



Survivors: Charlotte Stovell and (right) Janine White

In an image-obsessed world, these women carry stark reminders of their deepest traumas. But their haunting stories reveal why they're...

Proud to bare their scars



MOST of us will suffer tragedy or illness at some point in our lives. But once the pain has gone, there are usually no visible reminders of the agony. Other women aren't so lucky and are reminded daily of their most traumatic moments by the presence of a scar. Here, five brave women tell ANTONIA HOYLE their inspirational stories.

CHARLOTTE STOVELL, 24, is a post-graduate student from London. She has 27 third-degree burns on her right leg, the inside of her left leg and her right elbow after a boating accident in August 1996.

MY FAMILY had planned to spend the day at sea in our cabin cruiser near our holiday home in Chichester, West Sussex. Our boat was moored in the marina and we were filling up with fuel.

My older brother, William, 11 at the time,

was paying for the petrol. Aged nine, I was standing at the back of the boat. My parents and younger brother George, 18 months, were also on board.

When Dad turned the key in the ignition, the boat blew up. I was thrown on to the dockside by the force of the explosion.

Blisters formed all over my legs and I shivered from shock as people ran to the waterfront to fill plastic bags with water to cool my burns. The fire had blocked the

cabin door. Dad saved George's life by throwing him out of the window and my mother, four months pregnant at the time, squeezed through.

But Dad was stuck and the boat was drifting away as William jumped back on to it and opened the hatch at the front to set him free.

They jumped off together before the whole

TURN TO NEXT PAGE



IN 1968, Nan Kempner walked into a Manhattan restaurant wearing her Yves Saint Laurent suit, only to be told by the maitre d' she couldn't dine in trousers. The New York socialite promptly dropped said trousers and took her table wearing only her Le Smoking as an ultra-short mini dress.

Yves Saint Laurent's most enduring creation, a man's dinner jacket re-cut for a woman's body (left), was introduced in 1966. It was teamed with a ruffled white shirt,

Style classics: The smoking jacket

black bow at the neck and satin cummerbund. To a fashion world in thrall to Fifties feminine frocks, Le Smoking's clean, masculine lines were revolutionary. The couture mavens didn't instantly take to the design — it was only a month later, when Saint Laurent

released a version on his Rive Gauche ready-to-wear line, that they started selling.

The designer continued to reinvent the jacket until 1992. Bianca Jagger married Mick in St Tropez in a white version; Catherine Deneuve wore hers with nothing underneath. For style icons Kate Moss and Alexa Chung (right), the jacket is worn with everything from skinny jeans to slinky maxi-skirts. Saint Laurent explained its appeal best: 'Fashions come and go, but style is for ever.'



MORE MONEY THAN SENSE?

The £750 Burberry umbrella

LAST spotted being used as an aviation device by Mary Poppins, the duck's head umbrella is hardly chic.

Burberry, though, thinks otherwise, and has just released this natty item. The mallard's head is resplendent in painted wood, other than that it's a bog-standard black broly (indeed, it's made from 100 per cent polyester).

And the price? A snip at £750. Best left as one just for the fashion crowd, dah-ling.



FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

thing went up in a massive fireball. Dad — who had superficial burns on his face and arms — and I were rushed to Chichester Hospital in an ambulance. I cried while the nylon shorts which had melted on to my legs had to be cut free.

I was transferred to Roehampton burns unit at Queen Mary's Hospital in London and given emergency skin grafts overnight.

I stayed in hospital for two months, and I remember screaming so much when I had to have my bandages changed that doctors put me under general anaesthetic. My nerve endings had been destroyed and, as the new skin healed, it tightened, which made walking painful. When I finally did a lap of the ward all the nurses cheered.

Back home in Horsham, West Sussex, I had to wear pressure bandages for 12 months to help the healing process. The skin grafts created a criss-cross effect on my leg, but I don't remember thinking too much about how it looked. The explosion had made the national Press and my classmates were simply pleased and relieved that I was back at school.

For the next five years, to reduce the size of the scars I had annual operations in which sections of skin were removed. My father David, now 56, a carpenter, and mother Tracey, 52, were brilliant at reassuring me, so I never felt different. Sometimes

people stare and, yes, at times that makes me uncomfortable, but I try not to let it bother me.

When I was 21 I became an ambassador for the charity Raft — the Restoration of Appearance and Function Trust. It is launching a skin graft project that will enable future burns victims' skin to heal better.

My family has always been close, but what happened has made us appreciate each other more. Thankfully, Mum's pregnancy progressed smoothly and my brother Joseph is now 14.

