1998. “The Scandinavians took the stance that there were no circumstances in which you should hit a child,” she says. “The British and the French were largely ambivalent.” At the other end of the scale, the Spanish and the Italians considered such punishment a “family thing”. She draws back in her chair to reflect. “Societally, where do you draw the line? At breaking a child’s leg? In Afghanistan, they would not draw the line at breaking a women’s arm.” Having presented her case, she moves towards her conclusion. “Part of it is what society says is acceptable and not acceptable, and how you police yourself.”

For her part, Sandra is confident that rates of domestic violence – currently one in four women in the UK will be abused by her partner at some point in her life – will drop once society chooses not to tolerate it. In her own book Power and Control – Why Charming Men Can Make Dangerous Lovers, she says that women are conditioned to believe that marriage will bring ultimate happiness and that husbands will look after them and take
the lead in any decision-making. “We are totally steeped in the tradition of men being the dominant sex,” she writes. “But these very attitudes give men the power and control which can be so dangerous.” But if we are all products of our upbringing, why do some men abuse and many more do not? “That is the million dollar question,” she says softly in her Canadian accent. “Lots of men grow up in violent situations and don’t go on to abuse.”

Men can escape their conditioning under positive influences from teachers, uncles and other male role models. She also points out that abuse is an interplay of social and psychological factors, where personality and self-esteem can influence behaviour. “[Similarly] the strongest woman, with a really good upbringing, could end up in abusive relationship,” she adds. “Over time the subtle influences of a controlling man is like water dripping on a stone.” So could anyone suffer abuse, even Sandra? “Yes, even me,” she replies, though she makes clear that her husband is “very gentle and non-sexist.”

Sandra came over from Canada during the 1970s to study in Birmingham as a mature student. On a whim she answered an advertisement to run a home in Wolverhampton for abused and homeless women. “Little did I know how stressful the work would be,” she says. “Three women a day would be admitted with horrific injuries. One man took a hammer and chisel to [his partner’s] face.”

Although the emotional stress was great, there was little time for reflection. “You kinda had to steel yourself and get on with it.” Over the years, she has had her own confrontations with violent men. Once she was chased in her car by a pimp, out to get revenge after he was sent down for 18 months for assault. “I remember my heart was pounding and I was frightened, but it was more about what I was going to do. I drove to the police station in Shropshire and it worked.” She also describes how she has had “gangs of men baying for blood” at her door. On that occasion, the police were not interested in helping until she held the phone to her intercom and then they came round in minutes. Have her experiences made her distrust men in general? “In the early days there was an element of cynicism – it made me very wary of men – but you do realise that many men would never dream of hitting a woman.”

“**What we do in the courts is part of the social pressure that this is unacceptable behaviour.**”

- Cherie Blair

During Cherie’s work in family law, particularly in cases of child abuse, she had similar problems maintaining her professional distance. “There came a point where I could no longer face the hideous things that some people do to their children,” she writes in her autobiography. That realisation precipitated her decision to specialise in employment and public law. In 2000 Cherie was among a group of barristers who set up Matrix Chambers, a legal practice specialising in human rights law. In her charity work, however, she continued to campaign for women’s and children’s causes. She helped to raise money for the NSPCC’s Justice for Children campaign which, along with the Human Rights Act 1998, led to new measures to support vulnerable witnesses in court, including giving evidence behind a screen and video links.

In terms of using the law as a tool to prevent abuse, Cherie is emphatic about the need to put existing reforms into action. Changes made under the UK’s Family Law Act of 1996 meant that women became able to apply for an order to protect themselves and their children from threats or violence. They could also force their abuser to move out of the family home. However, as Cherie points out, no matter how good the laws are, judges and lawyers need to be trained to implement them. “We are still making progress to protect women and properly implement [the reforms of the mid-90s],” she says. “But the fact that we have the laws is good in terms of being a general deterrent.” The other issue is whether abuse is reported to the authorities. “The law is only a deterrent if [the abuser] is going to be caught.” On average a woman will be assaulted by her partner or ex-partner 35 times before reporting it to the police. Nevertheless, she concludes: “What we do in the courts is part of the social pressure that this is unacceptable behaviour.”

On the international front, Cherie sees the International Bar Association as an important player in developing model laws for other countries to adopt. However, to pave the way for new laws to protect women in countries such as Kenya, social attitudes also have to change. She quotes a male member of the Kenyan parliament who allegedly said: “It is well known that when a woman says ‘no’ she means ‘yes’.” Her eyes become luminous with indignation. “He was perfectly happy to say it,” she says in an incredulous tone. As a result, women MPs have struggled to amend laws on wife-beating and rape.

In the UK, Refuge has called for an integrated approach to tackling domestic violence – protect, provide and prevent. Sandra now believes that government policy is moving towards that with a new emphasis on prevention, although she fears “difficult days ahead” with a possible cut in public funding. A new initiative to teach children at school how to resolve conflict and respect gender differences is “absolutely key” although she is concerned about how it will be implemented. “Is it discretionary, or is it going to be mandatory?” Like Cherie, she believes attitudes can be transformed by raising awareness through advertising campaigns and even storylines on television soaps. And to create an egalitarian society, she wants women to be given greater access to education and childcare to help them to pursue careers. “In the long term, the ultimate goal is to alter society’s view that men are entitled
to control women,” she reiterates.

In her role as patron, Cherie wrote the foreword to the 2002 edition of Sandra’s book and is familiar with her thesis on power and control. “Why do successful, educated men want to humiliate their wives?” Cherie asks rhetorically, looking down at her papers as if in search of an answer. “If we change society’s attitudes, it will at least render it socially unacceptable.” Her own take on gender imbalances is more qualified, influenced perhaps by her struggles as a professional lawyer and the working spouse of a Prime Minister. Several times in her autobiography she writes of being an “appendage to the PM” and recalls hanging onto her identity “by the thinnest of threads.” In her words, “the roles of men and women are never equally balanced,” particularly if a woman gives up work to look after the children. However, she adds: “It’s always about negotiation, a negotiation between equals... and a balance of respect.”

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

- A multinational study by the World Health Organization found that between 15% (Japan) and 71% (Ethiopia) of women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner at some point in their lives.¹

- More than one in four women and one in six men in England and Wales have experienced some form of domestic abuse since the age of 16, equivalent to 4.5 million females and 2.6 million males.²

- The British Crime Survey shows that more than half of all victims of intimate partner abuse in the last year suffered some form of injury or emotional effects. The most common were mental or emotional problems (26%), minor bruising or a black eye (20%), scratches (14%) and stopping trusting people or having difficulty in other relationships (14%).²

- Female victims of intimate partner violence are more likely to suffer injury or emotional impacts of abuse than male victims. They are also more likely to experience repeat victimisation.²

- In 2004, the costs of domestic violence to England and Wales through health, employment and other emotional and social damages was estimated at £23 billion per year.³

- Specialist domestic violence courts were introduced in the UK in 2004. These use trained staff with experience in dealing with domestic violence to provide additional support and care to victims as they pass through criminal justice procedures. There are now over 120 across the country.⁴

- Over half (53%) of female homicides in England and Wales are committed by an existing or ex-partner. In fact, on average two women are killed by a male partner or former partner every week.²

- In 2008 almost 25,000 applications were made to county courts for remedies relating to (i.e. protection from) domestic violence.⁵
MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

FROM THE RACETRACK TO THE ROAD
The German Formula One driver has inspired a whole generation with his brilliance on the racetrack. Over recent years his sport has seen major improvements in safety while he has become active in a worldwide campaign to ‘Make Roads Safe’.

The Formula One chief Bernie Ecclestone once said, “All sports need a superstar and Michael is a superstar.” Statistically, Michael Schumacher is the greatest driver the sport has ever seen. He holds seven world championship titles and is celebrated for his talent, hard work and ability to push a car to its absolute maximum. His recent return to racing after three years in semi-retirement has exhilarated his fans and raised the prospect of another world title with his new team, Mercedes GP Petronas. At the start of the 2010 season, Michael admitted he felt like a child looking forward to Christmas. “When I retired from racing in 2006 my batteries were simply empty,” he explained. “Now they are totally recharged and I am ready for the challenge.” He has marked his comeback with a new addition to his race helmet – the zebra crossing logo that denotes the ‘Make Roads Safe’ campaign. For more than 10 years Michael has been involved with the FIA Foundation’s road safety campaign and is proud of his efforts to persuade leaders from around the world to recognise deaths on the road as a major global health issue.

Back in the 1960s, Formula One was considered an extremely dangerous sport. “Drivers were told that survival was a matter of luck,” Michael once remarked at a campaign event for ‘Make Roads Safe’. “If they did not like it, they could slow down or stop racing.” His own years in Formula One have seen “dramatic improvements” to the safety of cars, equipment and circuits. “During my career, I have survived some very high-speed impacts and I am still alive today because the sport’s governing body designed a system where safety is the primary consideration,” he says. Others have not been so fortunate and the sport is still haunted by the drivers who have died – most notably the three-times world champion Aryton Senna who lost his life at the San Marino Grand Prix in May 1994, as well as the less well-known Austrian driver, Roland Ratzenburger, who died while qualifying for the same event. In July 2009 Felipe Massa – Michael’s best friend among the drivers – suffered a fractured skull during a head-on collision with the tyre barrier at the Hungarian Grand Prix. Just prior to the crash, he had been struck on the helmet by a suspension spring from a competitor’s car. Incidents such as these persuaded the sport to adopt a different approach to safety.

Michael visited Felipe Massa in hospital a week after the accident and expressed relief at his “positive condition” so soon after the crash. He prefers not to comment on the impact that these accidents might have had on him personally, but points out that safety improvements in the sport are ongoing. “We now have an extremely strong survival cell, the front and side impact structures, the new high-spec carbon helmet, and the HANS (head, neck and shoulder) protective device,” he says. “They are constantly working on improving the safety of the physical infrastructure too, looking at run-off areas and high-speed barriers and conducting circuit safety simulations... So I don’t think there is any complacency, and we drivers would not allow it.”

“Young 260,000 children are killed on the road, on their way to school or playing in the street with their friends. It’s just terrible.”
The most serious accident of Michael’s career was at the British Grand Prix in July 1999 when he broke his right leg after his brakes failed and his car smashed into the Stowe tyre barriers. The accident put paid to his world title chances for that year, following his surprise move to Ferrari from Benetton in 1996. On occasion, Michael has alluded to uncomfortable memories of his Silverstone crash and told the German broadcaster ZDF last year that he thought he was going to die. “I suddenly felt my heart beat slowing and then completely stopping. The lights went out. Then I thought, ‘Ah, that’s the way you feel probably when you are on the way up.’"

