

BRIAN THE ROBOT: SUMMER TRAVELS



Registered charity: 1176608

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For FND Friends

BRIAN THE ROBOT: SUMMER TRAVELS

Brian the robot is a robot with Functional Neurological Disorder.

Brian has learnt to work when he has energy and rest when he needs to. Every day is different with FND. His friends have learnt how to support one another each day.

This is a story of his summer.

Brian and his friends had been working very hard in the factory.

Brian was staring out of the factory window, the sun was shining and the grass, looked so inviting.



Brian and his robot friends were called by Dave the factory manager, he had received a postcard from the factory owner who was on holiday.

Brian was so excited to receive a postcard, it tells people all about exciting travels to far off places.



This postcard was Informing them that a shiny new robot was going to be joining them, however she hadn't quite been finished. The final pieces to complete the robot were in different places around the southwest.

The special robot battery was in Bournemouth, the springs were in St Ives, the motors were in Minehead, and the oil was in Gloucester. The parts for the robot were so precious that they couldn't be delivered by post.





In the postcard, it said that the factory would be closed for two weeks and that everybody in the factory could have a holiday.

Everyone, yes everyone, had heard how helpful Brian had been to Father Christmas; so Brian and Dave were asked if their holiday trip could be the important job travelling to collect the remaining pieces for the new robot

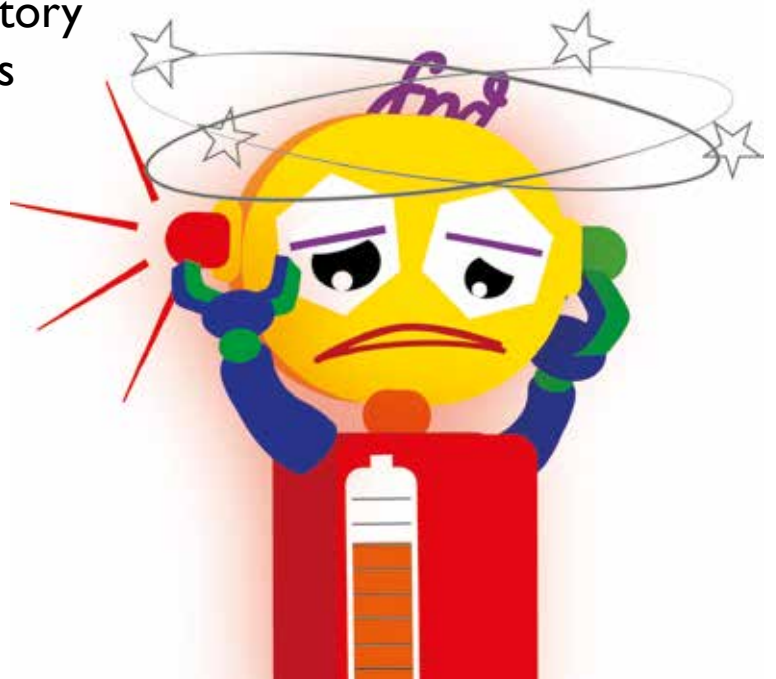
There was a great buzz of excitement all around. Everyone loves holidays, Brian too was very excited at the prospect of going somewhere different.

Brian in his everyday life in the factory had planned his life to allow for his FND, his head began to spin,

New places may be busy?

It may be noisy?

Would Brian able to get around?



Dave reminded him that things could be put in place to help Brian, to enable him to enjoy his holiday as much as anyone else. He needed to use his FND toolbox as well as packing his robot suitcase.



Brian's FND Toolbox

- Make time to rest
- Plan what you do so you don't do too much.
- Concentrate on your breathing to help.
- Wear ear defenders if you find noise too much.
- Only concentrate on one thing at a time. This is called being mindful.
- Tap or use a fidget toy as a distraction.
- Try to learn your triggers. A trigger is something that can bring on any of your symptoms.

Along with his robot clothes, he put in ear defenders to help in case it was noisy, sunglasses because brightness affects his eyes, a hat, fan and cooling towel in case he was hot, a pillow in case he wobbled and had to lie down, and Patch his favourite cuddly toy.





Brian and Dave planned to travel by train. They were able to get help at the train station to allow Brian get safely on and off the train. Dave had downloaded the new Assistance app for trains so someone was also available to help plan their routes that didn't require stairs. The man at the station was very kind.

Brian found the hum of the train wheels on the tracks quite soothing; he was able to doze. St Ives was a very busy and bustling beautiful place. Brian was very glad that he had his ear defenders. He finds that when lots of people are chatting is often quite difficult and can make him feel more wobbly than usual. He wore his sunflower lanyard that informs people about hidden disabilities.



They found the building in St Ives that had the springs they needed. The building had lots of history, all about pirates and smuggling. Brian was surprised to find out that the springs were so new and shiny.

