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Issue 7 Winter 2012/2013

London Mums



**James
Cracknell**



**Arlene
Phillips**



**Lowri
Turner**

**Star
mum**

EXCLUSIVE!

Jenni Falconer

'I love being a mum. It is difficult to balance home life with a career but I wouldn't change it for the world'

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Editor's letter



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Dear London Mums

Well, wasn't it a fantastic summer? If you're feeling a bit like the party's over then never fear we're here to help pick you up. This issue is filled with fun stuff for you and the kids.

Firstly there's our cover interview with the gorgeous Jenni Falconer who talked to us about swishing, her favourite things to do with her daughter and her suggestions for improving the tube. Celebrity stylist Alex Longmore was on hand to give us her tips on looking good in autumn. We've also interviewed London Dad, James Cracknell, to ask him about his role in making the Olympics the success they were and how he and his wife decided on names for their children. Next up we visited Lowri Turner who gave us some advice on setting up your own business. London Mums also caught up with choreographer, TV presenter and former Strictly Come Dancing Judge, Arlene Phillips.

Do you remember reading comics when you were a child? And waiting eagerly to find out what your hero was going to do next? Well, we are very excited to announce that the next three issues of London Mums magazine will feature 'The Adventures of Jonnie Rocket'. You and your children can join Jonny on his magic bicycle (which is without a doubt the coolest mode of transport right now) as he explores outer space. Retro fun for all the family!

We haven't forgotten to include the Agony Aunt pages, our interviews with two local super mums and pretty things. We've also got the Christmas Gift Guide to help you figure out what to get your little angels for Christmas.

Check out the London Mums website www.londonmumsmagazine.com for more articles, interviews and ideas for family fun.

Spread the word – London Mums is totally and utterly FREE!
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Monica Costa

Editor in chief, Founder of London Mums and mum of six-year-old Diego. monica@londonmums.org.uk

LONDON MAYOR



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Mayor of London, Boris Johnson

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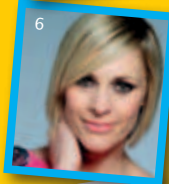
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'I LOVE BEING A MUM. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BALANCE HOME LIFE WITH A CAREER BUT I WOULDN'T CHANGE IT FOR THE WORLD' JENNI FALCONER



EDITOR MONICA COSTA FROM LONDON MUMS
MET WITH SCOTTISH TV PRESENTER JENNI
FALCONER AT THE FIRST BABY SWISHING PARTY
IN LONDON IN AID OF THE CHARITY TOMMY'S.

Q: Congratulations on holding the first baby swishing party in London! Can you tell us what a maternity swishing party is and why you got involved with Tommy's?

JF: I love being a mum so when Persil and Comfort got in contact and asked if I was interested in this swishing party idea I said, 'I absolutely am'. I am in that position of having to continuously get new clothes for Ella because she's growing so quickly. It is such an expense, especially in a time of recession. Instead of spending more why don't we just share amongst friends and people in a similar situation? When I was pregnant I had a lot of friends who were pregnant at the same time but just a little bit behind me. So I haven't got any maternity clothes now because they've got them all. It's really nice to know that they're being used because maternity clothes fit for such a short amount of time. So it was just such a good idea to swap things over. The other reason I agreed to get involved was that Tommy's is the charity they are supporting. I think that when you become a mum, or someone close to you has a child, you suddenly become a lot more aware of pregnancy and along with that some of the downsides that can occur. Unfortunately some women do experience difficulties and Tommy's is such a wonderful place to find information and support. It does really great work for families.

Q: If you were Mayor of London for a day, what would you do?

JF: I'm too scared to get on the tube with my little girl. I took her on once but people tried to sit on the pram – with her in it. There are lots of tube stops that don't have lifts. I was at South Kensington tube station and I was stuck at the bottom with all these stairs until someone came to help me carry the pram up. I think it would



be nice if they considered that public transport is not just for the able-bodied but also for those with disabilities, with prams, with mobility issues. I know some people who refuse to take their children on public transport but I think it would be much better if a few improvements were made. Maybe one carriage should be marked out for family use? Especially in rush hour, I wouldn't take Ella on the tube because it's so crowded. When I was quite heavily pregnant a lot of people would not offer up their seat on the tube. Everyone would just look down. I used to have to walk up to people and say, 'Excuse me but I have to sit down'. It's not that I wanted to kick up a fuss, I just didn't want to fall over. Having said that, there were a lot of very generous people who did give up their seats. So, yes, if I were Mayor for the day I would create a family carriage at the front of each tube train between four and seven pm.