In February 2009 Michael suffered another accident, but this time on a motorbike, which in a twist of fate eventually led to his Formula One comeback. During a test session at a Spanish racetrack near Cartagena, Michael fell off his Honda Fireblade and sustained fractures to his head and neck area. He was hospitalised for several hours but emerged determined to downplay his injuries. “I was driving down start-finish and when breaking into the first corner I hit some bumps which made me fall,” he reported on his website. “The checks in the hospital showed nothing and I am fine, therefore I went back home at the evening.” However, when he was asked by his old team Ferrari to fill in for Felipe Massa, it soon became apparent that his injuries were more serious than first thought. A few weeks later in August he was forced to cancel his temporary comeback. “Unfortunately we did not manage to get a grip on the pain in the neck... even if medically or therapeutically we tried everything possible.” In Formula One, great strains are placed upon the neck area as the car goes around the track. The rest of the driver’s body is supported by the structure of the car and it is only the head (encased in the helmet) and neck that move significantly during racing. Experienced drivers tend to develop a very muscular neck to deal with pressure exerted by g-forces while cornering on the circuits.

Michael described himself as “disappointed to the core” and these emotions may have factored into his decision to re-start his F1 career this year with the newly formed Mercedes team. With his lopsided grin, he told the BBC that his brief stint on the Ferrari team “initiated something I didn’t know it was there anymore.” Ross Brawn, the Mercedes team principal who had also worked with Michael at Ferrari and Benetton, persuaded him to join up. “My old hunger for racing is back,” Michael said on announcing his return. “Suddenly I was on fire again.” At the time his wife Corinna also issued a statement supporting her husband’s decision. “Michael simply needs challenges – that’s the way he is,” she said.

By his own admission, Michael is a man who loves riding motorbikes and jumping out of aeroplanes, but how does he reconcile this appetite for risk with his commitment to road safety? “I see no contradiction at all,” he says. “I drive at high speed on a racetrack where everything possible is designed and done to ensure that I and my fellow competitors and the officials and the spectators are safe.” He also draws a parallel between risks taken on the racetrack and the unspecified risks of using a public road system. “The race track is a closed system, the speed and risk can only happen under a tightly controlled safety-management regime... It makes me appreciate the need for road safety on the public roads all the more. It is important that I use my position and my fame to give that message to the motor racing fans.”

Michael is proud of what the ‘Make Roads Safe’ campaign has achieved to date, including a so-called Decade of Action backed by the United Nations. As part of this, the campaign has proposed a goal of halving the projected increase in road deaths during the next 10 years. “Some of the world’s most respected road safety experts have looked at this and believe it could be achieved,” says Michael, “and that five million lives could be saved and 50 million serious injuries prevented over the next decade.” He knows this is an ambitious target, but typically believes “the stakes are so high it is worth making the attempt.”

It is ironic that Michael became involved in the campaign as part of his punishment for a collision in the 1997 European Grand Prix. Although Michael’s manoeuvre was deemed “an instinctive reaction” by the FIA World Motor Sport Council, it was still seen as a “serious error.” In lieu of a further penalty, Michael agreed to participate in the FIA European road safety campaign for seven days in 1998. More than 10 years later, he is still involved, using his public profile to raise awareness. “We have to understand the consequences of our actions, why it can be dangerous to drive too fast, why drink-driving is wrong,” he says. “Educating the public has to play a role in this, beginning even before children are in kindergarten. If people don’t understand the reason for rules, the social context, they are less likely to obey those rules.” He was also drawn to the cause because children are often the most vulnerable. “There is so much attention to education and health, protecting against diseases, and yet 260,000 children are killed on the road, on their way to school or playing in the street with their friends,” he says. “It’s just terrible.”
The Decade of Action will encourage Western countries to share their knowledge of road safety with developing countries. "We need to understand road transport as a system, and to make it a safe system, meaning designing and managing the road network and the vehicles to operate within safe tolerances for the most vulnerable user," Michael explains. "This is just as true for a racetrack as for a big economy like the USA or Germany and a developing country like India or Kenya." Developing countries have different targets within road safety. For example, in African countries, pedestrians are most at risk, while in South East Asia, the motorbike riders are the major victims. Many Western countries have already halved road deaths since the 1970s, thanks to seat belts, better road design, training and tackling drink-driving.

Michael’s interest in road safety provides a fascinating foil for his daredevilry on the track. Mid-season 2010 saw him embroiled in controversy when he attempted to prevent Rubens Barrichello, the Williams driver, from overtaking him at the Hungarian Grand Prix. Michael swerved as Barrichello came up on the inside and almost pushed his rival into a concrete wall at 200 miles per hour. Fortunately, Barrichello managed to avoid a tragic accident by passing Michael’s car just as the pit wall alongside the track came to an end. Later Michael apologised in German on his website: “The manoeuvre against Rubens was too dangerous. I wanted to make it hard for him to pass me but I didn’t want to endanger him with my manoeuvre.” Earlier in the season, Michael was also criticised for his opportunistic blast past Ferrari’s Fernando Alonso in the final lap of the Monaco Grand Prix after the safety car had pulled in. Although his form in the current season has proved disappointing, Michael’s aggressive tactics suggest he still has the hunger and pugnacity to win. Despite what he might say, he remains a man of contradictions, committed to saving lives around the world, but able to risk his own for the sake of adrenalin and victory.

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

- Globally, over a million people die each year through road traffic injuries and tens of millions more are injured or disabled.\(^1\) In India alone, an estimated two million people have a disability as a result of a road traffic crash.\(^2\) In fact, India and China together account for almost half a million road traffic deaths every year.\(^3\)

- Road traffic injuries account for 2.7% of the total burden of all ill health globally.\(^4\) The cost of road traffic collisions has been estimated at $518 billion each year.\(^5\)

- By the year 2030, road traffic injuries are expected to become the fifth leading cause of death in the world.\(^6\)

- In 2005, an estimated 11,700 drivers across the European Union survived serious road traffic crashes because they were wearing a seat belt.\(^7\)

- Across the UK in 2008, 2,538 people were killed in road traffic collisions, a further 26,034 people suffered serious non-fatal injuries and 202,333 suffered slight injuries.\(^8\)

- Despite huge increases in the number of cars and other vehicles on the roads, the UK has seen nearly a century of reductions in road traffic casualties with a sustained decline especially over the last few decades.\(^9\)

- The UK has implemented compulsory use of both seat belts and child restraints in cars. In the 25 years following the introduction of the first legislation requiring seat belt use in 1983, an estimated 60,000 deaths and 670,000 serious injuries were prevented.\(^10\) In some countries, there is still no legislation requiring all car occupants to wear seat belts.\(^1\)

- Despite advances in road safety in the UK, a still substantial burden of ill health relating to road traffic injuries falls mainly on the poorest communities. For instance, compared to wealthiest areas, children in the poorest communities are four times more likely to be admitted into hospital as a result of serious transport-related pedestrian injury.\(^8\)
Glenda Jackson

IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANY WOMAN
The British Member of Parliament is a staunch supporter of the campaign to end domestic violence against women. A winner of two Oscars, she is feted for her acting career as much as her political activism.

As an actress, Glenda Jackson established a reputation for playing strong, articulate women. She was Queen Elizabeth I—a role that delighted scholars with its historical accuracy—Hedda Gabler—wilful and passionate—and a comic Cleopatra. In the flesh, she is as imperious as you might imagine. The woman who once tap-danced with the comedy duo Morecambe and Wise is a tough-talking politician, able to argue her case with intellectual rigour. She is also someone who has suffered domestic violence. In 1999 she told the New Statesman magazine, “I don’t think I’ve ever been in a relationship with a man in which he hasn’t raised his fists to me.” In the past, she has shown her support for the White Ribbon campaign and government policies to end violence against women and girls. “It can happen to any woman, anywhere, in any situation,” she enunciates with feeling. Possibly her own experience makes her sensitive to the suggestion that women who experience abuse are in the minority.

Since 1992 Glenda has been a Labour Member of Parliament (MP) and currently holds the Hampstead and Kilburn seat in north London. To enter Parliament, she gave up an illustrious acting career which saw her win Academy Awards for her roles in the films Women in Love and A Touch of Class. After a ministerial job in Transport during the late 1990s and an unsuccessful bid to become the Mayor of London, she retreated to the backbenches where she seemed to enjoy her relative independence during Labour’s time in power. Her parliamentary office in the centre of London is neat and practical, a reflection of her own work ethic. She is known for her sense of social responsibility and her determination to improve the lives of her constituents.

Although her mode of interaction is combative, Glenda chooses her words with care, often leaning back in her chair to collect her thoughts. “Domestic violence occurs in every single strata of the socio-economic make-up in this country and any other country,” she says as a preamble to a discussion on the underlying reasons for male violence.

“It was a terrible shock that someone had the audacity to invade your personal space.”

“You would need to ask a psychiatrist for a thorough answer,” she adds. “But there are elements of a patriarchal view that men are automatically endowed with the mental or physical gifts to make decisions.” Later she expands on this: “There are reasons—not rational or logical—it stems from the prevailing view that men have the right to an upper hand.” On the question of why some men resort to violent behaviour, while others do not, she responds facetiously: “I’d be interested to meet a man who hasn’t done it,” before tailing off in the tacit acknowledgement that this could be a step too far.

On the other side of the equation, Glenda believes that women are burdened with the duty to make themselves desirable. “A woman’s value is still primarily in her ability to attract men.” In a case of abuse, she says women are made to feel that they are at fault. “She must have done something wrong—‘I was asking for it, I wasn’t attractive enough’... This is why [women] are often reluctant to bring charges because they feel ashamed.” She maintains that her own encounters with violent men were not serious enough to be reported. “I responded by hitting back or walking away.” Was it wise to hit back? She modifies her response: “I defended myself without going into physical violence.” Although she says these “minor incidents” did not have a lasting impact on her, she recalls how “it was a terrible shock that someone [had] the audacity to invade your personal space.”

With some frustration, Glenda rails against the social attitudes that continue to undermine the status of women. She cites a mini-debate in the House of
Commons where it was argued that the charge of murder for a man who had killed his wife should be reduced to manslaughter because the wife had been unfaithful. “And that’s here in the House of Commons,” she snorts with disbelief. “We might as well go back to chastity belts.” Attitudes in the younger generation do not give her any more cause for optimism. She is dismayed by recent statistics showing an increase of violence in younger age groups – the Home Office reported last year that a third of girls in relationships have experienced sexual partner violence. There is a tendency for teenage girls to see abuse by their boyfriends as a “demonstration of extreme love,” she says. “We need to examine violence being presented as something good – this romanticisation of violence.”

“When there is an element as far as the perpetrator is concerned that it is a crime without retribution.”

When asked if educating school children could combat domestic violence in later life, she retorts, “You are pressing me for a silver bullet, but there are no silver bullets. One part of the process is education for all of us.” She supports an initiative under the previous UK government to teach children about relationships in primary school but stresses that the educative process should apply to all generations within a multiracial society. “[It needs to be taught that] women don’t belong to the men they are with and children don’t belong exclusively to their fathers.” She also believes that education has to be carried out at a grassroots or community level, rather than being imposed on society in a top-down fashion.

