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Issue 28 Winter 2019/2020



London Mums



Hugh Bonneville



Julian Fellowes

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**Comedian and
mother Olivia
Lee reveals her
secrets on how to
be a mindful mum
and how not to
lose her marbles**

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Editor's letter

Photographer Simon Williams



Hello...

While Britain tries to get a good Brexit deal, London Mums' magazine presents a special edition dedicated to all things Quintessentially British.

And what could be more British than *Downton Abbey The Movie*. I was delighted to meet the entire cast and filmmakers at the London press conference as well as to chat to creator Julian

Fellowes and actor Hugh Bonneville.

Tea at the Ritz London is a unique English tradition. I report about that and my recent chat with award-winning Royal Correspondent Robert Jobson who has written *Our Royal Baby* to mark the birth of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's first child, Archie Harrison Mountbatten.

Whether you believe in Brexit or not, London remains a vibrant European city. Here's the proof: I am Italian and for the last 13 years I have been the front lady for the London Mums' organisation created by and for mums and mumpreneurs based in London and beyond. I was honoured to be recently nominated by the Mayor Sadiq Khan as the ambassador for Italy at the 'We Are All Londoners: Celebrating our European culture and communities'. Check the full memoir of that day in this edition.

My cover interview is with comedian and mother Olivia Lee, who has a British sense of humour. She shared with me her secrets on how to be a mindful mum and how not to lose her marbles. Her unique spin on mindfulness brings laughter and anger therapy together, to battle stress and the pressure of parenting for 21st century mums.

If the lack of sunshine makes you feel blue, it's probably time to escape. So, in this issue you'll find a guide to Valencia, the hidden gem in the Iberian Coast and the perfect destination for a family city break. And hopefully Christmas in Tuscany feature will get you in the festive mood.

Find out the trendiest gifts in Santa's sack in the London Mums' Christmas gift guide. For additional ideas check our London Mums' dedicated site londonmumsmagazine.entstix.com where you can get up to 60% off tickets for West End shows and lots of London attractions. Check also our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/londonmums

I hope you will enjoy reading this Winter issue as much as we have loved making it!

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

Monica Costa

Editor in chief, Founder of London Mums & mum of 13-year-old Diego
Let me know what you think of this issue at monica@londonmums.org.uk
or via Twitter / Instagram at [@londonmums](https://www.instagram.com/londonmums)



THE BIG INTERVIEW OLIVIA LEE

Editorial

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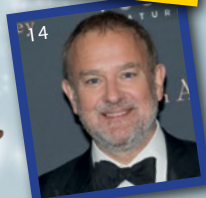
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OLIVIA LEE

**COMEDIAN AND STAR MOTHER
REVEALS HER SECRETS ON HOW TO
BE A MINDFUL MUM AND HOW NOT
TO LOSE HER MARBLES**

Photography Credits: Olivia Lee's cover image by photographer ©Michael Wharley

Editor Monica Costa recently interviewed comedian, actor and writer Olivia Lee – best known for her character comedy and her appearance on Channel 4's 'Balls of Steel'. Monica and Olivia talked about Olivia's album 'Mindful Mum – How Not To lose Your Total Fucking Shit' recently released via Decca Records. It's about a unique spin on mindfulness, bringing laughter and anger therapy together, to battle stress and the pressure of parenting for 21st century mums.

Bored of all the worthy meditation tracks that saturate the market, which tell you to just 'be calm' to 'just relax' and to 'stay positive', this is Olivia's two fingered salute to these. It is a direct reaction to what she describes as "the trend of rigid positivity that this generation seem obsessed with."

The meditations created for this unusual album are not just funny for the sake of being funny. There is a method behind the laughs as Olivia has written them with the hope that through laughter, she can actually help mums to feel better. Olivia calls this "laughter therapy", and it is her qualification as a life coach and recent journey into motherhood that ensures Olivia knows what will make mums (and fathers) feel better

Monica Costa (MC): I loved listening to your hilarious album. The word mindfulness is totally overused and over-quoted these days and I'm glad you're putting a new meaning to it. Are you a woman on a mission to reinstate freedom to the soul? It sounds very hippy and I love it.

Olivia Lee: The problem I have with mindfulness is that culture is becoming extreme and is rampant at it everywhere. It just tells us to be grateful and happy. It also makes negativity something to be allergic to, when actually negativity is good. There's a natural part of the human condition that's negative and we are designed to feel uncomfortable. We're not designed to always feel happy. If we were always so happy we would be diluting ourselves. It's a delusion. It's like saying that negativity doesn't

exist. And for me, becoming a mum, has meant that I can't get myself out of this hole of feeling overwhelmed. Venting is so much healthier. By being more honest about how we feel we can better connect with like-minded people who can see how you really are. When mums can do that, they can connect and support each other. We're living at a time when parents are trying to be perfect and there's a bit of a disconnect.

MC: How did you come up with the idea for the album and do you actually walk the talk?

OL: Oh, definitely. The idea came while I was studying about life coaching for another project. But I had my son on one side and that made me see things in a different way. This really helped me embrace how I would genuinely feel. By combining that with all the comedy that I've done, I could create a new version of mindfulness. That got me quite excited. I'm prouder of this than anything else I have done so far, because it can help other mums.

