

 Sir Alan's revenge on The Apprentice bullies

Woman

19 MAY 2008 90p
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'I wouldn't change thing about my fa

Susan Campbell Duncan, 44,
asks us to take a second look

L It's hard to blend in with the crowd when you've got a face like mine. Not a day goes by when I don't get funny looks. Most of the time I just shrug it off and find the best thing to do is to wave and smile – that works a treat.

I've had my facial disfigurement practically since birth, so I'd always known I was different. I was only a baby when doctors discovered I had a sarcoma, a severe form of cancer, on my face.

Doctors told my parents, Jean and Norrie, now both 75, they'd have to remove it. They didn't think I'd be able to cope with the surgery, as I was so young, so I started a course of radiotherapy instead, when I was four months old. I was just two when the operation went

ahead – it was a big risk.

The cancer was very deeply embedded in my skull and they warned Mum and Dad they'd have to remove most of the tissue and bone between my left eye and my jawbone.

It must have been awful for them both, watching me go to theatre, knowing I'd never look the same again. Mum says it was touch and go for the first few days, but I pulled through. I must have been a real fighter, even then.

My sister, Lesley, 49, and brother Norman, 52, had both been healthy babies and there had never been serious illness in the family before. But rather than handle me with kid gloves, my parents treated us all the same. I was allowed out to play with the other children from the street. As far as I was concerned I was part of the gang.

Thanks to my parents I was a confident little girl by the time I started school and I made plenty of friends. I was expected to get on with things, so that's what I did.

There were times when I looked at Lesley and wished I had her smooth cheeks and perfect jawline, but my mum said I was beautiful the way I was. 'Don't let anyone tell you otherwise,' she'd say.

I had 30 operations in my teens, and those months of pain and difficulty turned me into the determined person I am today. I was happy to sit for hours on the ward in my own little world, planning all the things I'd do when I got



'Having surgery made me the person I am today'

home. 'Can I start tap dancing lessons Mummy?' I'd ask her when she visited me. 'And can I get my hair cut?'

'We'll see,' she'd say – but I always found a way to get what I wanted. Once, when Mum said I couldn't have a pair of ballet shoes because we couldn't afford them, I made

some myself out of turquoise satin. They didn't fit, but I was determined to wear them, and my grandmother was so impressed she gave me the money for a new pink pair. It's probably thanks to her that I've developed a shoe fetish! I'm 4ft 6in and have tiny feet, but I go to a place

AS TOLD TO YVONNE GAVAN PHOTOGRAPHS MARTIN HUNTER, PHOTOLIBRARY



'I was just two when I had my first operation'

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...ce'



Poster campaign

'When people tell me they've seen my face, it makes me feel good'

in London called The Little Shoe Shop. I love it! I've always been into fashion (I wanted to be a fashion designer) and love fancy fabrics like satin and bright colours. If I'm going to attract attention, I might as well have something nice on!

My family have always encouraged me to go out

and do whatever I want with my life. My grandmother, also called Jean, inspired me to travel. If it wasn't for her I wouldn't have visited India, Africa, Thailand or Singapore.

But my biggest challenges have been at home. Getting people to see past my disfigurement has been a real challenge. Job interviews are always difficult, as you only have a short time to sell yourself. But I managed to get a good job at IBM after college, and I now work in the health department of the Scottish Government.

When it comes to men I've often had to make the first move, but I've had my share of relationships. I now have a wonderful boyfriend I've been with for six years. Since I appeared on a poster for Changing Faces, a

charity for people with disfigurements, passersby have stopped me in the street to say they've seen it - but if someone said I could change my face, I'd say 'no thanks.'

Why would I? I'm a bubbly, ambitious, outgoing follower of fashion who loves being out there. And once people get to know me, they tend to agree.

Change the way you think

Over one million people in the UK have a disfigurement. If you meet someone who has one, you should...

- Look them in the eye, but don't stare.
- Wait until you know the person better before saying, 'Do you mind if I ask you what happened?'

● Be prepared for them to choose not to explain.

✗ **DON'T SAY...** 'Deformity', 'abnormality' or 'disfigured person.'

✓ **DO SAY...** 'Unusual appearance' or 'people with disfigurements.'

✗ **DON'T SAY...** 'Victim' or 'sufferer.'

✓ **DO SAY...** 'Burns survivor', or 'has...syndrome.'

Go to www.changingfaces.co.uk

Turn back the clock with tomatoes

● It's the superfood with a twist - the fruit that could hold the key to eternal youth. Tomatoes have long been linked with cutting cholesterol and even preventing some cancers. New research suggests they boost the body's production of collagen, the protein that keeps skin supple, and could protect against sunburn and ageing. Experts recommend eating two tomato-based products a day, including tomato juice, sauce, paste or even ketchup.



Want a baby boy? Eat breakfast!

● Heard the one about wearing loose undies or drinking a cup of coffee just before sex if you're trying for a baby boy? What about getting your

husband to have a hot shower first, if you want a girl? Now experts say they have a formula to boost the chances of conceiving the gender

you want - and it involves eating breakfast! Studies show that women who consume the most calories, around 2,250 a day, have a 56 per cent chance of conceiving a boy. Having cereal can also tip the odds in favour of a boy, but if it's a girl you want, a diet could be your best bet.



Sunshine breakfast - eating cereals could increase your chances of a baby boy