Q: What is your favourite thing to do with your daughter, Ella, in London?

JF: I go to a Baby Sensory class with her. I have to say when I first signed up I was a bit embarrassed. I went to my first class and I was mortified that I was there. Now I look forward to it and she loves it! She started going when she just used to lie there on her back and fall asleep and now she crawls over to the teacher and knocks down her puppet show. She's going to grow out of it soon, I know she is. I'll have to find something else. ▶



Q: While doing the research for this interview I went onto your website. Then I looked up and forty minutes had gone by! Why did you decide to start it and how do you decide which videos to post?

JF: Well, I've had a website for years that my management put together. I didn't like the fact that I didn't have control over what went up. It was someone else ghost-writing on my behalf and I didn't like it. So I re-launched it and I decided I wanted it to be less about me and more about stuff I've found that I want to share with other people. I think people respond more to content that is of interest to everyone. It's lovely because people get in touch and are really nice. I love taking photos so I've linked it to my Instagram. It's no-one else doing it, it's just me which is why sometimes not much happens on it and at other times lots of things are being posted! I'd love to do more 'mums-stuff' on there.

Q: How do you balance your career and your home life?

JF: Balancing is hard. Sometimes I think it's easier going to work. Of course you want to do your best at work and at home. So, it is difficult but I wouldn't change it for the world.

Q: Are you working on anything at the moment?

JF: I'm filming a show called Fantasy Homes by the Sea, and I'm doing the Lottery. I'll be in training for the Great North Run and I'm an ambassador for the Royal Parks Society.



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Top autumn & winter fashion tips



Editor Monica Costa met top celebrity baby bump stylist and key player in the British fashion industry, Alex Longmore, to discuss practical fashion tips for busy mums for this autumn and winter.

Q: What would be your top tip for mums who want to look good but don't have a lot of time to get ready in the morning?

AL: My best piece of advice is to invest in a really good pair of jeans. In fact, get two: one for day and one for evening. Also, if mothers are on the run, literally, they'll need a really cool pair of flat shoes and then they can just change them for some high heels in the evening. Make sure your wardrobe is completely capsule. There should be nothing in your wardrobe that you don't ever wear. I do suggest that people detox their wardrobe before they do anything. So, a swishing party is great because they can get rid of loads of stuff. It doesn't necessarily have to be from the maternity section of the shop – just things you can wear during pregnancy. There are some really good maternity jeans on the market. Getting a well-fitting pair makes such a difference. Topshop have got amazing jeans, I think they're the best on the high street.

Q: What is your advice for dressing in autumn & winter?

AL: Dressing for autumn and winter is always difficult because you need layers. In this country the weather can change so much. One minute it's hot, one minute it's cold. One minute you're in a heated office, next you're out on a windy street. I always suggest lightweight jackets not heavy

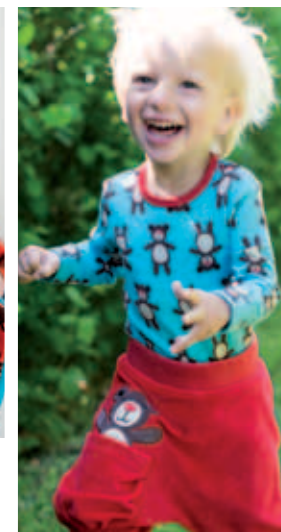
coats. Lots of layers – T-shirts, lightweight jumpers – actually make a feature out of layering. If you're pregnant then this can actually make your bump appear smaller!

Q: Do you have a favourite celebrity client?

AL: It's been an honour to have worked with all the celebrities I've worked with. I think the celebrity I found most interesting to style was Julie Walters. I absolutely love styling Julie because she's crazy to work with, she's brilliant fun and she's extremely professional. I also love to style Jodie Kidd because she's a very good friend of mine. She recently became a mum and I dressed her while she was pregnant. She wears clothes so beautifully and it's never like working when I'm with Jodie.

Q: Who is your ultimate style icon?

AL: Gwyneth Paltrow, without a shadow of a doubt. I think she's got the most amazing style. I love the way she dresses. I love the fact that after she had her two children she came out looking a million dollars. More sexy, more brilliant than she ever did before. I love the way she wears geometric prints and shapes. She's the ultimate yummy mummy! She's a modern day Grace Kelly. Grace Kelly would be my style icon from the past and Gwyneth for the present.