MC: I could have benefited from this album when my son was a baby because at times I felt surrounded by all these perfect mums while having the most imperfect child. I often felt lonely and I set up the London Mums' network to have a forum to open up about issues like that. A real group of opinionated mums as opposed to the so-called 'Stepford Wives'. Now, I'm up to my second bout of rebellious mumsy behaviour and I want to be a rock mum. My vocal coach told me that singing in a rock band has the same neurological effect of meditation and mindfulness. So here I am giggling with real rockers.

How do you think this album will change the attitude to show-off perfection?

OL: I hope to help mums that are fighting the constant bombardment of the perfected image. The only time I dropped the c-bomb on the album is when I talk about finding a tribe of like-minded women and avoiding the fake ones on Instagram. I just want to offer an alternative to that idea of perfection. I embrace the idea of imperfection and see perfection like nicotine. Whether it's about trying to lose your baby weight really quickly or competitive mums, it's all so exhausting. There are millions of women out ▶



there who are willing to be honest and do things differently. All I can hope is that after listening to my album any mum will be able to un-f*** themselves from the prison of perfection."

MC: My London Mums' tribe is honest and open. But it may be because it is a multicultural and multiracial community.

OL: You probably attract people that are like you.

MC: You're currently turning the album into a live show with dates and venues to be announced shortly.

OL: Yes. We hear about toxic masculinity, i.e. men struggling to be vulnerable. There's also this notion of toxic femininity out there, which is feeding women subconscious messages. The deeper message behind the album is that women need to embrace their rage and not to worry about being 'f***able', and being likable. We need to allow ourselves to be angry because that's a very forward-thinking emotion. I've read diverse books about female anger and I'm expanding on those feeds in the live show.

Warning! Mums, make sure you take a little time to yourselves, but the album is so X-rated that tracks are not to be listened to in front of the kids!





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Our Royal Baby



NEW BOOK BY AWARD-WINNING ROYAL CORRESPONDENT ROBERT JOBSON MARKS THE BIRTH OF PRINCE HARRY AND MEGHAN MARKLE'S FIRST CHILD, ARCHIE HARRISON MOUNTBATTEN

By Monica Costa

Tea at the Ritz London is always a pleasure, especially if the occasion is as glamorous as the launch party for a new book about Royals. Our Royal Baby is an interesting publication because it is not a biography but a very visual book created in collaboration with commercial partners and brands such as the world's purest baby wipes WaterWipes (who invited me along) that have been carefully selected by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex to become patrons of their baby journey. Best-selling, award-winning author Robert Jobson, who has chronicled the story of the Windsors for the past 30 years, is a smart and witty man so it was lovely to listen to his anecdotes involving young naughty Prince Harry. Robert is the royal editor of the Evening Standard in the UK, as well as the leading royal contributor for major television networks in the US, Australia and New Zealand.

The commemorative publication charts Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's journey from romance and engagement, through to marriage and new parenthood. This fully illustrated, beautifully designed hardback book heralds the arrival of the newest addition to the House of Windsor, and reflect on the current state of the British Royal Family and the place that it holds in the hearts of the nation.

Here are a few funny stories told by Robert Jobson over tea.

Being a Royal Correspondent has been a fantastic journey. I started in the Nineties as a young Royal Correspondent and covered all sorts of stories: I have covered all sort of stories: The dramas of the Queen, Charles and Diana's story. It was an amazing time. Then of course 1992, which the Queen famously called her

Annus Horribilis. The last few weeks have been tough for her with all these allegations about the private jets. But it's nowhere near as difficult as it was for her in the '90s. Meghan has brought the whole warrior story which has not really been seen since the days of late princess Diana. Her global appeal is demonstrated by the photographic world. The interest in Meghan is so high that the price of photographs is huge compared to that of images of the Royal family prior to that. She has a really strong appeal and that's because she has a warmth about her.

I have known Prince Harry for a long time. He was always a troublesome little chap. When he was at six or seven, he loved dressing up in army fatigues. He didn't want anything else but being a soldier and he would go up to one of the police officers, and ask: 'Can I have your a radio? I need a job to do.' And so he gave him radio and said: 'okay, go to the police station, the police box and then report from there.' So Harry would wander off. Once he disappeared and went to his aunt Lady Jane and reported from there. About half an hour past the officer suddenly remembered that Harry hadn't returned. There was a full scale alert and they went rushing out into Kensington High Street and there he was, this little boy with his radio outside the Palace. None of these stories, by the way, made it into the press. Another time little Harry had gone missing completely and no one knew where it was. And there was a proper security alert they thought had been kidnapped. He was found asleep in the garden.

Recently he has done a brilliant job with the Invictus games. And his work with HIV AIDS campaigns has continued – that is the legacy of his mother – and the work he does with his charity across Africa is hugely important. Unfortunately, in the last few months he seems to have lost a little bit of the common touch. I'm sure I'll come back. He's a very charming man. But he's probably been a little over-protective as a new dad, but you can understand that."





Downton Abbey The Movie: Chatting with Academy Award winning Julian Fellowes and actor Hugh Bonneville

By Monica Costa

After six years of waiting, the *Downton Abbey* movie, written by Julian Fellowes, is finally here. The movie picks up not too long after the series ended. Time-wise, it's nearly eight months after. The beloved Crawleys and their intrepid staff prepare for the most important moment of their lives. A royal visit from the King and Queen of England will unleash scandal, romance and intrigue that will leave the future of Downton hanging in the balance.