When the last British government launched its new domestic violence strategy in November 2009, it heralded a new emphasis on prevention of abuse. “Prevention is always better than a cure – equally there have to be support mechanisms and the victim needs to know where to go to obtain necessary help,” she says. In particular, she would like to see more places of safety made available to women escaping violence, with support services accessible on a 24-hour basis, 365 days a year. On the subject of integrated services, which are designed to help women re-build their lives and access support across different government agencies, she says: “I thought this was a wheel we discovered a long time ago, but there are still several areas where integrated services are not par for the course.” She also highlights the need to deal with perpetrators of domestic violence – offering them opportunities to manage their anger and ensuring that they recognise they have a problem. “There is an element as far as the perpetrator is concerned that it is a crime without retribution,” she says. “They don’t regard it as anything untoward.”

Earlier in the year Glenda also supported an Early Day Motion in Parliament on children and domestic violence, calling for a campaign to tackle the issue from a child’s point of view. “There are techniques that can assist in discovering what happened without damaging the child,” she says. “The child suffers from the psychological and emotional violence visited upon the mother.” There is also the risk that an abused child will go to become an abusive adult. “It is accepted that domestic violence is learned.” At least 750,000 children a year witness violence in the home, according to a Department of Health report published in 2003. The Motion called on the government to amend its definition of domestic violence in England to include the impact on children.

It is more than a decade since Glenda told the New Statesman that domestic violence was “far more common for women than is ever voiced.” Today she thinks that society has become more aware of how widespread the problem is. She points to a dramatic change in police attitudes and improved resources to deal with incidents of abuse. “What happens behind a front door is no longer sacrosanct,” she says. However, she remains shocked by the findings in an opinion poll commissioned by the Home Office in February 2009. For example, one-third of those polled thought that a woman should be held fully or partly responsible if she was drunk and was raped. “Society has to change itself,” she says touching her head despairingly. “We have to look at what are the pressure points for society’s view.” She names advertising, the media and education as key attitude formers. As examples of successful television advertising that changed public opinion, she points to the campaign to wear seat belts in cars – despite fears that belts were more dangerous and infringed civil liberties – and the present taboo around drink-driving. “It still happens, but it is socially unacceptable now.”

Glenda did not see The Cut, a controversial advert in 2009 campaigning against domestic violence and featuring the actress Keira Knightley, but she is interested to hear about it. The advert, made by the charity Women’s Aid, ran into trouble with public censors because of its graphic depiction of violence. “If they had put it in [the BBC soap] EastEnders, it would have been okay,” she says sardonically. “Everyone would have said how marvellous to treat issues in this way... [The controversy] is also because Keira Knightley is a famous actress and is not being beaten in real life.” Then she pauses and corrects herself with a wry smile. “But how do I know that.”

“What happens behind a front door is no longer sacrosanct.”
Global estimates suggest that between 133 million and 275 million children witness frequent violence between their parents or carers each year. Most fights are between their parents or between their mother and the mother’s partner.

Children from households where there is domestic violence are more likely to have behavioural and emotional problems. These can result in difficulties with education and early school drop-out, employment, crime, substance use and even poor sexual health.

Children who experience domestic violence are also, as they grow up, at increased risk of being involved in other forms of violence, including youth violence, dating and intimate partner violence and self-directed violence.

A million women and 600,000 males in England and Wales are estimated to have suffered some form of domestic abuse in the last year.

As well as immediate injuries, the long-term repercussions of domestic violence on victims’ health can be substantial. In Australia, intimate partner violence has been found to be a greater risk for ill-health in women aged 15-44 than factors such as alcohol and illicit drug use, smoking, physical inactivity, high body weight and high blood pressure.

A third of victims of partner abuse reported to the British Crime Survey believed that the offender was under the influence of alcohol.

In England and Wales, estimates suggest that only one in five women and one in 10 men who suffer abuse by their partner report this to police.
The British actress lost her younger brother Ben to a stabbing in June 2008. His murder inspired hundreds of Londoners to protest at the rising tide of youth violence. The tragedy devastated Brooke’s family and drove her to campaign against knife crime.

In the summer of 2008 Brooke Kinsella was steeling herself for a move out of the family home. She was 25 years old and felt it was time to grow up. On the day of her move, she found herself locked out of her new flat and decided to go for a look around the shops. Mid-spree, laden with shopping bags, she happened to pass the internet cafe where her brother Ben was working. On impulse, she surprised him with a takeaway from McDonalds. After 10 minutes of chat, she waved good bye and walked away. It was the last time she saw him alive.

Later that day, Ben was celebrating the end of his GCSE examinations with a group of friends at a pub in north London. After a fight broke out at the pub, Ben and his friends decided to make their way home. Before too long, they realised they were being followed and broke into a run. Eventually Ben stopped running and decided to cross the road, possibly to get out of the way of trouble. The three young men who were chasing the group switched course and followed Ben behind a van where they attacked him with a knife. He was stabbed repeatedly in the lungs, chest, stomach and heart. He also sustained wounds on his arms and hands as he struggled to defend himself. After his attackers left, he staggered to his feet and walked around the corner seeking help. Once in hospital, he underwent emergency heart surgery but died shortly afterwards in the early hours of 29 June. He was 16 years old.

“It was my worst idea of hell times a million,” says Brooke, recalling the day her little brother died. “If anyone had told me I would lose someone so close in such a horrific way, I couldn’t have imagined living another day, or carrying on with my life.” Almost two years on, she is still surprised that she can get up, go to work and even occasionally laugh, although this fills her with guilt. “Not a day goes by when I don’t struggle. It’s not like losing someone to natural causes, like a grandparent,” she says. “Your appetite goes, you can’t sleep anymore.” In the months that followed Ben’s death, she lost her religious faith, contemplated suicide and at her lowest ebb locked herself in a bathroom with a kitchen knife. She says something “finally snapped” after she watched her parents start to fall apart and her two sisters become increasingly withdrawn. Fortunately her boyfriend, the actor Ray Panthaki, managed to calm her down.

Brooke’s fame as Kelly Taylor in the popular BBC soap EastEnders helped to turn Ben into a potent symbol. He was the seventeenth teenager to die in London in 2008 from youth violence and the tragic futility of his death inspired hundreds of Londoners to march in protest. Brooke herself embarked on an ad-hoc campaign to learn about youth violence and in the process wrote the book entitled Why Ben? about her brother’s murder. “It was my way of dealing with it – to keep very busy, to write the book and work,” she says. “I had to keep distracted.” Her personal campaign culminated in a meeting with the British Prime Minister at the time, Gordon Brown, who asked her to become an ambassador for a national project to tackle knife crime. As part of that, Brooke has spent time touring schools to make teenagers aware of the dangers of carrying a knife.

“They don’t eat, they don’t socialise and they don’t laugh anymore. It’s awful – you can see it in their eyes – there is no light left.”
“Kids have stopped valuing life and they don’t care about putting themselves in danger.”

Brooke is fearful however that her tactic of distracting herself will eventually backfire. “As good as it may be now, in the long-term it can’t be good. I don’t think I have really dealt with it. It might hit me when I have my own children, or I might have some kind of semi-breakdown in the future. I know it can come at some point.” She also admits that though she might be a candidate for counselling, she “can’t go back through it all again.” A similar sentiment prevents Brooke from discussing her feelings with her family. “We don’t want to hurt each other so we hide [our grief] from each other.”

Brooke’s parents – Deborah and George Kinsella – have never recovered from losing their only son and still use sleeping tablets every night, she says. “They don’t eat, they don’t socialise and they don’t laugh anymore. It’s awful – you can see it in their eyes – there is no light left. I want to fix it for them, but I can’t.” The only positive is that both parents have managed to return to work and that “they are trying hard for the girls left behind.” Two years on, Brooke’s two younger sisters, Jade and Georgia, appear to be coping better and still enjoy spending time with their friends.

In June 2009, three men – Michael Alleyne, aged 18, Juress Kika, aged 19, and Jade Braithwaite, aged 20 – were found guilty of murdering Ben and each was sentenced to 19 years in prison. The trial was another difficult period for the Kinsella family – “for seven weeks it felt like Ben was on trial” – but it brought some measure of justice even if the sentence did not seem long enough. The family’s protest over the difference between minimum sentences for knife and gun crime led to a change in British law. The minimum term for knife murder has now been increased from 15 years to 25 years, more in line with a minimum of 30 years for gun murder. “We are proud for Ben,” says Brooke. “It’s spectacular for a 16-year old boy to have changed the law. We feel really happy that we have achieved something.”

Although Brooke has spent time researching knife crime, she still finds it difficult to understand why Alleyne, Kika and Braithwaite killed her brother that night. At the time of the trial, the police said that the men had an inability to interact socially or to rationalise and so resorted to violence. “There had been some disrespect that night and they went looking for revenge,” says Brooke. Braithwaite had been involved in the fight at the pub and later enlisted Alleyne and Kika to exact revenge for his loss of face. Ben proved an easy target. Brooke

remains disdainful of the defence’s attempt to argue that the men had suffered from a tough upbringing. “They’d not had the best chances in life, but there is no excuse for this,” she says, adding that she has met people through her work who have suffered “horrible abuse” but did not go on to kill.

To tackle knife crime, Brooke advocates a mix of tough discipline and social development programmes. “Kids have stopped valuing life and they don’t care about putting themselves in danger,” she says. “If you look at someone today in the wrong way, you might die for it.” By discipline, she means that penalties for kids found carrying knives – prison sentences of at least two and half years – need to be enforced. “The next thing to focus on is education – we need to reach the kids that way... and back it up with discipline.” She believes that half the teenagers carrying knives genuinely feel they need them for protection, while the rest do it out of peer pressure or to earn respect.

There is no simple way, she says, of preventing young people from carrying knives. “Everyone has to do their bit – teachers, parents, the government, the police – everyone and everything,” she stresses. “I know somebody might say, ‘It’s not my problem, it’s never going to happen to me,’ but that’s what I thought.” She thinks that parents who are having problems with their children should be forced to attend parenting classes and should have benefits stopped if they fail to show up. She is also a big fan of US-style boot camps designed to reform prisoners and fast-track them to parole. These correctional facilities in the US put men and women through intense military-themed programmes, study and counselling, with the aim of increasing their confidence and self-discipline. “It sounds harsh, but it is the most amazing programme to put the kids back on track,” she says. “We need the [British] government to take a chance on this.”

Despite her tough talking, she is also in favour of projects that are designed to positively encourage children. She acted as judge on the “Spirit of London” awards, developed by the Damilola Taylor Trust to celebrate young people’s achievements. She says it is important for them “to see a different path to take.” The Trust, set up in memory of a 10-year old schoolboy who was stabbed in 2000, hopes to take the awards nationwide. Brooke is also hoping that the London Olympics will run sports schemes across the country for young people. “I’m not naive, I know it might not work for a minority of bad kids, but some might be persuaded,” she says. “You can’t put a price on the next generation.”

