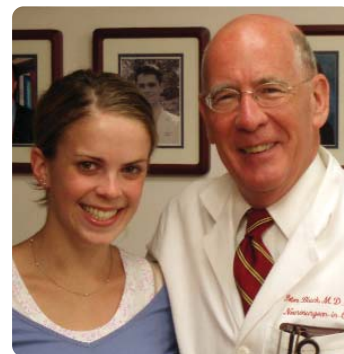


## March 21: DeckLog 21

A few of your favourite things...



### Ants aren't smart – but their colonies are

**So what have ants got to do with brain tumours? Quite a bit.** The study of swarm intelligence is providing insights that can help humans manage complex systems, from truck routing to military robots. And **brainstrust** is using the theory of collective intelligence to help it develop collaborations with key partners. We are already working with the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London.

**Not only has March seen **brainstrust's** 2nd birthday, it has also seen the launch of three collaborations.** Plans for the UK's first dedicated laboratory-based brain tumour research centre have taken a step closer, as **brainstrust** has joined forces with The University of Portsmouth to create a centre of excellence for brain tumour research on the South Coast. The new centre will focus entirely on dedicated laboratory-based brain tumour research in both adults and children.

Professor Geoffrey Pilkington of Portsmouth University states: *"The aim of the collaboration between **brainstrust** and Portsmouth University is to fund new specialist staff in neuro-oncology to further our research and to raise funds to buy equipment and provide essential running costs."*

It is anticipated that several leading clinical neuro-oncology centres will provide vital tissues and clinical experience while the University will provide medical research programmes, training courses and a state of the art laboratory. Those already on-board include Hurstwood Park Neurological Centre, Hayward's Heath, Maidstone NHS Hospitals, King's College Hospital, London & Charing Cross Hospital and the Institute of Neurology in London.

We are delighted to be working with Geoff to provide a coherent and compelling framework so that together we can understand the complex issues that surround the treatment of brain cancer and what we can do about it now and in the future.

**Our other collaborations are patient focused.** Charlotte is launching her "I believe I can" Charlotte's Fund of Hope to raise funds under the **brainstrust** umbrella to support a UK wide network of specialist neuro – oncology nurses. This is just one of **brainstrust's** goals. Anita, Charlotte's mother says: *"Our beautiful twin daughter Charlotte was diagnosed in May 2007, four days after her 16th birthday with an aggressive brain tumour. We have been told that the prognosis is poor. Whilst having chemotherapy, Charlotte was diagnosed with a second brain tumour. Charlotte is now on new treatment and continues to fight this wicked disease with the most amazing courage and bravery. One thing you learn very quickly when faced with this devastating news, you never stop looking for a cure..."*

Our collaborations are about collective intelligence; these collaborations prove that **none of us is as smart as all of us.**

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### And what of our Queen Bee?

**Meg is thriving.** She has more scans due this month, but has had no signs of epilepsy since her neurosurgery. If this continues she can begin to reduce her medication in June – a year after her surgery.

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### And the workers? Busy bees...

**If you haven't seen our new website, have a peep.** **brainstrust** had grown so large that it was hard to maintain the website; it had become clunky. So we have moved to a content managed system which will enable others to update the site. Thank you for sorting this, Josh!

**And then there is our magnificent, inaugural May Ball at Highclere Castle on 10 May.** Our Ball Committee has put together a fabulous evening, including:

- Champagne and canapé reception
- Fine dining by Highclere Castle's Mossiman trained chef, served in the opulent Library
- Auction of dreams hosted by Eric Knowles
- Silent auction of original 20th Century works of art to include works by Matisse, Picasso, Chagall and Miro
- Exclusive raffle
- Musical entertainment and dancing in the most romantic and magical surroundings
- Complimentary private tours of the newly refurbished Egyptian Exhibition.

If you haven't bought your tickets yet then please don't leave it until the last minute. You may well be disappointed. Why not make a weekend of it? Gillian has negotiated a really good deal for us at The Donnington Valley Hotel and Spa ([www.donningtonvalley.co.uk](http://www.donningtonvalley.co.uk)). The Hotel is offering a special room rate of £109 for Classic Rooms, reduced from £190, and £149 for Executive Rooms, reduced from £230. This rate includes the use of the Health Club facilities and it is valid on the night of the 10th May exclusively for the attendees of the ball.

For reservations can contact the hotel via phone (**01635 551199**) or email: [reservations@donningtonvalley.co.uk](mailto:reservations@donningtonvalley.co.uk). Remember to mention the **brainstrust** May Ball to take advantage of this special rate.

And if the thought of a Health Club the morning after the night before sounds a bit excessive, then The Carnarvon Arms Hotel and Restaurant ([www.carnarvonarms.com](http://www.carnarvonarms.com)), a traditional country inn offering sensational food, stylish bedrooms and great ambience, has agreed a room rate of just £80 B and B for double occupancy. Again – mention **brainstrust** May Ball when you book: **01635 278222** or email [info@carnarvonarms.com](mailto:info@carnarvonarms.com). This is at the end of the drive to Highclere Castle, but it is a long drive to walk down!

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## Oodles of doodles...

**Lee Marshall is doodling away for brainstrust.** If you are stuck on an original idea for a present then go to Lee's just giving page: [www.justgiving.com/leemarshalldoodles](http://www.justgiving.com/leemarshalldoodles)

Lee says "My cousin James Danfer passed away when he was 11 years old due to a severe brain tumour; he suffered a great deal."

Lee, an exhibiting artist, will doodle you a doodle based on a photograph that you email to him. All he asks for is a donation for **brainstrust**. In return, he will email you a jpeg of your doodle, ready for framing, use as a card or to use however you wish. Doodle your ideas on a postcard please...

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## Flora London Marathon

**Our hopes are on Ollie!** Ollie is training hard for **brainstrust** but he needs your support. Visit Ollie's justgiving page and sponsor his marathon today. [www.justgiving.com/oliverlake](http://www.justgiving.com/oliverlake)

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## Royal Parks Half Marathon

**The Royal Parks Foundation, the charity for the eight Royal Parks, is launching a brand new half marathon this year on 12th October 2008, starting and ending in Hyde Park. brainstrust** has been lucky! We have been allocated 25 places. Our runners will race (or walk!) through four Royal Parks, taking in superb views of Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, the London Eye, Marble Arch and the Royal Albert Hall.

We still have a few places left so if you would like to join our team, please contact HQ. Don't feel obliged to run. I will definitely walk it and probably stop for a picnic and Guinness en route.

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## Slim Sian

**Finally, Sian Carter is now fit enough to run a hundred marathons.** Sian lost an amazing two stone during her sponsored diet. Even more amazingly she raised well over £750 for **brainstrust**. So those of you who are looking for motivation to squeeze into those summer cossies – follow Sian's lead! She's now working on a Hog Roast...

See you at Highclere!

**Helen x**

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### Contact details

If you would like any more information about brainstrust, would like to organise an event or have suggestions for the Trustees please contact HQ. You can donate online or send donations by post to our address. Don't forget to make a Gift Aid declaration – download a form online.

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**brainstrust**  
the Meg Jones tumour charity