I was delighted to meet the entire cast and filmmakers at the London press conference as well as to chat to creator Julian Fellowes and actor Hugh Bonneville.

Q: The idea that the changing of the guard and the passing of the baton between the more senior members of the house and the younger members of the house, how important was that in the writing process for a continuation into the future?

Julian Fellowes: The very important part for the survival of these houses is always dependent on the older generation, knowing when it's time to let the next generation come in. When they don't do that and they hang on, the heir finally gets sick when they're already 68. This means they're too old to make the changes and do the work that needs to be done. I wanted to make it clear that Mary was going to be put in charge while she still had a level of energy and attack to get on with it. Even she has her moments of doubt as to whether she really wants to do it. But if she had not been allowed to get it before 60, she wouldn't have done it. And I suppose that was the point that I was endeavouring to make by making it clear that she's in charge and that Robert and Cora have the grace to accept that they must now step back and let the next generation get in.

Q: Everybody loves Lady Violet and would like to know how that character was born and whether she is based in any way on a real person.

Julian Fellowes: She was based on my grandfather's eldest sister whom I knew very well. He died in the Great War at 29, but his elder sister lived on. I was 21 and she was very autocratic and very tough on all the rest of us, but tough on herself as well to keep traditions going. In that sense, the character of Lady Violet was based on her. These strong women had been in charge during the war, while the men went off to the front, and were holding families together. That generation went through incredibly tough things.

Q: How much was the screenplay for the movie filtered through the current political situation in Britain?

Julian Fellowes: Part of the popularity of the show is that it doesn't do that. There's a sense of longing for a time when people experience a greater sense of the community or a greater connection to those who aren't like them and don't live like them. These characters have universal appeal. It's a family in which there are rivalries and jealousies and then affection. These stories speak to everyone.

Q: The series is very successful and the movie extremely anticipated. Can you talk a little bit about the move from TV to the big screen.

Julian Fellowes: In the series, not everyone involved expects to have a major story every week. They probably have two or three during the whole process. Not every story is completed every week. Some of them go through two or three episodes, some last the whole season. In the movie, everyone who appears in it must have a reason for being there and all of those narratives must be completed and resolved within the film. You can't say to people that we're stopping this story here and you can come and see the continuation in the next film. It doesn't work like that. So, the structure was altered in that way. We also wanted people to recognise the series they loved within the film and not be disappointed. It still had to feel like you were coming back to the same place. Obviously, all the actors understood the characters they were playing because they created them. Our job was to make it more cinematic and to find a central unifying subject – the Royal visit – that would allow us to plausibly increase the scale and fill a larger screen.

Another big challenge was to get 20 leading actors to be available in the same month, same year and in the same place. As to whether we've done that successfully, it's not for us to judge.

Q: *Downton Abbey* is without a doubt the biggest period drama that has come out of Britain. In your mind, how ▶





far timewise is the storyline of these characters gone? Have you already thought of taking these characters through the Second World War or beyond that? Are there going to be more movies? People really want to know this.

Julian Fellowes: I don't know. We've covered a timeframe of 15 years between 1912 and 1927 and we have done that over the space of 10 years in a fairly slow manner. The difference between actual time and fictional time, is not very great. Making the actors age 60 years, would not be credible. I wouldn't take them 20 years forward. But whether there's another bite to come out of it, who knows...

Q: Hi Hugh! We met at the junket for the Paddington movie a couple of years ago. Referring to both films you've done in recent times, do you prefer playing the Earl of Grantham or Mr Brown? Also, Allen Leech earlier suggested that your sexy calves are the defining moment for this shoot. What do you take away from this?

Hugh Bonneville: It's the same performance, it's just different costumes. The dad tries to make his way with family. One involves a furry bear, the other involves Michelle Dockery. I appreciate both projects equally. In terms of my calves, they are magnificent – Allen is completely right. And because I get to show them in the film, I think they will be a feature of the fan memorabilia for the years to come.

Q: How was it wearing women's clothes in Paddington? And the period fashion that you wear in Downton Abbey. Which one do you prefer?

Hugh Bonneville: I did try and get into the women's clothes in Downton Abbey as well. But the director was a little reluctant so that scene did not hit the cutting room floor. The fashion, particularly for the women of Downton Abbey, is wonderful and I'm very envious. I would have loved to wear one of those frocks.

Q: What was it like meeting 'King George' for real?

Hugh Bonneville: It was nearly as exciting as meeting Shirley MacLaine for real but slightly less glamorous. When Shirley turned up on her first day of filming, it was her arrival, she wanted to kiss everybody on both cheeks and she was told that she could not do that. Then she asked, can I hug Carston? We had to tell her: But Shirley, we are English, they are servants. (giggles)

Q: You have a few high-profile fans out there...

Hugh Bonneville: I can remember when Elizabeth McGovern and I were in Washington DC at a lunch once and met John Kerry, who was the Secretary of State then. He said that he'd been recovering from a bad back and had insomnia. His wife picked up the Downton Abbey DVD boxset which he watched from 4 am to midday. He was rather hooked. There's another White House connection. When we were invited to the American Ambassador's residence in London to celebrate Thanksgiving, a letter from Michelle Obama was there waiting to greet us because she's a big fan of our show. On another occasion, we did actually go to the White House and she said to us that the characters have become like friends to her.