Brooke has also taken tentative steps to revive her acting career. She recently appeared as a guest star with Pauline Quirke in the BBC drama Missing. In the wake of Ben’s death, she lost her drive to audition for parts and admits she is still “re-assessing” if she has the energy to pursue acting jobs. “But [Missing] made me realise this is what I love,” she says. “Ben loved me being an actress – he was proud of what I did. He will be looking down and saying ‘Well done.’” Although Brooke is
Interpersonal violence (or violence between individuals) kills 14,900 young people (aged 15-29 years) each year in the European Region. Four out of five of these deaths occur in males.¹

The chances of a young person being murdered are 30 times higher in Latin America than they are in Europe.²

Across the European region, there is a greater than thirtyfold difference between the country with the highest youth homicide rate (Russian Federation) and that with the lowest (Germany).³

Around a third of homicides in England, Wales and Northern Ireland involve the use of a knife or sharp weapon. In Scotland, this is much higher and closer to two thirds (58%).⁴ ⁵ ⁶

Between April 2008 and March 2009, there were 320 fatal stabbings in the UK.⁴ ⁵ ⁶ The number of patients admitted into hospital following assaults with sharp objects in England peaked at 5,102 between April 2006 and March 2007 but has since fallen.⁷

In the UK, assaults involving sharp objects and the injuries resulting from them are most common among young males from deprived communities.⁸ ⁹

There is no single reason why young people engage in violent behaviour or carry knives. However, some of the key risk factors include growing up in a dysfunctional or broken home, having suffered or witnessed violence in the past, having psychological and behavioural problems, associating with delinquent peers, and having social norms that are supportive of violence. Only a small proportion of young people report carrying knives, and the vast majority of those who do say they do so for self-protection.³

still unable to reconcile her brother’s death with her former faith in God, she is comforted by the idea that Ben’s spirit continues to exist in some form. “I have to feel like that because the alternative would break my heart.”
Jean MacColl

THE HEARTBREAK OF LOSING KIRSTY
The British pop star and songwriter, Kirsty MacColl, was killed by a speedboat in Mexico in December 2000. Famous for her collaboration with The Pogues on the Christmas hit *Fairytale of New York*, she died aged 41. Her mother Jean tells of the impact of losing her daughter to a tragic accident.

Not long before she died, Kirsty MacColl offered to plant water lilies in the pond at her mother’s west London flat. Dressed in khaki shorts and a t-shirt, she waded thigh-deep into the water to anchor the plants to the bottom. Her attempt later that day to catch some fish to transfer to the pond was, however, unsuccessful. “All she came back with were some stragglers,” laughs Jean MacColl, a spry 86-year old, sitting in the living room of the same flat in Ealing. “It is a very good memory,” she says. “I can remember how happy I felt seeing her that day.” She is contemplative for a moment as the green stones in her earrings catch the light. On the mantelpiece nearby, framed photographs of Kirsty – studio shots as well as family snaps – dominate the room. The red hair and the soulful eyes make her instantly recognisable. Jean, an accomplished dance choreographer in her own right, adds: “Kirsty is around all the time looking over my shoulder. I often talk to her and people think I’m going dotty! If you are close to someone, it happens naturally.”

Kirsty inhabited the British music scene of the 1980s and 90s, known for her brand of feisty folk-pop and quirky lyrics. As well as her chart success with songs such as *Days* and *A New England*, she collaborated with artists Bono, Morrissey, Johnny Marr, The Pogues and Keith Richards. At the time of her death, her career was experiencing a period of revival with the release of her acclaimed album *Tropical Brainstorm*, inspired by the musical rhythms of Cuba and Mexico. Pianist and former Squeeze musician Jools Holland once remarked, “The great thing about Kirsty is that there is nothing bland about her, and her voice is very distinctive... When you heard her on the radio, you knew it was her straightaway.” Kirsty’s father was the celebrated folk-singer Ewan MacColl, who split from Jean shortly after she was born. He died in 1989 before the accident.

Just before Christmas in 2000, Kirsty took a much-needed holiday on the Mexican island of Cozumel with her two teenage sons, Louis and Jamie, and her new partner James Knight. She had been busy promoting *Tropical Brainstorm* and...
completing a BBC series on the history of Cuban music. Late at night on 18 December, Jean received a call at home. She had been out to the ballet at the Old Vic Theatre in London. She answered the phone to Kirsty’s partner, James, and immediately felt uneasy. He came straight to the point and told her there had been an accident and that Kirsty was dead. All Jean can remember doing afterwards was screaming with grief and tearing at her earrings. “If only she had just been injured, I could cope with that.” She was shocked that she could have enjoyed the ballet with no inkling of what was happening to her daughter.

Kirsty and her two sons – Jamie aged 15 and Louis aged 13 – had been scuba diving in a restricted diving area in National Marine Park of Cozumel. Just as the three divers and their dive master, Iván Diaz, were coming to the surface, a warning shout alerted them to an oncoming boat. Kirsty managed to push one of her sons out of the way before the boat struck her. Afterwards, Diaz described the boat as coming towards them at a high speed – well over the park’s limit of four knots – and with the bow high out of the water. In a letter to Jean some time after the event, he wrote: “Everything happened so fast. I was screaming and waving my hands trying to get their attention but with the noise from the engines and the speed that they were going they couldn’t hear me and they just ran over us.” Diaz heard the boat’s propeller hitting Kirsty’s oxygen tank with a clang. She died on impact. An autopsy report revealed that part of her chest and left leg were virtually severed. Both Diaz and Jamie were also hit, but not seriously injured. Louis told his grandmother afterwards, “I was swimming in Mummy’s blood. I heard Jamie calling out, ‘Where’s Mummy? Where’s Mummy?’ I told him not to look.”

The 31-foot speedboat was owned through a limited company by Guillermo González Nova, chairman of Controladora Comercial Mexicana, one of the country’s largest supermarket and restaurant groups. He was on board the boat on the day of the accident, along with members of his family and a deckhand called José Cen Yam. Later, Cen Yam allegedly told the Mexican authorities that he had been driving the boat and that his vision had been partially obscured by a sunbather lying against the windshield. He was convicted of culpable homicide in March 2003, although his sentence of more than two years was later transmuted to a £61 fine (amounting to one Mexican peso for each day of jail time). A separate maritime investigation by the Port Authority reportedly found González Nova guilty of violating maritime laws, which included entering a restricted area. The dive company also came under criticism for failing to set out marker buoys and not flying the correct flag to indicate the presence of divers. “They should have done this,” says Jean, “but it didn’t affect Kirsty’s death. The fact was she was killed by a speedboat – it shouldn’t have been there, it’s as simple as that.” González Nova has declined to comment on the accident although a company spokesman provided a statement from his lawyer describing the matter as “fully and finally concluded” following the judicial ruling in March 2003.

Jean’s grief and anger after the accident found an outlet in seeking justice for her daughter’s death. Conflicting statements from witnesses cast doubt on the veracity of Cen Yam’s claim that he was driving the boat at the time of the accident. There were rumours that Cen Yam had been paid to take the rap for his wealthy employer. “You don’t know what sort of person you are until something like this happens,” says Jean. “I was determined to fight the case. I had to fight.” With help from friends, she established the “Justice for Kirsty” campaign, whose supporters included pop stars Bono, Billy Bragg and Tracey Ullman. The campaign’s primary purpose was to establish whether the Mexican judicial system had thoroughly investigated the case. In December 2009, however, the campaign was disbanded after nine years of fighting to bring González Nova to justice – the man Jean believes is responsible for Kirsty’s death. The committee received news that the Mexican government had closed its case file on Kirsty’s death, thereby leaving it with nothing to campaign for.

After Kirsty’s death, Jean and her grandsons rejected suggestions that they should see counsellors to talk through their grief. Kirsty’s celebrity status made them distrustful of confiding in someone outside the family. Instead Jean set about writing her daughter’s biography Sun on the Water as a point of record. At times writing the book was “so heartbreaking,” particularly the early sections about Kirsty’s struggle with asthma as a child. Jean describes the book as an attempt to come to terms with the loss of her daughter. “Her death, at the height of her powers and at the beginning of an exciting new period in her life still seems altogether too cruel.”

It is clear that Jean’s relationship with her grandsons has also sustained her through the years. She recalls a lunch with some of her old acting students – Alison Steadman and Philip Hedley among others – whom she trained in Laban dance and movement. Jamie and Louis happened to be present and helped to prepare the meal. “Everybody wrote a card afterwards and they all said, ‘What wonderful grandsons you have,’” she says with pride. Both boys have dealt differently with their mother’s death. “Louis was able to talk about it, but Jamie has never been able to. He of course had to identify the body. I was worried at first about Jamie – more so than Louis – he was very closed.” Music producer Steve Lillywhite, the boys’ father and

“You don’t know what sort of person you are until something like this happens.”
Kirsty’s ex-husband, believed his sons would achieve closure because they were both present at the scene of the accident. “Later on – a short time ago – he said he thought he was mistaken,” says Jean. “I think that was a lack of knowledge on Steve’s part. I knew that wasn’t right.”

In the aftermath of the accident, Kirsty’s older brother Hamish suffered a minor heart attack. “He had gone cycling at the gym,” recalls Jean. “Madly and angrily to get out the angst. He overdid it.” A quadruple bypass operation followed in 2004. Like Kirsty and their father Ewan, Hamish has a talent for singing. “He was a good singer, but I didn’t hear him sing again until eight years after she died,” says Jean. “We were at a campaign meeting and he sang just one verse of a song because someone couldn’t remember how it went.”

Five years after the accident, Jean and the family decided to scatter Kirsty’s ashes in Cuba. “I didn’t want to leave her [at the crematorium] – it seemed as though we were abandoning her.” In the spring of 2006, the family flew out to Cuba – with the exception of Jamie who could not face the public ceremony. Friends and family then travelled out to sea to scatter the ashes. “We were all rather down,” recalls Jean. “It was a parting with Kirsty for me, but we were taking her to a place she would have liked.” Suddenly there was an electric moment as the well-wishers realised that flying fish were following the boat – they were all conscious that the cover art of Kirsty’s last album Tropical Brainstorm had featured a single flying fish leaping up out of the turquoise sea. “There was absolutely something in it,” says Jean. “We all thought it.” Louis, anxious about being on a boat again, was also comforted when he looked down into the water and saw a vision of his mother. “I looked down into the water and saw nothing,” says Jean, “but I was glad he had that experience. One never knows about these things. One can be sceptical or in tune with something you can’t describe.”

Under pressure from the Justice campaign, Mexico’s Ministry of Tourism has brought in new laws – “Kirsty’s Laws” – which include tighter limits on speed, stricter regulations for dive boats and more buoys to mark the entrance to the park. Now that the Justice campaign has ended, Jean plans to ensure the laws are indeed enforced. The impression you get, however, is that she will not find peace until she receives a personal apology from the González Nova family. Repeatedly in Sun on the Water, Jean writes of her desire for some sign of remorse. “All I have ever wanted was for [González Nova]... to explain to me what exactly happened, and to offer a simple apology – that’s all.” When asked if an apology might have eliminated the need for a Justice campaign, Jean is taken aback but admits, “It might have done.” And this is what lies at the heart of her ongoing anguish – the need for someone, other than a hapless deckhand, to take responsibility for the accidental death of her daughter.