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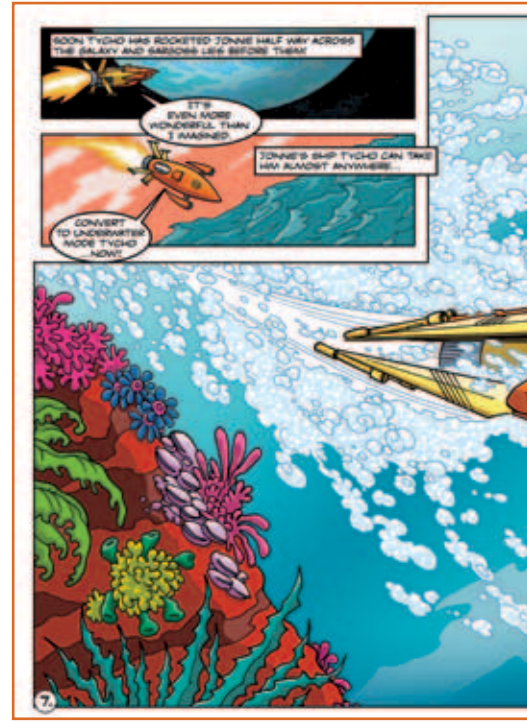
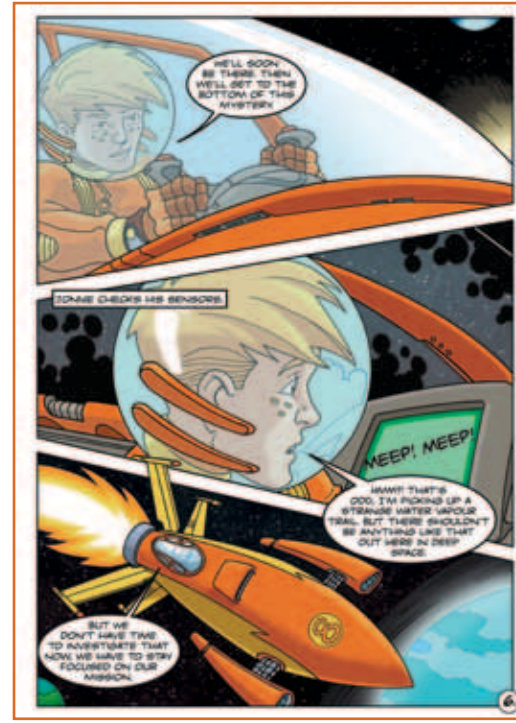
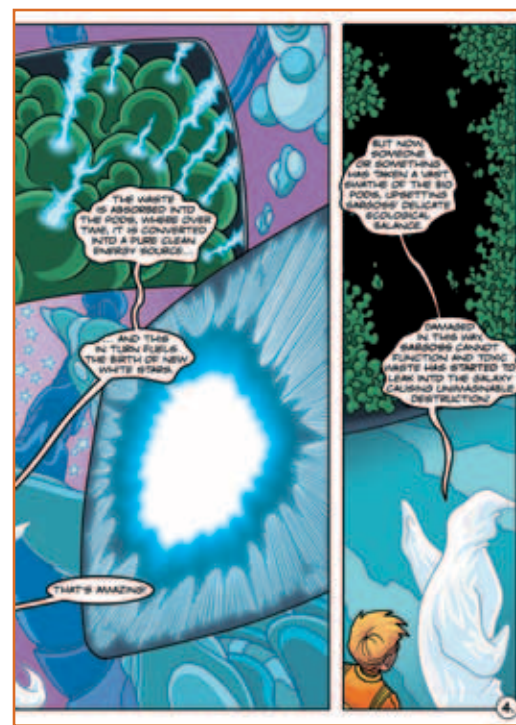
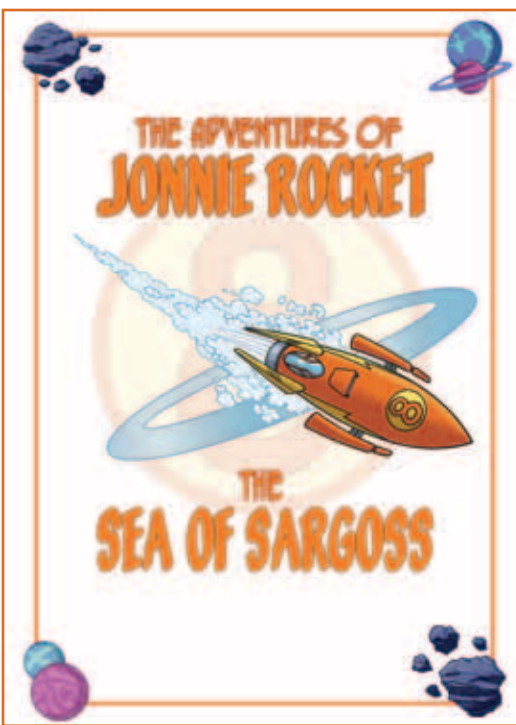
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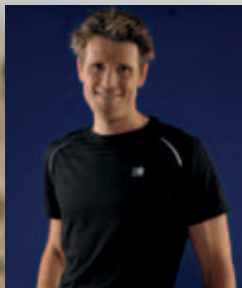
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TO BE CONTINUED....