LASER HAIR REMOVAL

FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

By Monica Costa

I have been removing my body hair all over since I was 16 and I can honestly say that it is a big hassle, often painful and, more importantly, time consuming. These days the promise of living body hair-free is alluring and real. Laser hair removal is the option that seems to offer a more permanent solution to getting rid of body hair. I recently went to a consultation at the Pulse Light Clinic London and I have found out the following: I have been removing my body hair all over since I was 16 and I can honestly say that it is a big hassle, often painful and, more importantly, time consuming. These days the promise of living body hair-free is alluring and real. Laser hair removal is the option that seems to offer a more permanent solution to getting rid of body hair. I recently went to a consultation at the Pulse Light Clinic (www.pulselightclinic.co.uk) London and I have found out the following.

1. Have no fear: laser hair removal is not painful

Laser hair removal uses laser light pulses to selectively destroy hair follicles by targeting the melanin (colour) in them. The pigment in the hair follicle absorbs the laser's light pulse, which damages the follicle enough to significantly retard hair regrowth. Laser hair removal is not electrolysis which works by directing an electric current into each individual hair follicle. It is painful and time consuming. Hair removal Lasers, on the other hand, can target a large amount of hairs in one go, in a much less painful manner. You may find the procedure a bit hot and sharp at first on the face which is more sensitive but nothing unbearable.

2. The process is lengthy

After an initial consultation to check the suitability of your complexion and hair type, you are provided with a plan. It usually takes two or three weeks after your first treatment to see a difference, and 8-12 treatments to get a permanent result. If you have one appointment per month, it will take one year for visible changes. The appointments cannot be missed because regularity is crucial to the success of this procedure. The hair follicles grow at different stages, so you need to all of them get removed. If you are

only removing your facial hair, each appointment only takes 20 minutes.

3. Skin Preparation ahead of the treatments

You need to use a trim or shave hair in the area to be treated before you undergo the laser treatment and make-up obviously needs to be removed as well. You also need to avoid scrubbing your skin for at least two days before and after the treatment.

4. Things to avoid

Plucking, waxing or bleaching hair have to be avoided if you start laser hair treatments because they can be impediments to the whole process.

5. Benefits of Laser hair removal

Apart from clearer, smoother skin and permanent hair reduction, laser hair removal's benefits include helping to reduce ingrowing hairs (a frustrating side effect of hair removal) and improve skin irritation. Apparently, the treatment encourages hair to grow straight. This hair removal device is suitable for all skin types and hair types. The hair just needs to be dark enough to drawn the laser.

Sponsored feature.



FAMILY CITY BREAK TO VALENCIA

A hidden gem on the Iberian Coast

By Laura Castelli and Monica Costa

Valencia is a great alternative to hipster and more expensive Barcelona and one of Europe's best-kept secrets for family city breaks. London Mums recently went on a three-day trip to Valencia organised by Turismo Valencia, the local tourist board, to showcase the fun side of Spain's third-largest city. We love Spain, and we always gladly go back. This country is more than just the Sangria and Barcelona (although both combined are a recipe for a pretty good time)

Valencia's landmarks disseminated throughout the ancient part of the old town represent a magnificent concoction of architectural styles: Roman, Gothic, Baroque and Art Nouveau to mention a few.

To crown an already enticing tour plan for our three days, we've been brought to the Hotel Dimar, a 4-star hotel on one of the greenest and widest avenues of Valencia, la Gran Vía Marqués del Turia (+34 963951030 / www.hotel-dimar.com): The super comfortable beds and the delicious Spanish and continental breakfast make this hotel pure bliss.

Here's our list of cool things to do with the whole family in Valencia!

Tapas lunch at Federal Café

Evocative Liberty-style restaurant, centrally located offering a variety of contemporary tapas.
(Tel: 960 617 596 <http://federalcafe.es/valencia>)

Valencia Family Tour

The guided walk called Valencia Family Tour to explore the city including activities and games tailored for children, is designed for visitors spending only a few days in Valencia who want to explore with kids the most emblematic sites of the old town,

such as the Lonja de la Seda (Silk Exchange) and the Cathedral.

The Holy Grail site

You don't have to be religious, but only curious to see what is believed to be the Holy Grail itself. Many historians believe it to be the real deal (the chalice belonged to the Spanish Queen Urraca, and is believed that was made sometime between 200BC and 100AD). Even the Pope has given his blessings on behalf of the Catholic Church!

The City of Arts and Science

This futuristic-looking location, used to film Disney's Tomorrowland starring George Clooney, is the work of Valencia's own architect Santiago Calatrava. The colossal structure houses an IMAX cinema (situated in the Hemisfèric), the Oceanogràfic – Europe's largest aquarium, interactive educational exhibits in the Príncipe Felipe Science Museum and the avant-garde opera house – Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía. Furthermore, the impressive l'Assut de l'Or bridge and the Agora are all a delight for the senses.
(Tel: +34 961974400 www.cac.es)





Horchata tasting

Outside the Tomorrowland's buildings there's a stand where you can taste horchata, a typical and refreshing Valencian drink.