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

- In the year April 2009 to March 2010, there were 5,930 reported deaths of UK civilians abroad including through natural causes, accidental deaths, unlawful killings and suicides.¹
- A Canadian study estimated the incidence of death in recreational scuba divers to be two in every 100,000 dives.²
- The intense emotions characterised as parental grief may typically last from one to nine years after the child’s death, but the feelings of sadness and loss remain throughout the bereaved parent’s life.³
- Safety legislation can vary widely between countries. For example, in the UK the drink-driving limit on roads is 0.08mg/100ml yet in most other European countries it is 0.05mg/100ml and in some (e.g. Hungary) it is 0.00mg/100ml. A lack of knowledge of local situations can mean holiday-makers inadvertently break the law.⁴
- It has been estimated that reducing the UK drink-driving limit on roads to 0.05mg/ml could prevent up to 6% of all road traffic injury deaths.⁵
- A study of sports-related deaths amongst the population of Hamburg, Germany, found that around 80% of such deaths that occurred at home were due to natural causes (e.g. heart attack) whilst 80% of deaths that occurred in other countries were due to injury, possibly due to greater risk-taking on holiday.⁶
- Around one in 10 young British holidaymakers visiting holiday resorts in the Spanish Balearics reported unintentional injury during their holiday.⁷
- Between March 2009 and February 2010, there were 308,860 recorded emergency department attendances for sports-related injuries in England.⁸
EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Heather
Mills
At the age of 25, the charity campaigner and former model lost part of her left leg in a traffic accident. Since then she has campaigned to rid the world of landmines and set an example for other amputees with her determination to live life to the full.

Just weeks after losing her leg, Heather Mills gathered a group of news reporters into her hospital room and sold her story to the highest bidder. Concerned about paying her mortgage and other expenses, she had found an ingenious way to fund herself out of financial difficulty. “It was up to me to make the most of it,” she told herself at the time. The ‘model meets misfortune’ storyline helped to turn her into a household name. Was she an opportunist, an entrepreneur, or just a young woman equipped with incredible survival skills? Almost two decades later, she is pragmatic about the motorcycle accident that wrenched off her left foot and led to a series of amputations. “I survive what’s thrown at me,” she says, explaining why the accident did little to dent her self-confidence. “I’m best backed in a corner. It was also the way I was brought up. I had a very difficult childhood.” Growing up in the north of England, Heather says she suffered physical and mental abuse at the hands of her father. “[My childhood] would destroy some and strengthen others.” The experience led her to have less fear generally, even of disability. “Nothing was more fearful than my father.”

After an itinerant start, Heather’s family settled near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. When she was nine years old, her mother left home. Heather, her older brother Shane and younger sister Fiona were left to fend for themselves, in a household where money was in short supply. Heather describes her mother’s departure as having the most profound effect on her life. “I totally understood why – my father was an abusive man. After she had gone, I became the mother in the family. I grew up very quickly.” In her autobiography, A Single Step, Heather describes how the children lived in terror of being punched in the ribs or beaten around the head for any misdemeanour, however trivial. “Stealing, lying, anything was in order to stop us getting hit.” On one occasion, when Shane accidentally broke the washing machine, Heather writes that her father was so angry he grabbed all three children by the hair and continued punching them in the chest until they begged for mercy. “My father is a very abusive person,” she says. “He won’t change and it’s very sad.” As a result, Heather has stayed close to her brother and sister. “They definitely got me through [the accident]. My sister Fiona was my rock.” Although Heather was reconciled with her mother, she died in 1989 during surgery for a thrombosis operation. Heather’s father has publicly denied being violent towards her.

Heather’s accident took place in August 1993 as she was crossing a road in the London borough of Kensington. She was standing on the curb with her boyfriend at the time, Raffaele Mincione, and watched two police motorbikes from the Diplomatic Protection Squad roar by with sirens blaring. Heather looked both ways down the street and saw a double-decker bus preparing to pull out and pedestrians starting to cross again. She stepped out and remembers nothing more. Afterwards she was told that a third police motorbike came out of nowhere and hit her head-on. In the impact, her left foot was ripped off her leg. She also sustained multiple fractures of the pelvis, crushed ribs, a punctured lung and minor head injuries. Fortunately a doctor who had been picnicking in a nearby park managed to stem the blood that was pumping out of her severed limb. At this point Heather had regained consciousness. “My body was in shock but I was aware of what was going on.”
“One day I was on a beach after I had been given my first prosthetic leg. It was the most ugly, disgusting leg in the world and I cried.”

Although her severed foot was recovered from the scene of the accident, it was too badly damaged to be re-attached. For three days Heather was barely conscious as doctors battled to attend to her various injuries. Her sister Fiona, who was at her bedside, was told four times that Heather was going to die. As well as undergoing an operation to amputate more of her left leg to leave a “clean stump,” Heather had to have a metal plate fixed into her damaged pelvis. After three months in hospital, she was still beset by an infection in her leg which prevented the wound from healing properly. Faced with the prospect of losing more of her leg, Heather discharged herself and on the advice of a friend flew to Florida to the Hippocrates Institute. While staying at the institute, she was put on a diet of raw organic food which she credits with helping to heal her wound.

In 2006, Heather had to go through another operation to remove dropped muscle in the residual limb and to minimise the nerve pain. “You can feel like you have an itchy foot and like your leg is still there,” she says. The operation improved the base of her leg to which she attaches her prosthetic limb. As a legacy of the accident, she has to adhere to a rigid programme of daily exercise and treatment, including acupuncture and visits to a chiropractor. A fall from a horse in 2002 and the pressure on her pelvis after giving birth to her daughter Beatrice in 2003 raised the spectre of a further operation, but she managed to avoid this by practising Pilates exercises to keep her core muscles strong. Finding shoes for her various prosthetic legs is in itself “a very precise science.” She always has to buy shoes with the same height heel and have them adjusted by a cobbler to fit her prosthetic leg. “And of course I can’t have leather because I’m a vegan,” she laughs.

There were times when Heather’s accident depressed her. “One day I was on a beach after I had been given my first [prosthetic] leg. It was the most ugly, disgusting leg in the world and I cried.” In her autobiography, she also tells of a visit to the toilet while still recovering in hospital. As she got up, she forgot to hold on and fell to the floor. “As I pulled myself painfully up on the handrail, a mass of emotions was churning around inside me... I wouldn’t be able to dance or ski or play tennis or swim either. I wouldn’t even be able to wear short skirts... All at once the thought of losing all these things, even the trivial ones, seemed unbearable.”

As it turned out, Heather did manage to dance, ski, swim and play tennis again. Earlier this year, she even took part in the ITV television show, Dancing on Ice, where she had to learn to ice skate with her prosthetic limb. “It was a huge responsibility to show people, able-bodied or not, that everything was possible,” she says. “I wanted to test how far I could go.” Her residual limb, however, took a constant pummelling which led to shrinking of the tissue and a poor fit with her prosthetic leg. “There was one dance when I was in this 70’s white outfit and I tried to move and the leg came out of the socket – it was just my tights keeping it on,” she says, evidently enjoying the farce. “Matt, my dance partner, was saying, ‘Just move, just blimey move woman!’ And I was trying to land back onto it, to try and pop it back in.” Her plucky performance seemed to endear her to the audience and raise her own confidence in the public eye following her troubled divorce from Paul McCartney in 2008. “It is incredible how much joy I got out of it – the achievement of it,” she says, her Geordie lilt becoming more pronounced with the emotion in her voice. “I’m the mother of a little girl who I can now take ice-skating. I have been concerned about all the things I couldn’t do with her.”

In the years since the accident, Heather has led convoys to Croatia to recycle prosthetic limbs, campaigned to rid warzones of landmines and taken part in road safety awareness campaigns. While she was working on a television programme with the presenter Esther Rantzen, she campaigned to make police sirens more directional in sound so that pedestrians could tell where a police vehicle was coming from. “All new police cars get a new sound now,” she says, “but there are still old cars left with the old siren.” She also believes that the Green Cross Code (to make pedestrians more aware of road safety) should be made compulsory in schools, with at least five minutes a week given over to learning and testing it. “Education needs to be a lot more about real life and not just learning about subjects for careers,” she says. In developing countries, she would like to see more regulations to control speeding and drink-driving. “In India, there is the most crazy road safety. They drive like lunatics. They brake for a cow, but not a child.”

Heather also sees schools as playing an important role in recognising incidents of child abuse. She wishes her own school had been more intuitive about what was happening to her. “My teacher was always asking me, ‘Why are you falling asleep Heather? Why are you not listening?’” She believes children should feel safe at school and able to talk to teachers about what they might be experiencing at home. “We need to train teachers to understand why a child might be behaving in a certain way.”
At the time of her amputation in 1993, Heather told a television station that something good would come out of the accident. Today top of her list is “motivating people and changing them, and in turn them changing my life”. On her website www.heathermills.org, she runs a forum for amputees to share their thoughts and concerns. Part of her motivation to do Dancing on Ice was to inspire that community. She is also proud of her work recycling prosthetic limbs and her successful campaign to ban the import of dog and cat fur into the European Union. “[The amputation] gave me the determination and profile to get that attention for my charity work,” she says philosophically. “It was a high price to pay. But to have it and not make any difference, that is the saddest thing.”

“It was a huge responsibility to show people, able-bodied or not, that everything was possible. I wanted to test how far I could go.”

FACTS AND FIGURES

- Globally, 500 million to 1.5 billion children have been affected by violence. In 2004, over 31,000 children below the age of 15 years were killed through interpersonal violence.

- Children who experience violence and abuse in childhood are also more likely to suffer further violence in later life. They are also more likely to suffer problems with alcohol or drug misuse, obesity and even some types of cancers.

- In the UK, 7% of young adults have experienced serious physical abuse at the hands of their parents or carers during childhood.

- Some 200,000 children in England live in households where there is a known high risk of domestic violence and abuse. Thousands more witness domestic violence every year.

- In countries including Ukraine, Peru, Ethiopia and Bangladesh, pedestrians account for at least half of all road traffic fatalities.

- Pedestrians account for a fifth of road traffic fatalities in the UK. In 2008, 572 pedestrians were killed on British roads, a figure three times lower than that recorded in 1988.

- Over a quarter of pedestrians killed or seriously injured on British roads are children aged 15 and under. Children living in deprived communities are at greatest risk.

- The use of traffic calming measures in high-risk areas can reduce road traffic injuries. In London, serious and fatal road injuries were reduced by over 50% in areas subjected to traffic calming measures (e.g. speed bumps) and a 20 mile per hour speed limit.