5 MINUTES WITH LONDON DAD AND BRITISH OLYMPIAN

James Cracknell



Q: You were a sustainability ambassador for London 2012. Can you tell us a bit about what this involved?

JC: Sustainability was one of the key reasons why London won the bid and went from a Candidate City to the Host City. Sustainability cut right through the bid, at the outset there was a misunderstanding of its role and importance when every committee and action had to consider sustainability. That soon changed especially as it's impossible to justify staging an Olympic and Paralympic Games on sport alone. It has to contribute more to society than that. Sustainability is more than trying to reduce emissions or run a carbon neutral event. At London 2012 sustainability was grouped under five headlines. Biodiversity, legacy, waste management, nations and regions (i.e. UK wide) and climate change.

Q: I love it when people give their children unusual names. Your three children are called Croyde, Kiki and Trixie! Did you pick these names for any particular reason?

JC: Croyde was after Croyde Bay in Devon where I learned to surf in the early 90's and I proposed to Bev there, she loved the alliteration with my surname. To be honest the same applied to Kiki – the alliteration not the place (if there is such a place). Bev thought Trixie was going to be a boy – based on nothing more than intuition and the fact she'd been right with the other two, so we had a list of boys names but no girls. When the little beauty popped out Bev said ***"I want to call her Trixie, you've got five minutes to think of something better!"*** My argument that in 20yrs time when she hits the town with Kiki they'll sound like a couple of strippers fell on deaf ears!



Q: The list of your achievements is frankly astounding! You have won two Olympic gold medals, trekked to the South Pole, rowed across the Atlantic... Is there one particular achievement that you are most proud of? And do you have anything else lined up at the moment?

JC: The Olympics is hard to beat for pressure, in rowing the final was six minutes and getting that right would determine whether the previous four years had been a waste of time. I'm probably most proud of my performance in the Marathon des Sables (a multi-stage running race in the Sahara) I was the highest finishing Brit (12th) in the 25yrs the event has been going, plus I'm built for comfort not speed when it comes to running. Preparing for something where you have to learn a new skill and sort the right kit for the event is always something I enjoy.

Q: It's great to be able to interview a London Dad for the magazine. Can you tell us some of your favourite things to do in this city with your children?

JC: My sister works at the Natural History Museum so going round there with my lad when it's closed is like 'Night at the Museum' but in the coolest museum in the world!

Q: If you were Mayor of London for the day what would you change?

JC: I'd try and introduce active transport weekends where the roads were open to only public transport vehicles. It wouldn't be popular but I'm the king...well the mayor!

James is brand ambassador for Karrimor.



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What to expect from What To Expect When You're Expecting

By Jasmine Joynton

I'm sure we're all familiar with Heidi Murkoff's 1985 pregnancy bible. It is probably the most famous guide to pregnancy in the English-speaking world. What To Expect When You're Expecting, and others in the same series, have sold a staggering 35 million copies worldwide. And it is now a hit comedy film too, which is out to rent and own on DVD and Blu-ray from 22nd October 2012.

The star-studded film follows five couples who are all awaiting the arrival of a baby. There's celebrity fitness coach and control-freak Jules (Cameron Diaz) and her laid-back boyfriend, Evan (Glee's Matthew Morrison). Holly and Alex (Jennifer Lopez and Rodrigo Santoro) are preparing to adopt a baby from abroad. Militant parenting author Wendy (Elizabeth Banks - who completely steals the show) and her husband Gary (Ben Falcone) have been struggling to conceive for two years. Finally, Rosie and Marco (Anna Kendrick and Chace Crawford) have not even had a proper date when they discover that they are expecting a child!

Full of funny moments, many of them provided by the Dads' group that meet at the weekend and take their children to the park to relieve their partners of childcare duty, What To Expect When You're Expecting shows that no matter what you plan for, life doesn't always deliver quite what's expected...