Oceanogràfic visit

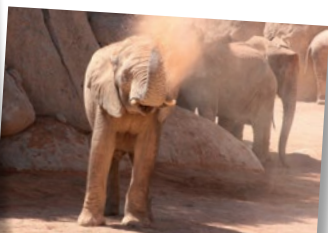
The Oceanogràfic contains representatives of the world's main marine ecosystems as well as a Dolphinarium. (Tel: +34 0470647 www.oceanografic.org)

Dinner at restaurant 2012 el Principio del Fin

Head here for a fine dining experience in the centre of Valencia with one of the best Spanish meals and Sangria we have ever had. (Tel: +34 963 92 06 76 www.restaurante2012.es)

Bike riding and Bioparc visit

The best way to see Valencia is by bike. We rented some from Passion



Bike (Tel: +34 633 79 55 81 www.passionbike.net) and headed to the 100,000 m2 large Bioparc Valencia, a new generation animal park conceived with the zoo-immersion philosophy. The visitor feels totally submerged in the wild habitats that have been recreated here. (Tel: +34 902250340 www.bioparcvalencia.es)

Valencia Beach

Marina de Valencia hosts some of the city's most important landmarks, shops, terraces, restaurants with spectacular views, as well as a children's park, the Superyachts Berthing with its amazing yachts and boats. Just a few metres away are the beaches of El Cabanyal (Las Arenas) and La Malvarrosa, next to the attractive Paseo Marítimo promenade. It is a great area for kids as they can play with the sands on the beach or walk along the beach promenade. We had a Paella lunch at restaurant La Alegría de la Huerta, with privileged views to the Mediterranean. The restaurant is located at Paseo Marítimo, (Tel: +34 963 55 05 07 www.restaurantelaalegriadelaHuerta.es)





Catamaran tour

We went onto a 1-hour trip Catamaran tour with Mundo Marino to Unwind and relax as well as get a different perspective on Valencia from the sea.



Paella Making at Barraca de Toni Montoliu

www.barracatonimontoliu.com

Outside Valencia at the farm Barraca de Toni Montoliu, we collected vegetables from the fields before making an authentic Valencian paella under the expert guidance of owner Toni himself. Children can take a tour around the vegetable gardens in a horse-drawn cart, visit a Barraca museum (the typical houses of the region), an exhibition of carts and agricultural tools from the 19th and 20th centuries (60-90 minutes), and go on a donkey ride.

Ruzafa Nightlife and dinner at Hard Rock Café

Once a decadent neighbourhood, Ruzafa is now the trendiest area in Valencia. This is a historic working-class neighbourhood, which has increasingly attracted artists and bohemian people. We dined at Hard Rock Cafe' which has the most amazing steaks and music. (Tel: +34 962 56 56 53 www.hardrock.com)



Check Valencia Tourism website for more information: www.visitvalencia.es



CHRISTMAS IN TUSCANY

By Rita Kobrak



Take advantage of the school holidays to go to Tuscany and let a Tuscan chef prepare a traditional Christmas lunch feast for your family to remember. No shopping, no cooking and no washing up! The delicious food, the welcoming attitude and inclusion of children makes Tuscany so special for families. Over Christmas, there are less tourists and Italians love walking around the streets, piazzas and Christmas markets (Arezzo being a good one to visit).

The festive season kicks off with the 'Immacolata' (a public holiday in Italy celebrating the Immaculate Conception) on December 8th and finish with the Epiphany on January 6th, when an ugly old lady called 'Befana' leaves gifts for good children and lumps of coal for the naughty ones. My Mum was from Sicily and there the naughty kids received a stick in their stockings! La Befana is awaited by Italian kids almost more than Father Christmas. Her arrival marks the end of the festive season.

A Tuscan Christmas lunch feast

Christmas lunch starts off with chicken liver or tomato Crostini. The meal continues with the 'primo' (first course) which is a pasta dish such as homemade ravioli stuffed with either meat or ricotta and spinach or 'Crespelle alla Fiorentina', pancakes stuffed with ricotta and spinach. They are made like normal pancakes, then they are stuffed with ricotta and spinach and coated with Bechamel and tomato sauce, grated Parmesan cheese and baked in the oven.

The main course is roast pork flavoured with herbs (rosemary, sage, garlic) and white wine poured over it in the oven to keep it moist. It is served with potatoes and seasonal vegetables. Desserts include Panettone, Panforte, Ricciarelli biscuits (almond flavoured biscuits which originate from Siena). Finally, liqueur or Vin Santo (sweet dessert wine) to aid digestion! You can even dip Cantucci biscuits in the Vin Santo.

New year's eve's dinner (Il Cenone) is normally a fish-based meal including a plate of lentils, eaten at midnight to bring luck (lentils symbolise money in Italy).

Where to stay

At Villa Radicata, situated in the medieval village of Caprese Michelangelo, we will prepare your Christmas lunch or all meals, so you can really relax and enjoy your holiday rather than doing the same chores that you do at home. We also offer Wine Tasting experiences, cooking or pasta making lessons.

The villa (with pool in the spring and summer) sleeps 10-12 people and is set on three levels with a large garden and outdoor eating area including games, toys for children and mountain bikes.

Villa Radicata is available for rental throughout the year and London Mums' readers will receive **10% discount**
www.holiday-villa-in-tuscany.com

Contact Rita Kobrak
07983821282 (whatsapp) or
00393495018679 Ritakobrak1@aol.com

We also run mum and child yoga/cooking and fitness breaks.

