

FREE

Issue 34 Winter 2021-2022



London Mums



Don McLean



Dave Hill



Alan Clark

**Star
mum!**

**Fearless alpine
ski racer Chemmy
Alcott on breaking
records both on
and off the piste**

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Editor's letter



Photographer Simon Williams

The Christmas spirit is in the air despite the difficult pandemic times. This edition aims to help us find relief from stress through entertainment. My big interview with fearless alpine ski racer and star mum Chemmy Alcott sheds light on how she overcomes big challenges both on and off the piste.

This issue is particularly close to my heart because it includes three interviews with music icons who are now finally back on the road: Mr 'American Pie' Don McLean celebrates 50 years of his huge hit single and remarkable music career; Guitarist and singer Dave Hill tells why his fellow Slade rock band mates are not resting on their Glam laurels; and, last but not least, Alan Clark spills the beans about Dire Straits ahead of the Dire Straits Legacy 2022 world tour.

For me personally, 2021 has been a remarkable year despite the pandemic, mainly because I self-published my debut book which enjoyed enormous success with the public and media both in Italy and in the Italian community in Great Britain over the summer. I learnt so much in the process that I have decided to share my knowledge through a series of workshops to help write and self-publish a book. Email me for more information.

My book *Noi di Lido Adriano - Storie di Romagna* provides the perfect escapism during the forthcoming wintery evenings as it is all about holiday-making on the Adriatic Coast in Italy between the '60s and today.

In this magazine edition you'll also find suggestions for happy destinations in Tuscany and a recipe for Panettone to get you in the festive mood.

Find out the trendiest gifts in Santa's sack in the London Mums' Christmas gift guide.

I hope you will enjoy reading this Winter issue as much as the London Mums' team have loved making it!

Spread the word - joining London Mums is totally and utterly FREE!

Monica Costa
Editor in chief, Founder of London Mums & mum
of 15-year-old Diego monica@londonmums.org.uk, [@londonmums](https://www.instagram.com/londonmums)

Monica

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THE BIG INTERVIEW



Chemmy Alcott

Editorial

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FEARLESS ALPINE SKI RACER CHEMMY ALCOTT ON BREAKING RECORDS BOTH ON AND OFF THE PISTE

By Monica Costa



Chimene Mary "Chemmy" Crawford Alcott is the most fearless mum of two I have ever met in my entire life. Beautiful and confident Chemmy is the real deal. She is a former English World Cup alpine ski racer who competed in all five skiing disciplines (downhill, super G, giant slalom, slalom and combined). She is a fun mum and has a 'dream' TV job these days as the new lead presenter on hit BBC show Ski Sunday alongside Ed Leigh.

Not many people know that Chemmy broke not just many bones while skiing but also the world record for number of beer mats flipped and caught in 30 seconds and made it into Guinness World Records.

What is your biggest achievement in life so far?

Chemmy: I will have to give two – one professional and one personal. Professionally, it was making history, becoming the first British Athlete to ever win a run in the World Cup. To come from Britain and be competitive with the rest of the World, inspiring generations to come to know they can be the best even if they face hurdles. Personally, it's being able to have a family and a profession at the same time. I have always wanted to be a mum and I didn't want to sacrifice who I was as a person. Being ambitious in my profession has definitely helped me to be a better mum, so I am hoping that I have a pretty good balance at succeeding at both.

You have broken various Guinness World Records over the years. What is your biggest challenge as a mum of two young children?

Chemmy: Learning to ride the rollercoaster of parenthood is certainly the biggest parenting challenge. You have the most epic highs being a parent but there are some really frustrating times too. It's knowing to appreciate every moment. It's difficult because you want your children to be happy but

sometimes they have to show anger and frustration in order to grow and develop personally. The biggest challenge is letting go of always wanting to make them smile. I'm a bit of a joker; I like being the playful one in the parenthood and I have to remember that I have to do the discipline side too.

What is your parenting style?