If you're looking for a sentimental comedy to see with friends this just may be the perfect choice. We at London Mums would certainly recommend it as the ideal DVD to watch with your post-natal class!



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SUPER LONDON MUMS

DINA MAKABI (MUM OF RYAN, 5 AND TALIA, 1 FROM KENSINGTON)

FAVOURITE LONDON ACTIVITY

On a rainy day, Museums are hard to beat. They cater for families and offer educational workshops for children. Victoria and Albert Museum, London Transport Museum and the Science Museum are some of our favourites. On a sunny day, HollandPark is great for picnics and where children can run wild in the adventure playground.

FAMILY FRIENDLIEST VENUE

Whole Foods Kensington must be one of our favourite family venue. It ticks all boxes: great food and children friendly. Westfield shopping Centre is also great as its got private feeding rooms for little ones and when baby is sleeping, Mummy can do some retail therapy!

LONDON CHALLENGES

Not having any family or relatives around is kind of a challenge I face in London. My friends become my family!

YOUR SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE TO OTHER LONDON MUMS

Always trust your instincts when it comes to your children's well being and Enjoy your little one as much as you can as they are little for a short while.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF WORKING AS A MUMPRENEUR IN LONDON

I enjoy reaching out to local mums, its a rewarding experience helping new Mums not to feel alone once they come home with their little bundle of joy. It can sometimes feel isolating and lonely. Being a mum myself I can relate to that. Kensington Mums is about keeping parents and carers in the loop with fun filled

activities where Mums can socialise with other like-minded mums and their children can enjoy having fun. The biggest challenge I face is lack of sleep and its not because of breastfeeding! Juggling family-work life balance is all about organising your time and most of the time it happens to be late at night once kids are in bed.



FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION

Any country with sun, sea and childcare!

Dina is the founder of Kensington Mums, keeping you in the loop with local playgroups, activities and family outings www.kensingtonmums.co.uk



RITA KOBRAK (MUM OF ALESSIA, 5 FROM FULHAM)

FAVOURITE LONDON ACTIVITY

A day in Barnes including a visit to the farmers' market, lunch at the child-friendly Sun pub, feeding ducks at the pond and visiting the Wetlands Centre.

FAMILY FRIENDLIEST VENUE

Battersea Zoo (outdoor) and Eddie Catz Putney (indoor) are our favourites.

LONDON CHALLENGES

When my daughter was younger I remember how difficult it was getting the pram up and down the tube steps with few people offering to help. So much to do in London there's never enough time!

YOUR SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE TO OTHER LONDON MUMS

Read the London Mums magazine and Families magazines as there is so much good advice and listings of events, many free.

FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION

Being of Italian origin I would have to say Italy but we also love Croatia and Greece. We recently went on holiday to Skiathos and it was beautiful and very child friendly. We would definitely return there.

BENEFITS OF BEING A MUMPRENEUR

I get to take my daughter to work with me in Italy and now that she has started school I can do the school run, get all my work done and be there for her in the evenings (and carry on working when she is asleep!). Single-handedly running a business is certainly challenging but very rewarding. My Mum and Baby Experience in Tuscany (Italy) provides everything mums need for a relaxing holiday with their child. It's a small business but it's already been featured in the Guardian, Mail on Sunday, Ryan Air and Easyjet magazines.

In our beautifully-restored Tuscan villa with mountain and lake views mums can do yoga, Zumba and cookery lessons while we take care of babies and toddlers. We have a pool, babysitting service, car seats, cots, high chairs, baby equipment and plenty of toys. We also organise visits to the medieval town of Anghiari, shopping trips to Italian shoes' outlets, massage sessions, weight loss programmes, olive picking and weekend cookery breaks.

Rita Kobrak is the founder of Mum and Baby Experience holidays

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Get involved!!!! If you want to share your parenting tips with other London mums and want to be interviewed for these pages send an email to monica@londonmums.org.uk we will reward you with a thank you gift!



LOWRI TURNER REVEALS HER JOYS AND CHALLENGES AS A SINGLE MUM AND MUMPRENEUR

Editor Monica Costa met Lowri Turner at the Allergy + Free From show in London where she talked at the launch of new ProVen Probiotics and explained how probiotics help in preventing and curing allergies.

Lowri Turner is a British television presenter, journalist, nutritional therapist and hypnotherapist. She began her career as Fashion Assistant at The Observer newspaper. She is perhaps most well-known for her radio and television work which includes 'Drive Time' on Talk Radio and 'Lowri', 'House Call' and 'DIY SOS' all for BBC television. She trained in nutritional therapy with the Institute for Optimum. She holds a Diploma in Clinical Hypnosis and is a certified practitioner in Non Linguistic Programming and Time Line Therapy. A mum of three, Lowri is now the resident nutritionist for Mother & Baby magazine as well as appearing regularly on The Wright Stuff and other television shows.