Closest airports are Perugia or Florence.
Closest large town is Arezzo.

Read the full article and get the recipe for Chicken liver crostini and Tomato crostini online at londonmumsmagazine.com



PAPER ANGEL

By Maggy Woodley



Step 2
Fold both concertinas in half – as neatly as you can.



Step 3
Then glue the white paper wings to the body.



Step 4
Add your bakers twine for hanging (and it also secures the shape a little more).

Glue the bottom of the angel skirt together.



Step 5

To make your face, you will need a circle in skin tone colour and a strip of paper. Glue the strip of paper to the top of the head.

Step 6

Then fold down behind the head on both sides. Trim to a desired length. And add your facial features with pen!

Step 7

Glue the head to the top of the angel body and add any embellishments such as gems, bows or sequins.

With Christmas around the corner, why not put some time aside for some fabulous Christmas crafting with the kids! To help you along the way we have invited author, blogger and YouTuber Maggy Woodley, to share some of her delightful paper angels from her new Kid's "Easy Paper Projects" book. A book packed with super simple, colourful and do able crafts for all seasons that **ONLY NEED paper**. How fantastic is that! Perfect for the pressie list and to keep kids busy on Christmas Day!

Today, we would love to share our Paper Angels from our Christmas Craft section in the book. They are super quick to make and are so cute. This angel is made entirely out of paper – but you can also make the angel's head from wooden beads and add hair in wool or tinsel! The paper face in this craft was created by a Red Ted Art reader (!): Pranali sent me her angel photo and I thought her paper version would be perfect for this book! Thank you for sharing your makes with me! I always love to see them.

Materials

- coloured or pattern paper approx. 15 x 15cm
- white paper approx. 10 x 15cm
- paper scraps
- bakers twine for hanging
- gem (optional)

Tools

- pen
- scissors
- glue stick

Step 1

Concertina fold your square piece of paper with approximately 0.5mm folds. I added some red strips to the white paper for effect – but you can leave them plain too! Fold the wide paper in concertina shape along the 10cm edge.



Easy Paper Projects contains 60 crafts that you can wear, gift, use and admire. The book is designed to use mainly paper and every day items (such as string, scissors and glue). Aimed for independent crafting for kids 8yrs+ and for lovely "together time" for younger kids. It is available from Amazon, the Book Depository or signed copies at £12 plus postage directly from Maggy Woodley (inquire at maggy@familywoodley.com).

WIN

A NEW WILD ONES JUNIOR KICK SCOOTER FROM RAZOR TO GO ON WILD ADVENTURES

For your chance to win a Wild Ones' scooter of your choice, simply answer this question on our competition page online:

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LEARN TO
BALANCE™
DINO

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HELP CHILDREN LEARN TO BALANCE

 **Razor.**

RUBBED INJECTION-MOLD PLASTIC FRAME
EXTRA-WIDE AND DURABLE

Who was the king of the dinosaurs?

Let children's imaginations run wild with Razor's NEW Wild Ones Junior Kick Scooter, designed to help new riders learn to balance and build the skills they need to safely and confidently ride a two-wheel scooter.

Specially designed with extra-wide, slow rolling wheels, perfect for learning indoors or outdoors, the Wild Ones Junior Kick Scooter eliminates the need for a third wheel, enabling kids aged 30 months and up to learn to balance on a two-wheeled ride. With features including soft foam grip handles and a low deck with full colour graphic grip tape, children can ride with ease and comfort as they start their scooting journey.

Free standing and made from injection-moulded plastic, choose from 3 bright and bold designs including Shark, Dinosaur, and Unicorn—there's a Wild One for every little one!

WILD ONES

LOW DECK WITH FULL GRAPHIC GRIP TAPE
DESIGNED TO MAKE CLIMBING EASIER

**THE ADVENTURE STARTS FROM
22ND NOVEMBER. RRP £39.99.
AVAILABLE FROM VERY.**

WE ARE ALL LONDONERS: CELEBRATING OUR EUROPEAN CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

By Monica Costa



I will remember the 21st September 2019 forever. It was the day I was chosen by the Mayor Sadiq Khan to represent Italy in the first public EU Settlement ceremony at City Hall during the 'We are all Londoners' event in honour of celebrating and supporting European Londoners. As my name and my achievements were read out loud in front of 350 Londoners I was teary and incredibly emotional. Suddenly everything I have done in the last 21 years spent in London with my London Mums' organisation and my contribution to these communities as a European citizen made sense and I felt proud of my life. It was an unforgettable Eureka moments for me. My choice of London as my home was right then and is still right now as I look back. I know that I have belonged to the London DNA even before arriving here and I have always felt a true Londoner. I am extremely grateful to

all the people who have crossed my path and who have inspired and supported me over the years. I couldn't have got here without them.

There are more than 1 million European Londoners in our city. 'We are all Londoners' was a celebration of the diversity and openness of our city. The contribution they've made to our city is massive and stretches far and wide – in our businesses, in our health service, in our cafes and restaurants all across the capital – European Londoners have helped make us the vibrant, diverse and unique place we are today.