We never found out why the boat exploded, but I won't let it stop me living my life. If anything, my scars and the accident have made me more driven and determined to do anything I put my mind to.

JANINE WHITE, 29, is a psychology student from Blackburn, Lancashire. She has two 11in scars down her right thigh from six operations after a fall in 2002.

WHEN I slipped on a wet pub floor during a night out with friends aged 19, I hadn't even been drinking. Doctors at Blackburn Hospital told me I'd broken my right hip; they were shocked at the damage, saying my X-rays suggested a collision akin to a car crash.

I had my hip screwed back together and was in hospital for two weeks. I thought that would be that, but, humiliatingly, I had to move into my grandmother's bungalow as I couldn't even manage the stairs at my parents' house.

Losing my mobility at such a young age came as a terrible shock. I consoled myself that I would soon be better, but the pain worsened and I then discovered that the screw had stopped my blood flow and my hip bone was crumbling.

As a result, my right leg got shorter. So, to prevent that getting worse, I eventually had a second operation to remove the screw in my hip. At only 20, I developed arthritis, which I still have. I was reliant on crutches and hated the fact I could never wear high heels.

Finding a boyfriend was difficult. Men weren't as bothered by my scar as I was, but they ran away when they realised how limited my lifestyle was.

It hurt, but I consoled myself by telling myself that if they weren't tolerant, I didn't want to be with them anyway.

I suffered flashbacks and grew frightened of leaving the house. In 2004, I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

I moved in with my mum, Josephine, 50, who became my carer and, later that year, had a third operation to stimulate my blood flow and strengthen my bones.

TO ENCOURAGE my hip to move, in 2005 I had two more operations to cut the tendons in my groin. After each operation, I was in a wheelchair for six months. By the beginning of 2006, at just 23, I was unable to walk at all.

A hip replacement operation that October got me back on my feet, but I still need a stick to get around. I'm reliant on painkillers and a night out dancing will leave my leg so swollen it takes three days to recover.

Sometimes I feel jealous of my friends, but the only person my anger affects is me, and I've learned to live with the hand I've been dealt by life.

With each surgery, there has been a build-up of scar tissue, which makes my leg look lumpy — as though I have a saddlebag. Sometimes when I'm on holiday in a bikini people stare, but I ignore them.

I'm just glad I'm able to walk at all. I have had boyfriends, but meeting a life partner isn't high on my priorities.

Next year, I graduate from Blackburn University and hope to become a psychologist. I have my scars as a reminder that, no matter what life throws at me, I have the strength to get through it.

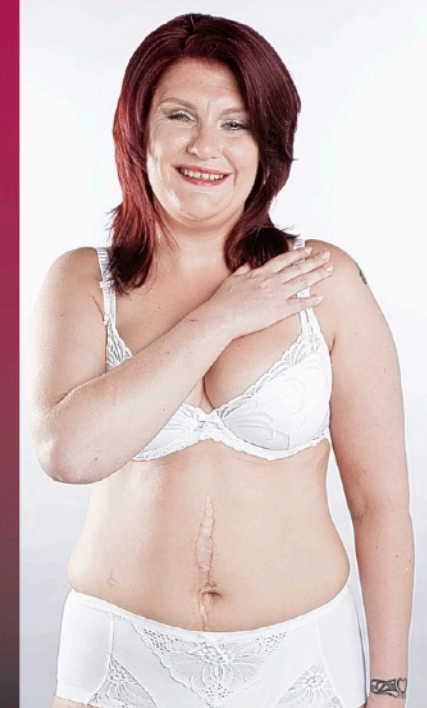
LYDIA LAWRENCE, 25, is a recruitment consultant from London. She lives with her partner and their two-week-old son, Zachariah. She has a 16in scar on her stomach after being stabbed in August 2008.

I NEVER believed I was the type who'd end up being stabbed. I was walking down the street on my lunch break with my friend Jeremiah Adeanju in Hammersmith, West London, when a woman appeared and plunged a 7in steak knife into my stomach.

I knew her — she was Sarah Harper, a former girlfriend of Jeremiah's. Passers-by tried to stop the blood



Jessica Whitfield: 'I don't hide away'



Alison Mooney: 'I'm so grateful'

while I lay on the pavement shocked and in agony. As I was rushed to Charing Cross Hospital, I was terrified I might die.

I was in a coma for several hours before I had life-saving surgery to remove part of my pierced liver and to sew up my kidney. When I saw the scar and the 40 staples holding my skin together, I was horrified. My self-esteem was shattered.