Q: What do you enjoy doing in London with your children?

LT: I was brought up in London as a child. I'm a big fan of just getting on buses and seeing the city. I have a lot of friends who have moved their children out to the country to have a better quality of life. I think you can't have a better quality of life than here in London because there's so much to do! All the museums – our favourite is the Natural History Museum – and the parks.

Q: You run your own hypnotherapy and nutrition business. What drew you to hypnotherapy?

LT: I trained in nutrition first and as I trained I thought 'I'm going to write these wonderful programmes for people and they're not going to follow them.' I had to find a way to help people change their behaviour. So that's why I started to study hypnotherapy. As I began to study it I realised I really enjoyed it. It uses a lot of the same skills as I've had to use on the radio and the TV, really. It's about speaking and communicating with people.

Q: You're a triplet. Does your mother ever talk about the challenges of raising three very young children?



LT: Well, I think it's very different now. Triplets are much more common because of IVF. When we were born in 1964 there were no three-seater prams, no car-seats. No nappies! My mother had three buckets with real nappies in them. Fathers didn't help back then. I think the worst must have been the noise level because if one of us cried, we all cried. What my mother always says is that the early stage was very difficult but once we were toddlers we played together. So that aspect of having triplets is good.

Q: How do you balance your work life and home life? Do you have any tips for other mothers who run their own businesses?

LT: Yes. What I would say is that sometimes you'll be working with people who haven't got a clue about what it's like to have children. I work with an older man who has one adult daughter and it was hard for him to understand that I couldn't have meetings at 9.30 because I had to get the kids to school first. Or if he set something up late in the afternoon then I needed advance notice so ▶

I could arrange childcare. Early on, working with him, I had to be very clear. And I had to continue to be clear. That takes courage, to say, 'I'm a mother of three, I have to work in a different way but don't doubt my commitment.' They will doubt your commitment. What I've learned is that I love working with other mums because we get back onto our e-mails at 8 or 9pm and start working again. The men don't do that. It's women doing that. Men might think we're not working as hard because we leave at 3pm to pick up the kids but that's not the case. I make sure I copy them into some of the e-mails I'm sending so they know I'm working in the evenings! It's important that you don't apologise for yourself and are clear about your abilities. Choose who to reveal that you're struggling to – with other mothers I might ask to postpone something but you can't do that with everyone. Choose who to ask for support from.

Q: What would you change about London to make it better for parents and children?

LT: I think more step-free access in the tube. Paddington, for example, is a nightmare. Also, children are free on buses. Why do we have to pay for them to use the tube?

Q: What challenges have you encountered as the mother of a mixed race child in London?

LT: I think I worried more about the challenges than they actually materialised. You just get on with things, really. I'm very keen that she celebrates her Indian heritage so she has some Indian clothes and we've got a Bollywood dance DVD. Her father is much less bothered about all this than I am. I thought it was going to be much more

complicated than it's turned out to be. Occasionally something happens that is upsetting. We were on holiday and there were lots of Irish people around who were all milky-white. This little girl, who must have been about four, came up to me and said, 'Your daughter's very brown' and she didn't say it in a nice way. That pulled me up very short; I was quite shocked by that. On the whole, though, you don't get very much of it.

Q: You have said that you found raising boys difficult at times. Are you enjoying being able to indulge in more girly activities with your daughter?

LT: I had two boys first and when I got my daughter I was so relieved. It's been a joy for me. She's five now and she's not in jeans – always dresses. We make fairy wings and I'm absolutely immersing myself in the world of glitter. When the boys are out we can sit and watch Cinderella and she looks up at me and says, 'Peace and quiet, Mummy'. We can go shopping and she doesn't run around pulling things off shelves. If she likes something she picks it up, looks at it and puts it back. Wonderful.

Q: Do you think that the capital offers enough support for lone parents? If not, what would be really helpful?

LT: The problem is the cost of everything in London. Raising children here on one income is difficult – you don't get a discount for being a single parent. The cost of childcare is the worst thing. The fact that single mums, if they earn over a certain amount, are going to lose child benefit is iniquitous.



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ARLENE PHILLIPS ON LIFE, FASHION, MEETING THE QUEEN & STRICTLY GOSSIP

Q: Home is...