- In the 12 months between April 2006 and March 2007 there were a total of 4,957 new amputees referred to prosthetic centres in the UK. Over 450 were due to trauma but most were the result of circulatory problems.

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BRIAN
MOORE
TACKLING FOUL PLAY
The English rugby player and commentator was sexually abused by a teacher at primary school. He believes his subsequent lack of self-esteem helped him to excel on the rugby pitch but had a negative impact on his personal life.

As a nine-year old Brian Moore showed sporting promise and a competitive edge, though few could have predicted he would become a renowned rugby player. Early photographs show a boy with a broad, cheeky grin, his hair combed over and brawny legs outlined in long socks. He is a youngster from another era, a time of apparent innocence when no one talked about child abuse. “In today’s environment the subject is more discussed,” says Brian from his home in Wimbledon. “It would have been easier to say something... My mother was remarkably candid and honest when she said, “I probably wouldn’t have believed you.”’ Brian’s abuser was a teacher at his Yorkshire primary school, a friend of his parents and a pillar of the community, who in all other respects was “pleasant and fun.” It wasn’t until Brian wrote his recent autobiography, published earlier this year, that he finally decided to tell his mother – and everyone else – about what had happened to him.

The trigger for Brian’s revelation was a trip to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre in London, which tracks and prosecutes online child abuse. He had been asked to visit as part of a fund-raising initiative. The cases he witnessed brought back his own experiences of being molested on overnight field trips and in classroom storerooms. “In retrospect, much of the pain, much of the shame, lies in the fact that at the time I couldn’t recognise what is obvious to an adult, and that at the time the experience was partially fun,” he explains in his new autobiography, Beware of the Dog. When the teacher forced him and other boys to reciprocate, he felt “numb.” Brian estimates that the same teacher abused at least 12 others, possibly up to 200 boys.

As an adult, Brian wrote a letter to his abuser, explaining what impact the abuse had had on his life. “How do you look my mother in the eye?” he asked. However, by the time he was ready to send the letter, the teacher had died.

The visit to the CEOP Centre marked an emotional watershed for Brian. “People reach a point where they are compelled to say something, so it was with me,” he says, sitting at his kitchen table. Outside
in the garden is the shed where he wrote *Beware of the Dog*, so titled because of his nickname “Pitbull” on the rugby field. For nearly a decade, before rugby union turned professional, he played for England and the British Lions as hooker. In 1993, he achieved the record of being England’s most capped hooker of all time. His playing style was aggressive and uncompromising – he says himself he was almost “pathological” on the pitch. At first, Brian wasn’t sure whether to include the child abuse in his book, which mainly deals with his role in various rugby tournaments. “It was not like the rest of the book, but so intrinsically involved in it, how it affected me,” he says falteringly. “It jars a bit, it is not an easy narrative and I very nearly didn’t include it... But I needed it to explain the extremity of reaction I had to things throughout my life.” Rugby provided a controlled environment for him to express his frustration and belligerence, although at the time he didn’t analyse what was driving those feelings.

Once he had written a draft account of the abuse, he let his mother Dorothy read it while he retreated to his office in the garden shed. He had already warned her that there were “difficult things” in the autobiography that he wanted her to see. “She was very upset – one of the difficulties is knowing that she’d be upset,” he says, his voice giving out. With one hand resting on the bridge of his nose, he shuts his eyes to stem the tears. “I don’t think many people are willing to inflict pain on someone you care about,” he adds after recovering his composure. “That is the vital point about resolving things,” he writes in his book. “If I, or anybody else, cannot learn to go beyond the purely rational and get to the bottom of the emotions that have been lying deep inside the unconscious, it is impossible to move on.”

The abuse also “led to a crippling fear of intimacy” because as a consequence of his experience he could not allow himself to become vulnerable in his relationships with other people. “The secret me, the bit I kept for myself, the bit that nobody could touch, was my defence mechanism against being harmed again.” This explains in part, he believes, the breakdown of his first two marriages. Older and wiser, he is now married to Belinda, the mother of his second daughter, Larissa. With the

That’s the conundrum victims are in. You carry this around with you and end up on your own, trying to save everyone else pain.”

Born in Birmingham to a single mother in 1962, Brian was adopted eight months later by his parents Ralph and Dorothy Moore. In 1995 Brian tracked down his biological mother Rina and realised that he had inherited some of his innate combativeness from her. (He has no wish to trace his Malaysian father who left Rina before he was born.) With the birth of his first daughter, Imogen, in 2001, Brian started to dwell on Rina’s decision to put him up for adoption and realised that he could not justify it emotionally, even though he could accept it on an intellectual basis. He believes the unresolved angst and rejection he associated with his adoption, coupled with the childhood abuse, may have led to his battles with low self-esteem. This has manifested itself in an alter-ego, or a malevolent internal voice who talks to him in his head, constantly critcising and undermining his achievements. Brian has named his alter-ego Gollum after the aberrant hobbit in J.R.R. Tolkien’s epic *Lord of the Rings*. At his surprise 40th birthday party, for example, before the child abuse became public knowledge, Brian recalls how Gollum started carping halfway through the night: “You’re having a good time, but they don’t know you like I do. If they knew, they wouldn’t be here.” Gollum also berated him for being a “sex pervert” because he had partly enjoyed his encounters with the teacher at school. “This is what fucks you up,” says Brian with some passion. “Why wasn’t I immediately revolted by it?” Counselors have explained that he was only a child and simply responded physically to the situation. As with his adoption, Brian can understand the argument, but he can’t seem to feel it. “That is the vital point about resolving things,” he writes in his book. “If I, or anybody else, cannot learn to go beyond the purely rational and get to the bottom of the emotions that have been lying deep inside the unconscious, it is impossible to move on.”

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assurance of a cherished child, the
two-year old climbs onto her father’s
knee while we are in the kitchen and
provides some relief from the painful
business of self-analysis. Later we move
into the living room so that she can have
her lunch. Would he have been a different
person, had he not experienced the
abuse? “I certainly wouldn’t be the
person I am – I’d be a nice, decent
person,” he says laughing, before closing
his eyes once more and sinking back into
the sofa. Would he have taken the same
paths in his life? He hesitates. “I don’t
know. Most of them. Some I wouldn’t
have done.” More personal things?
“Yeah,” he replies without going into detail.

Brian’s earliest memory of Gollum
(though he didn’t name him until later)
was during an under-fourteen cricket
competition. Brian’s school team lost in
the finals and he can remember hurling
his runners-up trophy over a wall, while
Who cares if you top-scored? You
couldn’t bowl the real batsman out, could
you?” Throughout his rugby career, Brian
has suffered from similar attacks of
self-doubt, and yet he believes that on
some level this has helped him to become
a better player. His experiences as a child
gave Gollum ample fodder, and in turn
Gollum’s criticisms appear to have shaped
his playing style and obsessive training
routines. “I don’t know whether had
these things not happened, whether I
would have done it anyway,” he says,
thinking out loud. “I’m combative
anyway... but yes it probably did help.”

Rugby as a “game of violent collisions”
has also provided an outlet for Brian’s
natural aggression. “I was allowed to do
things in rugby that would have been
assault off the field,” he says. “It’s a great
game because of that.” He believes that
sport in general can prevent people from
being violent in other areas of their life.
“That’s why the [last] government turned
to sport to support their anti-social
behaviour programmes,” he says.
Nevertheless, he recognises that rules are
needed to curb illegal practices such as
eye-gouging, ear-biting and dangerous
tackles.

A few days later, Brian happens to be a
guest on BBC Radio 5 discussing the
eye-gouging of a Gravesend rugby player
called Clarence Harding, who subse-
quently lost his sight in one eye. This
follows disciplinary action for several
incidents of eye-gouging, including a
suspension of 70 weeks for the French
player David Attoub last January. “What
happens when you feel the finger go in
your eye, you panic because there is
nothing you can do especially if you are a
hooker in a scrum because both your
arms are bound,” comments Brian.
Organisations such as the game’s
national governing body, the Rugby
Football Union, are now looking at
lifetime bans for eye-gouging, a develop-
ment he would support if the injury was
serious and incontrovertible.

Brian is also concerned about safety
issues arising from “the demise of the
scrum.” In particular, he criticises referees
for not ensuring that the ball is put in
straight during a scrum, thereby giving
either team the chance to win the ball. “If
you take away the opportunity to strike,
then you are just left with pushing and
pulling,” Brian explains, jumping up from
the sofa to demonstrate, his arms swing-
ing. As a result, he believes scrums have
become more dangerous and are at
greater risk of collapsing. “[The referees]
want the scrum over quicker so that there
is less time to collapse but the irony is
that the referees fucking created this
problem,” he says. In his autobiography,
Brian cites Daniel James, a young player
who was paralysed after he dislocated his
spine in a collapsed scrum. Daniel
sparked controversy in September 2008
when he chose to die by assisted suicide
in the Swiss clinic Dignitas. “Unless we
sort these things out, the courts might say
you’ve had sufficient notice that the risk
was there,” Brian warns.

Although players bear some responsi-

bility for not injuring each other illegally,
Brian believes that “the governing body
has more responsibility because they are
in charge and have the power to change
things.” Rugby, however, is a game for
hard men and he is more ambivalent
about general injuries, such as those
experienced by Jonny Wilkinson during
his stop-start career. “If you play less or
train less, you lessen the chance of injury,
but there comes a point when you’ve got
to play enough rugby,” he says. “There is
a risk and benefit equation.”

In his book, Brian compares his years at
the rugby club Harlequins to his life in
general: “gloriously flawed, with
moments of triumph, yet marked with
disappointment at missed opportunities
and mistakes made.” His flaws were
largely bound up in the abuse he suffered
as a child, and his tendency towards
perfectionism. Even memories that should
have been positive are sullied by
“constantly believing I was not good
enough.” His retirement from rugby in
the mid-90s posed more problems as he
struggled to adapt to normal life out of
the limelight. Having worked as a lawyer
during his time in rugby, he began to try
his hand at commentating for the BBC
and writing columns for newspapers such
as The Daily Telegraph. At the same time
he carried the burden of the abuse he had
suffered. “I’d had to keep it secret for so
long and I didn’t want to keep it secret
anymore. A huge part of me was saying
you must tell somebody.” Beware of the
Dog – which was in fact a second auto-
biography – became the vehicle to pull
together the different threads in his life.

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Some knowledge is with
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Brian is sensitive to some of the reactions
his revelation received in the press, with
at least one pundit accusing him of using
the abuse to publicise his book. He says
people in general tend to react with
prurient interest by wondering whether
he enjoyed it, or by going into denial.
“They say, ‘Go away, I can’t face it’ and
because of their discomfort you have to
be excluded.” Such reactions have made
him feel “tainted by association with the
awfulness of the crime”. For all these reasons, he thinks it is difficult to hold a sensible debate on child abuse. “You swing from silence to Rebekah Wade,” he says, referring to the tabloid editor who oversaw a controversial campaign to name and shame sex-offenders.