After a week, I was discharged, still in shock. By then, Sarah had turned herself in to the police.

In February 2009, she was convicted and sentenced to nine years for wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm and a further 3½ years for carrying a weapon.

She was insecure, deluded and jealous of my friendship with Jeremiah, even though we weren't an item.

I went to court as a witness full of anger and disbelief. There is a stigma attached to knife crime. People assume I must be some sort of low-life person, but I have a good job and loving family and friends. I don't know anyone who'd dream of carrying a knife.

For months I felt on edge, and every time I looked at the scar it reminded me of what had happened. My confidence disappeared. I had counselling for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Luckily, before the attack, I'd just met my partner. He was an incredible support and treated me and my body exactly the same as he'd done before.

This May, I wore a bikini for the first time in Portugal, which was a real turning point.

I was worried I couldn't have a baby

Taking care of your **energy bills**

Energy prices frozen*

Brrrrrrilliant news from Age UK Energy!



- ✓ E.ON have frozen home energy prices in 2012
- ✓ Now, you can fix your gas and electricity prices for the next two winters with the Age UK Fixed Price April 2014 tariff
- ✓ No cancellation fee or tie-in charges

Don't miss out
0800 810 0988

Lines are open Mon – Fri 8am – 8pm, Sat 8am – 4pm

Pop into your local Age UK[^]

Or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/energy



The new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged

*Home energy prices won't increase in 2012 apart from customers on a fixed term deal that ends this year, or those that are using more energy than last year, who may see an increase. Prices are fixed subject to regulatory or VAT changes. Prices are fixed at 1% above our standard Age UK Energy rates as at 27/02/2012 until 01/04/2014. Available to customers with standard and Economy 7 meters only. Excludes prepayment, Heatwise and restricted hour tariff meters. If you leave E.ON before 01/04/2014 you will not receive discounts on your final bill. Age UK Fixed Price April 2014 tariff is brought to you by leading energy provider, E.ON Energy Solutions Limited; registered in England & Wales No: 3407430. Age UK Energy is a trading name of Age UK Enterprises Limited, which is a commercial services arm of Age UK (registered charity number 1128267) and donates its profits to that charity. Age UK is a registered trademark. The use of the name and logo "Age UK" is done so under licence agreement between Age UK and Age UK Enterprises Ltd (Registered in England & Wales No 3156159). [^]Not all Age UK offices offer all Age UK products – please call your local Age UK before visiting.



SAVVY SAVINGS Make your home. Simply pick fresh elder over boiling water and leave to wine vinegar to every two parts



Pictures: JULIETTE NEEL/PAUL JONES

Lydia Lawrence: 'Pregnancy helped me come to terms with my body'

whom I met through friends at 18, was no different.

He said I was beautiful and got more annoyed than me when people pointed and whispered.

Alex was born in March 2005. We married that October at St Thomas of Canterbury church in Basingstoke and Ben arrived in March 2007.

Becoming a mother has changed everything. I can't hide away as I might once have done, because it would affect them, which wouldn't be fair. The boys know I have a poorly face. One day I'll explain properly, but they never ask questions. To them I'm just Mummy.

Two years ago I started a new procedure called sclerotherapy, in which a serum is injected into the veins to shrink them.

I've had six injections and the birthmark is much less visible. This summer, I went scuba-diving for the first time because the mask and snorkel now fit my face.

I'm more confident, but still have bad days. Judgmental people make me angry. Two months ago, a woman asked me if I'd been in a car crash. I said 'No, actually' and walked off. I don't think I'm ugly and that's thanks to having a lovely family and friends who accept me for who I am.

ALISON MOONEY, 30, lives with husband Rob, 34, a metal worker, in Liverpool. She has an 11in scar on her stomach following a kidney and pancreas transplant in 2010.

I WAS diagnosed with diabetes as a toddler and by the time I was 12, I was injecting insulin four times a day. At 19, I developed diabetic gastroparesis—a disease that stopped my stomach muscles working and made me vomit up to 30 times a day.

It was 1999 and I had just moved in with Rob, my childhood sweetheart. Our happiness was marred by endless hospital visits. Then, at 20, my vision started to deteriorate. Three years later, blood tests revealed I had kidney and pancreatic failure.

ALTHOUGH I was put on the waiting list for a transplant, I endured dialysis for four hours, three times a week for 2½ years at the Royal Liverpool Hospital. Luckily, Rob was an enormous support and we married in May 2008.

In July 2010, I got the call to say a kidney donor had been found. It made sense to give me a pancreas transplant at the same time. The organs came from the same donor. It was an incredibly high-risk eight-hour operation.