AP: Where my family is

Q: What's your parenting style? What are your best tips for our mums?

AP: I'm kind but firm. Always be honest with your kids, respect them and hopefully they will do the same in return.

Q: What are mums' challenges with modern teenagers?

AP: Getting them off computers/phones/TV and out being healthy and active.

Q: What did the Queen tell you when she presented you with your OBE?

AP: This is for Services to Dance.

Q: What did you want to ask the Queen but you could not?

AP: How do you find the strength and energy to do as much as you do at your age?

Q: What are your guilty pleasures?

AP: Eating chocolate and watching a murder mystery like Poirot or Lewis.

Q: Your top tip on how to succeed in business to our mumpreneurs' community?

AP: Want it, and work at it with total commitment.

Q: Will you go back to Strictly? If yes, what will you change in your approach now that you had a break from it?

AP: I don't think about Strictly any more.

Q: Natasha Kaplinsky and Karen Hardy both revealed a few insider gossip from the show in our previous issues. What's your exclusive Strictly gossip to London Mums?

AP: I wore tracksuit bottoms and comfy shoes under the desk!

Q: What would you change about the Strictly show format if you could?



AP:

It's wonderful how it is. I wouldn't change a thing.

Q: Who is your all time favourite contestant on Strictly so far?

AP: Mark Ramprakash, his Argentine Tango was just breathtaking.

Q: What are your favourite fashion shops in London?

AP: I have to say I pretty much find everything I need at Selfridges. From high street to designer, they've got it.

Q: What's your favourite restaurant?

AP: Currently it's the Delaunay, and one of my all time favourites is The Stag at Titley in North Herefordshire.

Q: What's your favourite cuisine and why?

AP: Japanese, I'm just crazy about Sushi.

Q: Not many people know that you are an amazing fashion designer as well. Your dresses seem to be inspired by Emilio Pucci but are affordable for mums who want to look great without spending a fortune. Where do you get your inspiration for your fashion range?

AP: From magazines – but not fashion magazines – ones about wallpaper and art. It's the colours and patterns that inspire me.

Q: What would you do as a Mayor of London for the day?

AP: Something to cheer Londoners up, and make sure all the road works are finished ASAP!

Q: What are you up to next?

AP: I'm directing and choreographing the UK tour of Starlight Express, as well as producing the UK tour of Midnight Tango.

Follow Arlene on Twitter
www.twitter.com/arnephillips – She is very good at replying back!

Photography Credits: Arlene's Marisota Collection available in the paper and online catalogue

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The Family Guide to Lanzarote

By Monica Costa

Travelling to a new holiday destination can be difficult if you have young children. But Lanzarote in the Canary Islands is an amazing destination and certainly the best kept secret for winter sun with lots to offer to families: good weather guaranteed at any time of year, snorkelling in clear waters, entertainment for children, modern and affordable resorts with childcare, unique landscapes including white beaches and volcanos. Here are my top 5 things to do on Lanzarote with the kids.

Stay at the Seaside Los Jameos Playa Hotel

Most definitely the best family-friendly hotel on Lanzarote situated in a quiet part of Playa de los Pocillos right on the beach front and close to Puerto del Carmen lively beach promenade. The resort provides a wonderful mini club for kids, activities for the adults, evening entertainment and top class restaurants. During school holidays Los Jameos Playa runs a special Mange Tout programme designed for children by the British kids' nutrition expert Lucy Thomas. You pay a 4-star hotel price but get a 5 star service! www.los-jameos-playa.co.uk

Discover the Fire Mountain

The Montañas del Fuego (Fire Mountains) was created in the 1730s when more than 100 volcanoes rose up and devastated half of the island. The area is now a national park, Parque Nacional de Timanfaya, and is a must for any visitor to Lanzarote because of its unique 'Martian' landscape and rare plant species. You can also watch the fire from a hole of the only active volcano and mini-

geysers. It is also possible to take a camel ride across the volcanic landscape.

Swim at Playa Blanca – Playa del Papagayo

Golden sand, clear water and blue skies, mean the beaches of Playa Blanca are great places to lay back, chill out and top up your tan. The most well known of all the beaches around Playa Blanca is Papagayo. In reality this is a collection of smaller beaches that are separated by high cliffs, forming a number of sheltered bays.

Visit Charco de los Clicos

Best kept secret on the island, Charco de los Clicos is not on touristic maps but is the strangest beach I have ever seen. It is one of the few examples for hydro-volcanism which is explained by an interaction between magma and water. The combination of the green colour of the lagoon water and exposure of light, depending on the time of day and position of the sun, give the impression of a lunar landscape.