Despite his own experiences, Brian is critical of a vetting and barring scheme designed by the previous UK government to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. The scheme, which is currently under review, would require staff and volunteers in education and healthcare to register their details – including checks by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) – on a national database run by the Independent Safeguarding Authority. “They have got it completely the wrong way round,” Brian fumes, pointing out that many abusers do not have a criminal record. “Now if you get CRB clearance, you must be fine. You are divesting responsibility onto a piece of paper instead of being vigilant.” He also believes that the scheme would effectively ask workers to prove their innocence and could have far-reaching social consequences. “It creates a level of anger around the subject,” he says. “I am also a parent and I don’t want the relationship between me and children to be stigmatised.”

Instead, Brian feels the emphasis should be upon providing a safe environment for children to report abuse, using schools and “report” buttons on the internet. “You have to create an atmosphere whereby people feel it is possible [to report abuse],” he says, “not just with a number on a notice board, although that is better than nothing.” He believes the internet has an important role to play because so many children have access to a computer. “Anything that starts the process [of reporting] is welcome. The catalyst for catching people is reporting what happened.” During an appearance on the BBC Panorama programme in February, he was asked if he wished he had been brave enough to report his teacher at the time. It is an unfair question and he is visibly distressed by it, partly because such action might have saved others from experiencing the same abuse. “Yes I do,” he says, after an agonising pause. “If something had been in place in the manner I’m suggesting then maybe I would have been braver.”

Even now Brian still has to confront his feelings of inadequacy, but with his decision to publicise his abuse the balance has been subtly altered. “If you tell somebody, you might still feel lonely but not alone,” he says. “Some knowledge is with another person.” Although the abuse and the effects of his adoption remain powerful influences in his life, he says he has learnt not to define himself by his experiences. He is also striving to meet the challenges of being a good father and husband, now that his rugby career does not demand so much of his focus. At the same time, his campaigning in the world of rugby and his charity work are satisfying. “All these are more than enough for a normal man, which, in the end, is all that I am.” As we conclude the interview, his relief is palpable. His mood lightens and he is at ease once more.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- In high-income countries, between 4% and 16% of children are physically abused every year and one in 10 is neglected or psychologically abused. During childhood, between one in 10 and one in 20 girls and up to one in 20 boys are exposed to penetrative sexual abuse. Up to three times this number are exposed to any type of sexual abuse.

- Internationally, an estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked each year. The global profits of trafficking in human beings are around $31.6 billion annually. Trafficking people is one of the leading sources of profits for international organised crime along with trafficking in drugs and arms.

- A major study of 18-24 year olds in the UK found that around one in 12 reported sexual contact against their will in childhood with an adult who they knew but to whom they were not related.

- In the year between April 2009 and March 2010, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre in the UK dismantled 96 high-risk sex offender networks, facilitated 417 arrests and safeguarded 278 children. During the previous year, UK ChildLine’s counsellors answered almost 700,000 calls from children in need of support.

- In 1995, when Brian Moore was still playing international rugby, estimates for the UK suggested that 29 million new or recurrent injuries resulted each year from participation in organised sport or physical activity. Ten million of these were severe enough to result in individuals being unable to work or continue their usual activities for a period of time. Even at 1991 prices, the cost to the NHS of treating these injuries was estimated at £590 million pounds per year.

- During the 2007 Rugby World Cup, players sustained 161 injuries over 48 games, an average of 1.7 injuries per team for each game played.
“I was allowed to do things in rugby that would have been assault off the field.”
Ever since a close friend was beaten by her partner, the British actress has campaigned to end male violence against women. She is an ambassador for the domestic violence charity White Ribbon and also stars as an ambitious detective in the UK television drama *Midsomer Murders*.

“I would like to think I could spot a perpetrator a mile off,” declares Kirsty Dillon with a touch of weariness in her tone. By “perpetrator” she means a man capable of inflicting violence on his partner or wife. “These men start as the most charming men in the world – they are your knight on a white horse,” she explains. “They sweep you off your feet. The violence never starts on the first date.” About 10 years ago, one of Kirsty’s closest friends was abused by her partner. The beatings began three months into a relationship that would last two years. Unlike many in the same situation, her friend didn’t feel trapped. “She loved him and was trying to help him.” By the end, however, the violence became “catastrophic.” As Kirsty recounts the culmination of everything her friend endured, her voice turns brisk, consciously devoid of emotion. “She was kicked and bruised but the physical injuries were not as severe as the mental injuries. It took a lot of counselling for her now to be in a loving relationship.”

Deeply affected by her friend’s experiences, Kirsty had the idea of using her acting talent to help rehabilitate other women who had suffered from domestic violence. “They all have low self-esteem and I know as an actor that there are fantastic tools for raising assertiveness,” she says. While she spends her spare time teaching yoga and assertiveness at a centre for abused women in Portsmouth, her career is progressing with an expanded part in the television series *Midsomer Murders*. She plays Detective Constable Gail Stephens opposite heavyweight John Nettles, injecting some glamour into the cozy world of old-school policing. “It’s a real stepping stone for my career,” she says of the programme that attracts almost six million viewers. Her other credits have included parts in the television dramas *Casualty*, *The Bill* and *Holby City*, as well as some film and stage work. She is a versatile actress, portraying her various roles with subtle intensity.

The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) centre, where Kirsty volunteers, is managed by her sister Shonagh who also runs the Portsmouth Early Intervention Project. The centre is a one-stop shop offering medical, legal and practical support for victims of rape and sexual assault (or “survivors” as Kirsty prefers to call them). “Some of the women don’t feel they have a right to speak, or they talk very quietly with no eye contact or confidence,” she says. “Others, when they do say something, spit it out quickly.” Many are also fearful of confrontation and in new relationships tend to avoid a row at all costs. “She thinks, ‘If I confront my partner’ – which is normal in a healthy relationship – ‘I’ll come out with a black eye.’”

Using her acting training, Kirsty teaches the women how to speak slowly and gives them exercises to improve their body language and sense of status. “It is about allowing them to find their own voice which is centred and calm.” Nevertheless, Kirsty finds the responsibility of looking after the women difficult, particularly as the exercises stir up bad memories. “At times everyone in the room is fractious and tense. I suffer from anxiety myself and it can be emotionally stressful. But it does lead to a sense of strength and empowerment afterwards when the women get to trust one another.” One survivor told her, “I’m beginning to remember how loud my voice is.”

“At times everyone in the room is fractious and tense. I suffer from anxiety myself and it can be emotionally stressful.”
“The woman came over to me and said, ‘He’s going to hit you. If you take him back, I guarantee you will be that pane of glass.’”

These types of centres are vital, Kirsty believes, for reducing the impact of violence on the lives of the survivors and their children. Currently there are 30 such centres in England and Wales, and she is concerned that they could lose funding following any change in government policy. Her work as an ambassador for White Ribbon involves fund-raising and running local awareness campaigns around the 25 November, the United Nations-backed day for the elimination of violence against women.

Kirsty is well-placed to understand what her survivors are re-experiencing in the classroom. Her friend lived every day with the fear of provoking her partner. “He could give her a look in the pub which no one else could see, but she would be there thinking: ‘I’ve done something and I don’t know what it is. He’s going to beat me when we get home.’” Kirsty also explains how perpetrators are prone to moving the goal posts to catch their partners off-guard. Her friend’s boyfriend liked to have his food presented in a certain way. Then one night quite randomly he would accuse her: “Why the fuck have you done that? I don’t like it like that!” He would also indulge in animalistic behaviour, urinating over his partner’s favourite dress to repay her for an imagined slight. Throughout the relationship, Kirsty was aware of what her friend was suffering but felt powerless to protect her. “It was unbelievably difficult,” she recalls. “I didn’t know how I could protect her and I didn’t know who would protect me.” She says she also felt “terrified, physically so frightened” of the man who beat up her friend. “In those days – 10 years ago – it would take an hour for the police to turn up, although it is better now.”

While Kirsty was training at drama school, she had a lucky escape of her own. Seven months into a new relationship, she decided her boyfriend had become too possessive and tried to break up with him. “He wouldn’t accept it and came round to my flat screaming and shouting with a crazed look in his eye.” She managed to push him out of the flat and slammed the door behind him, but then she heard screaming in the corridor outside. In his rage, her ex-boyfriend had punched a Victorian sash window. Kirsty opened the door to find him standing with a pane of glass embedded in his arm and “blood squirting 10 feet in the air.” She called for an ambulance and two paramedics arrived to deal with the injury. “The man dealt with my boyfriend, but the woman came over to me and said, ‘He’s going to hit you. If you take him back, I guarantee you will be that pane of glass.’”

As a result of her experiences Kirsty has little sympathy for the perpetrators of such violence. “I’m not into helping them – it takes money away from the survivors. I don’t think there is a way to understand it... When you get past adolescence, you realise violence is not the answer.” She argues that many of the perpetrators are able to exercise restraint in a work setting – “you don’t hit someone at work if you lose your job” – and should therefore show a similar level of self-control at home. Despite this, she does believe that the residual effects of a patriarchal society – which historically allowed men to treat their wives as they deemed fit – are also to blame. “It’s [also] a socialised thing – men are socialised not to communicate,” she adds. “Women are allowed to show emotion, but men are encouraged not to. They don’t have a very large emotional vocabulary so they have no tools to express themselves. The build-up from a lack of communication creates pressure.”

In terms of prevention, Kirsty is very supportive of targeting children early and teaching them through education and the media to show respect for the opposite sex. “Three or four children in the classroom may have witnessed violence at home and [school-based programmes] can normalise it for them and open up ways of discussing it with the teacher.” She says it is important to use high-profile sportsmen, such as the former English goal-keeper David James, to endorse the message that “real men don’t hit.” Role-play and drama can also teach them to challenge their usual responses to a situation. As an example, she cites a song lyric “slap that bitch up” which boys are liable to laugh at in a group situation. “We need them to realise that could be their mum, or their sister, or the girl they walk to school with in the mornings,” she says.

“It’s about reclaiming yourself. Finding out who you can be without a man. This is why I use the word ‘survivor’ and not ‘victim’.”
As well as educating the young, Kirsty wants longer sentences for perpetrators. With a quiet sense of outrage, she tells of how one of the women she works with at the SARC centre suffered “horrific violence” and then watched her former partner walk free with a suspended sentence. “He threatened to cut off her fingers and toes with a pair of scissors.” The survivor has since started a petition for longer sentences which was later picked up by her local Member of Parliament and handed in to Downing Street.

The determination of this young woman to fight her corner is an example of how some survivors can emerge from the shadow of violence. Kirsty’s close friend is now herself a supporter of the White Ribbon campaign. “It’s about reclaiming yourself,” says Kirsty. “Finding out who you can be without a man. This is why I use the word ‘survivor’ and not ‘victim’.” She often finds herself objecting to the way writers portray battered women in the media. “They make it look like a mistake when the woman wants to go back to her partner – we need to change the perception of these women as victims.” To date in her acting career, Kirsty has not played a survivor of domestic violence. “But I would love to,” she says with enthusiasm, “because I feel I am an expert and I am so passionate about this.”