I cried as I held Rob's hand before being wheeled into the theatre, realising I might never see him again. When I came round and a nurse told me the operation had gone well and my blood sugar level was normal for the first time, I cried tears of joy.

I had 47 staples in my stomach and for weeks all I could wear were pyjamas and sundresses that were soft against my skin. Sleeping on my stomach or side was impossible.

Rob said I was still beautiful, but I worried about him seeing my body and felt dreadfully self-conscious.

The first time we made love after the operation, was a huge deal to me and I worried what Rob would think. But he said my scar was beautiful and reminded me that without them I'd be dead.

I was delighted that there were no more injections or dialysis.

This May, I went to Spain on holiday and wore a bikini. I was nervous at first, but it was fantastically liberating. I was prepared for people to comment, but no one did.

I realised that, far from being an embarrassment, I loved my scar. I'm incredibly grateful for it, especially as it means I can have children—something that never could have happened were I still on dialysis.

I was stabbed with a seven-inch steak knife. My scar reminds me I'm lucky to be alive

— I had an irrational fear that pregnancy would exacerbate my wounds and split my stomach open. But becoming pregnant ten months ago helped me come to terms with my body.

I'm no longer in touch with Jeremiah and feel only pity towards Sarah. She's thrown away her life while I'm enjoying mine. As for my scar—it reminds me how lucky I am to still be alive.

JESSICA WHITFIELD, 28, is a carer from Basingstoke, Hampshire. She has two sons, Alex, seven, and Ben, five, with husband Darren, 31, a car restorer. She has scars on her face from 17 operations to correct a birthmark.

I WAS born with a benign tumour called hemangioma. At first, it was only a small mark above my lip on the right side of my face, but soon it became the size of a tennis ball.

At 18 months old, I had my first operation at Great Ormond Street Hospital, but it continued to grow.

By the age of seven I knew I was different when other children kept asking what it was. They would call me 'bubble-lip' or 'fish-face'.

I was hurt and confused and often

came home in tears. Thankfully, my parents taught me that people who teased me were ignorant and said I should feel sorry for them.

Throughout my childhood and teens, I had an operation at least every other year to reduce the blue tone and the bulk of the tumour.

Most have been invasive, but I've also had laser treatments to seal off the blood vessels and steroid injections to try to shrink them.

I've cried with pain after every operation.

Being on my lip, the tumour made eating and talking difficult. I was off school for months at a time and didn't finish my GCSEs until I was 18. By then my tumour was smaller, but just as visible.

As a teenager I became terribly self-conscious when people would stare and snigger in the street, elbowing each other and gawping. I grew wary of meeting new people and made a habit of explaining my birthmark as soon as I met anyone.

Thankfully, some boys saw beyond the birthmark and I had a handful of boyfriends before I met Darren. They all told me they stopped seeing the birthmark after a while and Darren,

Who knew?

Scar tissue is made of collagen fibres, not skin cells, so it does not have hairs, sweat glands or blood vessels

own gentle lotion for cleaning wood or delicate surfaces in the flowers (pictured left) and bruise with a pestle and mortar. Pour steep until the mixture is cool. Strain and add one part white of elderflower water, then pour into a clean spray bottle.

AT ANY AGE... ANIMAL PRINTS

GIVE your wardrobe a wild edge with this season's easy-to-wear trend – animal print. Subtle accessories are the easiest route to instant chic. Be careful not to overload your prints – balance your leopard spots with neutral colours and conservative classics. **BARBARA McMILLAN**

20s



Blue leopard print top, £140, jaeger.co.uk
Carven navy shorts, £260, matchesfashion.com
Statement necklace, £19.99, zara.com
Leopard gladiator sandals, £45, topshop.com

30s



Red printed dress, £165, whistles.co.uk
Gold watch, £35, asos.com
Black suede shoes, £70, aldoshoes.com

40s



Black mid-length pencil dress, £50, and ring, £8, warehouse.co.uk
Nude patent shoes, £22, asos.com

50s



Jersey wrap dress, £79, hobbs, 0845 313 3130.
Earrings, £19, stelladot.co.uk
Peep-toe shoes, £28, debenhams.com

60s



Top, £30, lauraashley.com
Trousers, £165, ikbennett.co.uk
Ballet pumps, £29.99, clarks.co.uk
Shoulder bag, £25, accessorize.com

70s



Angora knit, £120, jaeger.co.uk
Skirt, £105, net-a-porter.com
Satchel, £69, jonesbootmaker.co.uk
Kitten heels, £170, ikbennett.co.uk