Explore volcanic caves at Jameos del Agua

Jameos del Agua was formed by the lava flow from the eruption of a volcano which advanced while the surface solidified. Due to the action of the gas trapped beneath the surface, part of the surface collapsed. It's now been turned into a beautiful garden of tropical plants species centred around a vibrant, turquoise-coloured pool.

Read the full feature with lots of information on how to get around Lanzarote online at www.londonmumsmagazine.com/2012/lanzarote





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Readers' letters

Our Agony Aunt Seonaid Joynson, Health Visitor in South-West London, responds to your questions.

Seonaid has over 15 years' experience in helping many parents, carers and children. The views she expresses are entirely her own.

I find myself shouting at my children a lot. What can I do differently?

Josie, Hammersmith

Most parents will admit to finding their children frustrating at some point. However, it is good to address your shouting. It may be that you were brought up in a household where shouting was the norm. It is ok for us to look back at our childhood and then decide to parent differently. Children who hear a lot of shouting stop responding to it and also think it's ok to shout themselves. Here are a few ways to change your habit:

- Try re-directing their attention. For example, instead of 'No, that's naughty!' try 'Can you show me how high you can build that tower?' Young children focus on the last thing that you say to them so it is better if this is something constructive.
- Look at when you are shouting. Is it due to your child procrastinating at inopportune moments? For example, if your child takes too long getting ready for school allow an extra ten minutes and remove some of the choices they have to make in the morning. They can

choose breakfast and which outfit they are going to wear the night before. Just make sure you stick to it.

- The only time you should have to shout is if your child is in immediate danger. As parents, we need to have an authoritative tone which signals to our children that we are serious. Use a quiet, calm voice and be consistent with boundaries and your home life will be more enjoyable and less stressful.

Changing the way you talk to your children may feel alien at first and need practice – keep going, it gets easier. Finish the day with some special time together. Make it low key and relaxed – just snuggling up and letting your child talk is rewarding. You will both feel better for it. Remember, your love and praise will make the most positive difference to your child's behaviour.

Talk to your Health Visitor or GP if you are still concerned about your shouting after trying these tips.



All my friends' children seem to have play dates every other day. My six year old daughter doesn't get invited to her classmates' houses. I'm worried she isn't getting on well with the other children at school.

Caroline, Holborn

If you think about it, not all adults have a large group of friends. Were you very sociable as a child? Your daughter may be happy in her own company and being self-reliant is an important attribute in life.

If you suspect she's being bullied or she is unhappy then talk to her teacher or the teaching assistant. They will be able to tell you if she plays with others at break-time and if they have any concerns.

A good way for your daughter to gain confidence in how to have a friend would be to arrange a trip to the park with another child and their carer. She may enjoy the chance to play with a classmate without the pressure of a large group around.

We sometimes forget how important it is to offer our children time to talk on their terms. Why not set aside 15 minutes each day when your child knows she has your undivided attention? If she has any worries she is more likely to express them then.



I have started taking my toddler, Duncan, to playgroup. He really enjoys it but he bites one of the other children, Freddy. I find this very embarrassing. I have tried telling him off and biting him lightly to show him it's not nice. The problem is getting worse, he laughs when I say 'no'.

Kelly, Clapham

Don't worry; this is a very common problem. Duncan probably just finds it exciting to bite but does not realise how anti-social or painful it is. At his age any reaction (from you or the other child) is exciting. It does not help to bite him. In fact this teaches Duncan that biting is acceptable. Instead, when you see him about to bite Freddy try to distract him. If he does bite Freddy then immediately give Freddy lots of attention and remove Duncan from the area without saying anything. Let the attention all be on Freddy for the next few minutes and then say, 'No biting' to Duncan firmly but quietly. If he bites again in this session then take him home. He will make the association between biting and his fun being cut short.

If the problem persists then talk to your Health Visitor.



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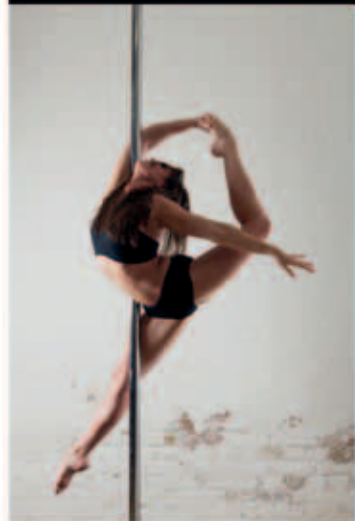


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