FACTS AND FIGURES

- A multinational study by the World Health Organization suggested that between 3% and 29% of women were current victims of physical partner violence (e.g. beatings) and between 1% and 44% were current victims of sexual violence (e.g. rape).¹

- In England and Wales, over a quarter of women who have suffered some type of domestic violence (partner abuse, sexual abuse or family abuse) have suffered more than one type and 6% have experienced all three types.²

- The British Crime Survey suggests that over 400,000 women and more than 50,000 men experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempted assaults) in the last year. The same survey indicates that around one in 20 women and less than one in 100 men have suffered a serious sexual assault since the age of 16.³

- Four in 10 victims of serious sexual assault tell no-one about the experience. Only one in 10 report the assault to the police.²

- Nine out of 10 incidents of serious sexual assault are committed by someone known to the victim.²

- By the beginning of 2010, there were 30 Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) in England and Wales providing immediate medical care, forensic and after care services for victims of serious sexual assault.⁴

- One in 10 men and one in five women have been victims of stalking since the age of 16.⁵

- Estimates suggest between 100 million and 140 million girls and women worldwide are currently living with the consequences of female genital mutilation.⁵
SIMON WESTON

STAYING IN CONTROL
A British veteran of the Falklands War, he suffered severe burns when his ship *Sir Galahad* was bombed in June 1982. After years of reconstructive surgery, he battled with depression and low self-esteem. His recovery and determination to help others has earned him public respect.

Simon Weston was a “swaggering young lad” of 20 the day he sailed to the Falkland Islands on *Sir Galahad*, part of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. He and his platoon of Welsh Guardsmen were headed to Bluff Cove in the South Atlantic to defend British sovereignty of the islands. On the morning of 8 June, the ship dropped anchor near Fitzroy to slowly unload her cargo of troops, equipment and ammunition. The men on board dozed and played cards below deck until the order came for them to disembark. It was early afternoon when four Argentine planes were sighted streaking across the bay. An air-raid warning echoed around the ship but Simon was at a loss as to how to react. The Guardsmen had not been trained in air-raid drills and had little knowledge of emergency muster points. Unlike their colleagues in the Navy, they also lacked anti-flash gear – flame-resistant suits.

Within seconds, a bomb from one of the enemy planes burst through the port side of the ship. “I heard jet engines screaming from above,” recalls Simon in his autobiography, “then there was a brilliant flash from the engine-room and the beginning of my personal Hiroshima.”

Almost a week later, the war was over.

Simon’s account of the fire in his book *Walking Tall* reads like a vision of hell. Set against the brilliant beauty of the flames, he watched his friends and comrades burn to death. Only eight men of the original 30-person platoon survived. Simon sustained 46% burns to his face and body. “There are catalyst moments where everything springs from that moment,” he says. “The Falklands was my moment.” Sitting at his home in Cardiff, nearly 30 years later, he is relaxed and candid, seemingly light-years away from the horrors of war. And yet, he has suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for 23 years, only shedding the panic attacks, nightmares and broken sleep three or four years ago.

“I would wake up completely bathed in sweat – you’re on fire, desperate to get out. There is no escape, no door. And the noise...” he trails off for a moment. “I can only remember the noise and the smell in my dreams.” He says that on other occasions he used to re-live the moments before the bomb hit, desperately planning how he could save people and alter the course of history. It was a form of injury prevention on a subconscious level.

Simon’s slow and difficult recovery was well-publicised in a series of BBC documentaries at the time. Treatment of his injuries involved 11 months in hospital, 85 surgical procedures, skin grafts, physiotherapy and 700 units of blood. Living skin was harvested from his shoulders and buttocks to be grafted onto his eye-lids, face and hands. The biggest challenge, however, was “learning to be a human being again.” Throughout five years of treatment, he never received any psychiatric support, other than therapeutic effects of being nursed. “Just because your leg is fixed, it doesn’t mean your mind is,” he says. “There are therapies now that could have helped me then.”

Although he feels there is greater understanding of these types of injuries now, he believes more needs to be done to unite the different types of psychological support for the treatment of burns trauma and PTSD. “We need a process for treating people’s minds.”

“I had to discover who I was and if I could survive in this world. Would I ever meet a girl I could go out with when my appearance had changed so badly?”
Imagine being 21 and waking up the next day to find you’re 65? Would you be happy with it?”

As Simon’s physical injuries began to heal in 1983, he descended into “general malaise and despair.” At the same time, his relationship with his fiancée unraveled. “I had no idea where my life was going. I had no structure. I lost the army, my girl, my sport, my looks, the person I was.” Despite the unstinting devotion of his mother and family, he felt suffocated by kindness. He suffered violent mood swings, flashbacks and an inability to sleep. “Once I was released from hospital, I began drinking huge amount. It is a world of embarrassment for me to look back now.” At his lowest point, he considered taking his own life with a crossbow. As he pulled the twine back on the bow, it rebounded and almost sliced off his fingertips. In his third book Moving On, he recalls: “Jesus, I thought. What pain. If it hurt my fingers like that, what the hell will it feel like if I don’t manage to do the job properly?” The experience served as a wake-up call. His mother contacted the Welsh Guards, who invited Simon to Germany to watch the regiment play rugby. Three weeks of no mollusc-dulling was “the best therapy I could ever have had.”

Simon then decided to travel on his own to Australia and New Zealand. “I had to take charge after the drinking and being a danger to myself. I had to discover who I was and if I could survive in this world. Would I ever meet a girl I could go out with when my appearance had changed so badly? Could I get on with life and blend in?” The answer was to reassert control over his life. He learnt to fly and to race cars, and found inspiration in the strength and self-confidence of the people around him. He also learnt he could contribute to others through charitable work, setting up his own youth charity Weston Spirit in 1988. (The charity closed down in 2008 following financial difficulties.) Through Weston Spirit he met his wife Lucy, with whom he has three children. In 1992, he was awarded an OBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours for his charitable work. The mental journey from despair to rehabilitation was, however, travelled “quite jerkily.” He says there were “no Eureka moments” and plenty of “bricks in the road.”

Dealing with his disfigurement was another challenge. “Imagine being 21 and waking up the next day to find you’re 65? Would you be happy with it?” Although he says he doesn’t mind people looking at him anymore, he is hurt when they continue to stare. “I have to say something when they are rude. A very small minority has no concern for other people’s feelings at all.” When asked how he managed to overcome the stigma of disfigurement, he says, “Learning to like yourself – not in an arrogant way – but you’ve got to like who you are.” He adds: “If you don’t accept the stigma, then it doesn’t matter. I have control over all these things.” Simon is in his element now, eager to expound a philosophy wrought from suffering and “a lot of time to think.” Dressed in a red t-shirt and jeans – a “bit of me” brought over from his previous identity – he leans forward to emphasize his next point. “You retain the core of what is you, but in a magical way there is an opportunity to be a new you. You have no choice – you’ve got to accept you are something different for the rest of your life.” As his words run on, it is easy to see how in later years he has forged a successful career as a motivational speaker.

The theme of control runs through his ideas for preventing burns injuries both in domestic and civil settings. “It’s all about understanding the dangers... you have to minimise the potential for accidents – don’t leave it to chance – use smoke detectors and never leave matches around with a child.” Simon personally spends time educating the public about the dangers of fire, and has worked with the UK Fire Service, schools, power stations and The Birmingham Children’s Hospital. “If my experience could stop someone else being injured, then so be it. We as disfigured people have a large role to play in the success of this.” More specifically, he believes better training is needed for the evacuation of buildings in the event of a fire. As an example, he talks about hospitals: “A huge amount of nurses wouldn’t know how to exit a building with their patients.” The people who own the building should set money aside to invest in evacuation training, he argues. All apartment and high-rise buildings should be furnished with secure links on every floor enabling ladders to be hooked up in case of an emergency exit, while communities should organise for communal ladders to be stored in the buildings. Similarly, in schools, he thinks sixth-formers should be trained in first-aid and evacuation drills to support the teaching staff. “They need to be given greater responsibility – they are old enough to fight a war. We need to give people back responsibility for their own lives.”

At this juncture, he happens to glance up at two statuettes on his mantelpiece – Laurel and Hardy. “You wouldn’t think I would be a fan of those two, would you, with all this talk of responsibility?” he laughs. The slapstick nature of their comedy appeals to his humour, however, and he also likes the fact that “they live in a world of right and wrong.” It is Simon’s strong sense of military code that enabled him to forgive and develop a friendship with the Argentine pilot who bombed Sir Galahad in 1982. “He was doing a professional job and there was a certain degree of honour in that.” More importantly, Simon seems to have overcome the dreadful suffering of his past with his humour and humanity intact. He says our experiences of “yesterday” should teach a lesson without becoming a burden. “I’m indelibly stamped with the Falklands – I see it every day in the morning when I clean my teeth. But it is part of my history, not my today.”
FACTS AND FIGURES

☐ Between 2004 and 2007, armed conflicts directly caused an average of 52,000 violent deaths per year. Four times this number (over 200,000 people per year) are thought to have died indirectly from war and conflict through disruption to basic services and essential resources.\(^1\)

☐ Around 90% of those killed in World War I were soldiers. Today, 75% or more of those killed in war are thought to be civilians.\(^2\)

☐ In 2009, compared to the UK general population, a member of the UK Armed Forces was at just over twice the risk of death as a result of injury and poisoning. That year, 205 deaths occurred among the UK regular Armed Forces. Half of these deaths occurred in hostile action, nearly one in five were through road traffic injuries or other accidents and one in 25 were through suicide.\(^3\)

☐ Between 2007 and 2009, approximately 1,000 UK casualties were admitted into military field hospitals in Afghanistan each year. Approximately one third resulted from individuals being wounded in action.\(^4\)

☐ Fire-related injuries kill over 300,000 people globally each year with over 95% of fire-related deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries.\(^5\)

☐ Between 1995 and 2004, fire-related injuries killed almost 5,000 people in England and affected over 90,000 more.\(^6\) Cooking appliances cause more than half of all accidental fires in UK homes.\(^7\)

☐ Deaths from fires in the UK continue to fall each year. Fire and rescue services in the UK attended over 384,000 fires in 2007, and a further 419,000 false alarms. In the same year, six UK firefighters died in the line of duty and a further 268 were injured.\(^7\)

☐ In Scotland, over 60% of fire deaths are associated with alcohol.\(^8\)

☐ Around 80% of households in England and Wales have a working smoke alarm installed.\(^6\) Studies in the USA suggest that for every $1 spent on smoke detectors, $28 can be saved in health-related expenditure.\(^9\)
References

INTRODUCTION

FACTS AND FIGURES

DAVID BADDIEL

CHERIE BLAIR & SANDRA HORLEY

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“The safety of the people shall be the highest law.”

Marcus Tullius Cicero 1st Century BC