Chemmy: I am all about energy. I am absent quite a lot of the time because I am working, but when I am present I really try to be very, very present. Really active, lots of doing, I am all about activities, sharing family adventures together. I love watching them face their fears and pushing and supporting them through them. Seeing the personal satisfaction, they feel at the other side is incredible. ▶





What is your favourite London activity?

Chemmy: I have two. We like going on family paddleboard adventures, so we get picnics and we get on the paddleboards, with the boys sit on the front in their lifejackets. I love that! Another thing we went to recently was the Sea Life Centre and that was a massive hit and the boys ask me every day if we can go back there.

What's the secret of a happy marriage?

Chemmy: Understanding that you will have highs and lows in your marriage. It's very challenging for

us because we work together, we are in each other's pockets the whole time professionally and then we spend huge chunks of time away from each other. Right now, Dougie is away for five weeks. So, I am the parent on duty the whole time, which is hard for me but it's also hard for him because he misses the kids. We try to make sure each other is involved in every decision. And just listening to each other. We are best friends first and share all the same hobbies so that is the success that we have.

We met at a conference lunch about CBD and its use to deal with chronic pain and poor sleep. What is your personal experience with this natural ailment?

Chemmy: I've lived with pain every day since the 2nd December 2010. And since January this year, I've been taking Dragonfly CBD regularly and I am now pain-free. It's the difference between seeing life in black and white and having a life with sunshine and rainbows now. I just wake up every morning and I feel like I have infinite possibilities. I sleep better and I am way more neutral with my emotions.

What are you up to next?

Chemmy: For me, I am preparing my body for the winter. I have five Ski Sunday shows coming up, then it's the Winter Olympics! I want to spend as much time with my boys as possible because I know it's about to get really, really busy professionally.

Photos by Georgina Viney.



Chemmy Alcott is brand ambassador for the evidence backed, Dragonfly CBD range of oils and skincare remedies – www.dragonflycbd.com



SOUTH LONDON BASED MUM AND BABY SINGING GROUPS TO BOOST YOUR MOOD

Are you experiencing an ongoing low mood, lack of interest in things, or anxiety since having a baby? If so, you may be suffering symptoms of post-natal depression (PND). It is incredibly common in the year after giving birth and can be difficult to cope with and talk about.



Breathe Arts Health Research have created Melodies for Mums, a pioneering intervention for post-natal depression that has been scientifically proven to help. Groups of mums and babies get together in a welcoming and supportive environment and sing. It's a fun way to boost your mood, bond with your baby and be around other people who understand what you're going through.

Get involved

The next series of singing groups kicks off in January and runs for 10 weeks. If you're a new mum with a baby aged 0 – 9 months, living in London and currently experiencing symptoms of PND you may be eligible to join. Get in touch at m4m@breatheahr.org or register your interest online today.

About the sessions

Sessions are informal and relaxed, and you don't need to have any previous musical experience to take part. It's not your average mum and baby singing group – there's no *Wheels on the Bus* here. Instead, you'll be singing anything from folk, to lullabies and gospel, in Kiluba, Swahili, English and Native American.

Your baby will get a lot out of the sessions, but the focus is on making you feel good. Mums talk about experiencing a real lift, an increase in confidence and energy, and a release of tension.