Fun French Lessons

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Daily Express and
Time Out

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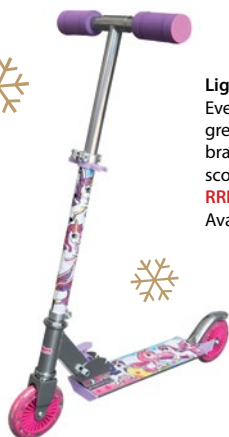
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LONDON MUMS Christmas

The trendiest gifts on your Santa's wish list



Light Up Unicorn Scooter by Grossmans

Ever popular Unicorns abound on this great folding scooter from the Ozbozz brand. Great light up feature when the scooter is in motion.

RRP: £29.99 age 4 and up

Available from Amazon



Llama Bounce Putty by Grossmans

A fun tub filled with amazing Llama Bounce Putty in bright colours that stretches and bounces. It's part toy, part stress reliever, part physical therapy. A great stocking filler.

RRP: £2.99 for ages 3 and up

Available from Amazon



Story Creations

OJo develops family games that stimulate children's curiosity, problem solving and critical thinking skills, with a firm emphasis on learning by doing and having fun! Travel around a world of strange and wonderful possibilities with Story Creations, a fun family game based on Charades, to stimulate storytelling and creativity.

RRP: £15.99

Available from www.learnwithojo.com



Soft toy sitting Unicorn by Grossmans

This soft toy Unicorn – suitable for ages 3 and up available in a variety of sizes and colours – will win everyone's heart.

This one is 40 cm and costs around £14.99.

Available from Amazon



My First Slot Set from Maisto

Pre-assembled beginners slot car set that is ready to play inside the box. Cars are inspired by Formula One racers to drive around the pre-built figure of eight track. Squeeze the trigger on a controller and the matching car will zip around the track.

Suitable for ages 6+ RRP: £39.99

Available from Amazon, www.tobar.co.uk

gift guide



Animigos Scampering Sausage Dog

Award winning remote-control soft toy, adorable sausage dog, walks, barks and wags tail! From the successful Animigos range from Tobar.

RRP: £24.99 – aged 18 months up

Available from Amazon, www.tobar.co.uk



Penguin Play and Kick Car Toy – Taf Toys

An innovative activity centre especially designed to entertain babies traveling in a rear facing car seat. Complete with a remote control, parents can re-activate the music and lights when required, and also switch between 'playtime' mode and 'soothing' mode dependent on the baby's needs..

RRP £34.99

Available from Very.co.uk or from Argos or www.halilit.co.uk



Edushape Sensory Shapes and Balls

Stimulate baby's senses with this array of sensory balls and shapes from Edushape. Suitable from 6 months +. The mega value pack includes nine different balls.

RRP: £39.99

Available from John Lewis (also online) and www.halilit.co.uk



My First Baby Band by Halilit

The perfect introduction to the magical world of music with instruments specially chosen for young babies. Shakers, bells and maracas will get your baby bopping!

6mths and up. RRP: £15.99

Stockists: Early Learning Centre or online at www.halilit.co.uk



Shark World Hand Puppet

Sharks are really popular this year and Jaws can be yours with this great hand puppet, lots of fun at pocket money prices. Great stocking filler.

RRP: £6.99 – aged 3+

Available from Amazon, www.tobar.co.uk

Great Christmas gifts ideas



Monster Splat

There is a high alert in Monster City – the slime monsters have escaped! Who will slap the most monsters with the slime hands and be the first to reach the ladder in this energetic game? This game is suitable for 2-4 players.

RRP: £12.99, age 5+

Stockists: Argos, Smyths Toys, www.argos.co.uk

Ravensburger Harry Potter Knight Bus 3D Puzzle Harry Potter fans will love piecing together this 216 piece 3D puzzle to create a model of the Knight Bus. This triple-decker bus is a fun puzzling experience for Muggles and, once finished, doubles as a handy storage container. No glue needed.

Age 10+ RRP: £24.99.

Stockists include Smyths Toys, www.smythstoys.com



Christmas is Coming Pop-Out children's book

A fantastic account of Santa's preparations for Christmas with press-out flaps which become a charming festive display.

RRP £12.99

Stockist: www.carltonkids.co.uk



Aqua Gelz Deluxe Playset

Watch Aqua Gelz designs transform as if by magic! Simply design, dip and enjoy! Use the Aqua Gelz to create a design in the included molds, then submerge in the Aqua Gelz solution mix. In just a few seconds see the design transform to become a unique, squishy creation!

RRP: £19.99, Age 5+

Available at The Entertainer, www.thetoyshop.com

The First Letters of Christmas Book

This unique children's book tells the story of Father Christmas. Carbon copy pages allow children to write and send their letter to Santa, while parents keep the second copy as a treasured memento.

RRP: £24.99

www.firstlettersofchristmas.com





Mightymast Leisure 34-IN-1 Multiplay Games Table

Designed to provide hours of fun for the whole family, this 4ft, 34-in-1 games table from Mighty Mast comes complete with all accessories needed to play all games. Including Table Football, Pool and Table Tennis, there's also a handy travel case containing 14 magnetic games for playing whilst away from home!

RRP: £209, age 8+

Available from www.very.co.uk/
www.littlewoods.com



CHRISTMAS MOVIES

Snap up this unique advent calendar containing 12 magical films to Digitally Download onto your favourite device.