Brian became wobbly, Dave decided it was best for Brian that he and Brian to go and rest on the beach. St Ives Beach were able to give Brian an all-terrain wheelchair that could go on the sand. After a rest, Brian could even wheel his chair into the sea. He couldn't stay in too long, otherwise he (not the chair) would go rusty. Brian and Dave, sent a postcard to the factory owner, it had a picture of the blue sea and golden sand they enjoyed.





After a few days in Cornwall, Brian and Dave were able to get the train to Minehead, but this involved changing trains twice!

They could see the old peaks of Dunster Castle and the new peaks of a famous holiday resort.

On the train, Brian dreamt about the knights and dragons that could have been in the castle and all the children playing at the beach resort.



The beaches around Minehead had a promenade where Brian could practise his walking and breathe in the sea air. They bought a stick of rock for each their friends and sent more post cards.

The factory in Minehead was modern and very big. Here they made many motors, some for power-chairs, electric scooters that enable people to do everything they want to do.

They collected the motor for their new friend.



Their journey then took them to Gloucester. This time, they travelled by coach. The coach team were also very helpful. They gave Brian a seat that had more legroom and was easy to get to. They provided headphones, so they could listen to music. The journey passed very quickly.

Brian dreamt of his favourite cheese ... double Gloucester, and wondered whether he would meet the famous Dr Foster? Because of Brian's FND, he often feels tired.



In the factory in Gloucester, they collected the oil. The workers were able to apply some oil to Brian's joints.

He felt so mobile, and after a rest, even had more energy. Dave had a telephone call.

The factory owner had arranged a helicopter ride from Gloucester to Bournemouth to collect the all important batteries.

Brian had never flown by helicopter before. He worried about whether he would manage this type of transport.

The factory owner had already spoken to the pilots who had a care plan in place to manage Brian's needs. They made sure that Brian had his ear defenders in place and was safe and secure in the helicopter before they turned on the noisy rotor blades.





Dave and Brian collected the battery as soon as they arrived in Bournemouth. The people in the Factory here said that as Brian had been so helpful, he deserved a new battery too and they also gave him a solar panel charger for when he gets tired on his travels.

In Bournemouth, again the sands were golden, and the sea was blue. Dave and Brian spoke to the tourist information centre to plan the rest of their visit. They visited the pier and Oceanarium, and of course the beach.

Brian was starting to feel the effects of their busy holiday, so Dave told him he needed to rest, he was experiencing something called boom and bust, this is where your adrenaline makes you feel that you can do a lot but then later you are even more tired than usual.

Brian decided that now would be a good time to rest on the beach one last time before they went home.

Brian and Dave have been all around the southwest and along the way, have met some of their FND friends along with making new ones!

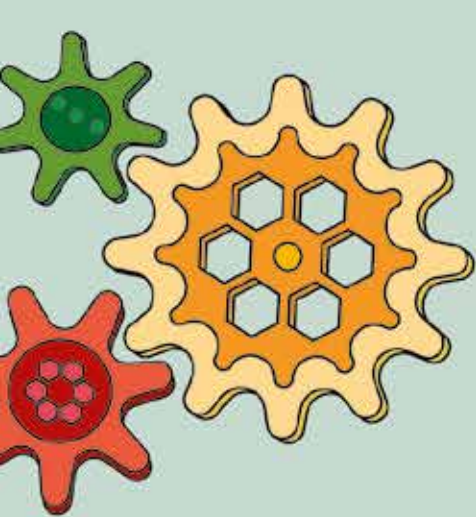
They had started their travels with lots of things and they'd come back with even more. Brian and Dave had so enjoyed their summer holiday. Brian liked being helpful. He was so pleased to have collected the parts needed.

Brian was proud of how he had planned his time. He still made room for pasties, fish and chips and ice cream by the sea. He had rested when he needed to and planned his activities around what he was able to manage, it helped that almost everything was accessible from trains, to disabled rooms in their hotels! Sometimes his body had buzzed and wobbled, ... but he had done it!

Back at the factory, they were reunited with all their FND friends. Some had been to far off places, and some having a nice restful time at home. They had all enjoyed their break. Some had even come back looking brighter than before!

Finally, the factory owner was pleased to announce that their new robot friend had been assembled. Everyone was excited to meet...

Briony!



WELCOME





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FND FrieNDs is a patient and carers support group for those living with the diagnosis of FND in the South West of England.

The groups meet regularly in a pre-arranged venue to meet others with the same diagnosis. This helps to reduce feelings of loneliness, misunderstanding and isolation that are often associated with this particular diagnosis. We can in some instances make home visits to those who are housebound. The idea of this is to encourage the individual when they feel confident enough with us, to leave their home and meet/ come with us to a local venue where they can meet others in a similar situation, in a comfortable, fun and positive environment. Please note though, we are not medical professionals and do not offer medical advice.

www.fndfriends.com

Acknowledgements:

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