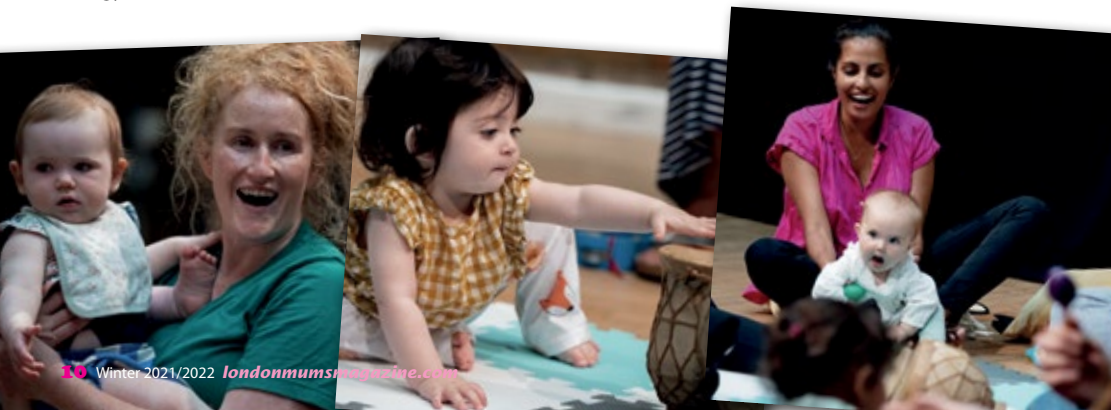
"In all the Melodies for Mums sessions the music just lifted our spirits and reminded me again how music is a driving force for connection and healing."
Melodies for Mums Participant

The science behind the groups

Melodies for Mums is a scientifically proven intervention. In 2016, the Royal College of Music and Imperial College took 150 mothers with symptoms of PND and split them into three groups, each receiving a different type of care – ten weeks of usual care, ten weeks of social groups and ten weeks of social singing groups. They found that those in the social singing groups had significantly faster improvements in their PND. In fact, about three quarters of them had recovered from their symptoms by the end of the ten-week project.

What's next for Melodies for Mums?

The research project is ongoing, with the long-term goal that group singing sessions will eventually be rolled out as a clinical service within the NHS. By joining the groups, you'll be part of this study, meaning that other women across the country will hopefully have access to this joyful programme in the future.



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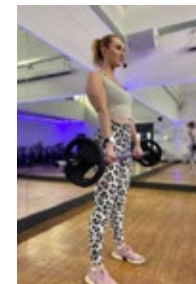
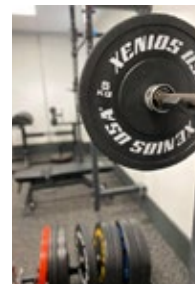
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It was a real honour for me to chat with Don McLean, who is an iconic sing-songwriter and author of masterpieces such as *American Pie*, *Vincent (Starry, Starry Night)*, *Castles in the Air*, *Cryin*, and *I Love You So*, *Wonderful Baby*, *Since I Don't Have you*, *It's Just The Sun & If We Try*.

During the interview (on Zoom) he briefly sang for me to demonstrate how to control a slow song. He was charming and wise. I learnt so much about music through his thoughts on song-writing. He has inspired so many generations of musicians. Madonna, Drake and Garth Brooks are amongst many artists who have also recorded Don's songs.

American Pie was released in 1971 as a double-A single and it charted within a month. Interest from the media and public sent the single to #1 in the U.S. and Don to international stardom. Despite decades of attempted interpretations, Don has always remained enigmatic as to the songs meaning & the mystery remains to this day!

Now, 50 years later, *American Pie* is named one of the top 5 songs of the 20th Century (by the Recording Industry of America).

A New York native, Don McLean is one of the most revered and respected songwriters in American history. His song *And I Love You So* was the theme for

He is also an inductee of the Grammy Hall Of Fame, Songwriters Hall of Fame and is a recipient of a BBC Lifetime achievement award. This year he was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, which can be found in front of The Pie Hole Bakery, between Hollywood and Vine.

Prince Harry and Megan Markle's wedding. *American Pie* appears in the Avengers' *Black Widow* and the upcoming Tom Hanks movie *Finch*. Next up for McLean is a children's book expected to be released in 2022. Don is such a genius but yet always humble.

Q: Don, you will be touring again in 2022.

Don: Yes, tickets are going on sale for this tour in Europe, the UK, Ireland and Scotland centred around the 50th anniversary of the *American Pie* album.

Q: You have written such iconic songs. I don't think there is a person on the planet who doesn't know *American Pie*. Which song is your favourite one out of your huge repertoire?