RRP: £25

Available at Tesco, WHSmith, Argos, Zoom.co.uk.



INTERACTION

INTERACTION Is an interactive party game for family and friends. Whether Brainiac or athlete, old or young, all your senses and talents are put to the test. Only the best player in each category – knowledge, creativity, action, social and games – can reach the end of the board and be the lucky winner! Combining the social interaction of board games with the multimedia power of an app, it's guaranteed fun for everyone. Simply unpack & play, all you need is a smartphone or tablet (not included) and a free "Rudy Games" account.

RRP £34.90

Stockists: www.amazon.co.uk and www.rudy-games.com/shop



Thomas & Friends™ Amazing Mystery Box

Each gift box of fully licensed merchandise offers *Amazing* value for money with a wallet, backpack, activity tablecloth, water bottle, diecast train and a surprise blind bag.

RRP £24.99

Stockist: www.theamazingmysterybox.com



Razor PowerCore E90 Electric Scooter

Whizz along in style with the Power Core E90 Electric Scooter from Razor. Powered by an electric hub motor, you can ride up to 80 minutes before you need to recharge. Push the button to accelerate and zoom along at speeds of up to 10 mph!

RRP: £164.99, Age 8+

Available from www.argos.co.uk
www.halfords.com

Disclaimer: Check Local Riding Laws



iBeani®

Is a multi-award-winning, ultra-lightweight, tablet beanbag stand, designed for comfort when relaxing with any digital tablet, eReader or book. Stylish and able to hold your device securely at any viewing angle, iBeani® is great on your lap, sofa, in bed, anywhere. With styles to suit males and females of all ages, iBeani® is the must have lifestyle-accessory for every home.

RRP £24.99 Available from ibeani.co.uk



LONDON MUMS LOVE CHRISTMAS



The Tails Cable Guy Controller & Smartphone Stand

Sonic Collectible Tails 8 Inch Cable Guy is designed to hold and charge gamepads, such as the DualShock 4 and Xbox One Wireless Controller, in addition to smart phones. It stands approx. 20 cm tall and comes with a 3 m long microUSB cable with lightning adapter.

RRP: £19.99

Available to buy from Zavvi
www.zavvi.com

Baby reins by ONK

These style savvy toddler and baby safety reins come in a range of standout, look-at-me-designs including camouflage, leopard print and stars. Designed in the UK and bursting with personality, these reins are perfect for little explorers.

RRP: £12.99

www.onk-uk.com



Gadgets



Speaker Pillow – Chill out or Rock out with Sleep'n Sound!

Speaker Pillow – Sleep'n Sound (74 x 48cm) It features a small undetectable speaker concealed within to unwind to your favourite music, podcast, mindfulness app, or learn a new language – all from the comfort of your bed. Made in the UK, this pillow is filled with soft, cosy hollowfibre and finished with a smooth microfibre cover. The perfect gift for music lovers, bedtime readers and podcast listeners.

RRP: £19.99 FREE delivery

Available from Amazon.com

Puro Sound Labs BT2200 Kids Volume-Limiting Over-Ear Wireless Headphones

Junior Jams Bluetooth Headphones are designed specifically for children: the volume is limited to 85db to protect their hearing without compromising on sound quality. Additionally, the unique daisy-chain feature allows two pairs of headphones to playback the same source simultaneously. They are an ideal Christmas gift.

RRP: £49.99

Available from Amazon

Immerse Noise-Cancelling Bluetooth Headphones by KitSound

These Immerse headphones are not just a great gift but a real game changer for those that struggle to hear their music in noisy cafes or on their daily commute because they use noise-cancelling technology. These headphones can really emphasise the bass on movies and songs.

RRP £60.00

KitSound products are available in most high street and online retailers. www.kitsound.co.uk





Cool Cat Stainless Steel Straw Cup

Munchkin's NEW Cool Cat Stainless Steel Straw Cup is perfect for home, school and on the go. It is insulated, and the spill-proof straw keeps drinks cool for up to 15 hours.

RRP £14.99

www.munchkin.co.uk



Winter Sleeping Bag with Detachable Sleeves – Nautical

Treat your little one this Christmas with Slumbersac's Nautical inspired Sleeping Bag, featuring detachable sleeves, that you can remove if your child is too hot and re-attach when needed.

RRP: From £30.99

www.slumbersac.co.uk

Fashion

Vicki Vegan backpack – KeriKit

This stunning luxurious leopard print nylon backpack is trimmed with durable vegan leather and luxe gold hardware. Lightweight and practical with perfectly-placed pockets and clever compartments, this bag is perfect for mums and mumpreneurs. Founder Keri juggles her business with her husband & 3 kids.

RRP £145

www.kerikit.com



Kids Ski Jacket and Pant Set by Mountain warehouse

Mountain Warehouse has created a new clothing range for kids to protect them from the cold weather while allowing them to feel free and play outdoor. We used these items on a ski holiday in France with temperatures below zero and always arrived totally dry at the end of the ski slopes. The set is fleece lined for warmth, the jacket features zipped pockets and elasticated cuffs with Velcro tabs. The pants include side pockets, adjustable braces and ankle zips (which make it easy to fit trousers over any footwear including ski boots).

RRP: £59.99

www.mountainwarehouse.com



Vilac Polar White Classic Ride-on

RRP: £100

www.hippychick.com

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