Mr 'American Pie'

DON MCLEAN TALKS ABOUT HIS UK TOUR TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF HIS HUGE HIT SINGLE AND REMARKABLE MUSIC CAREER

By Monica Costa

Don: I have been lucky I have favourite songs that are also my most famous hits. Sinatra, for example, hated *Strangers in the Night* and that was his number one hit.

Vincent is probably one of the best songs I wrote and I always enjoy singing it. I love performing them all but that is a special song.

What I tried to do when I was starting out at 17 was to walk around at night and sing very slow Nat King Cole and Sinatra songs trying to control them like when a photographer has a control over milliseconds. Musicians have to have a fine touch and have control over very small amounts of time. That's what I was working on. Today everything is fast and that doesn't require any subtlety. You just yell it out there. I was working on something that was subtle back then and I was lucky to have *Vincent* and *I love you so* that became famous despite being slow songs.

Q: What kind of audience do you get at your gigs these days?

Don: It's quite a mixture. Whatever you try to do you want to make sure that you do it at your absolute best. You have to always be 100%. That does not necessarily mean that you have to be in perfect health. For example, I love cabaret singer Mabel Mercer from the 1930s who was adored by elite wealthy people of Europe. She would do shows with another wonderful cabaret singer, Bobby Short. They would play Town Hall in Florida, New York City and all the richest people would show up to listen to them. Mabel had a lung removed so she sang in a more breathless way and spoke the words more than singing them. She was actually better in this version than when she was young and used to sing very high notes. She evolved into a new style.

Al Jolson, the greatest entertainer of the first half of the 20th century, used to sing very high notes but when he got older he was frustrated that he could not reach the high notes any more. He went to Korea to play to the boys but his piano player suggested to him to sing the low notes. And he created a whole new style which was very effective.

You don't have to sing perfectly as you grow older. You can find a new way of communicating.

Q: So how do you communicate with your audience now that you are more mature? What's your new trick out of the hat?

Don: I keep writing new songs. I've got an album with new songs coming out and I'll throw three or four of those in a show. When that happens, it changes the chemical value of the other songs. The new song





'on the block' stands up against the old songs and creates a new vibe. If you can do four or five of those successfully you've got a whole new act.

You can become very stagnant in this business. When artists get older, they get tired and bored of playing the material they're known for. They try to fake it and do it for the money but it's not fun.

What makes it fun is if you can create new things all the time and then the old songs are more fun to play because they're contrasted against new colours.

When older artists play material for 20-30-40 years, sometimes they start to screw around with the songs and they mess up because they're trying to keep their own interest in it. I've never heard Mick Jagger sing any of his songs that way. He always sings them like he always did. He might be bored with it but he knows the audience loves it. *Satisfaction* is always sung in a certain way. At the end of his career, Elvis Presley ruined a lot of songs like *Don't be cruel* to play them in new ways.

Q: What else would you like to achieve on top of all your successes?

Don: I want to surprise people with a new record. If I can't do that, at least I want to make an album that, if you look back on 10 years from now, you'd think that they are good songs that some young singer might

want to use. That's all I care about: writing good songs and giving a great performance on stage.

Now I am focusing on the 2022 tour that will begin in September, the new album and a documentary movie.

Q: How has the music scene changed since your beginning?

Don: We have a Black and Hispanic audience now that has created an enormous wealth for their artists. This is the new reality. It's not a white game anymore, but it's for all the talented people regardless of where they come from. New kinds of music. New kinds of energy. It's very good and I'm just thankful that anybody wants to hear anything from me because it's so different.

Monica: Our time is up and it's such a shame but the date of your London gig is in my diary (4 October 2022 at the Palladium).

Don: I won't forget you, Monica, that's for sure.

**Tickets for Don McLean
50th Anniversary of American
Pie Tour are available via
<https://donmclean.com>**



WANT TO KEEP THE KIDS BUSY THROUGHOUT THE WINTER?

MEET BOKEN!

Boken, the Little Dog with the Big Heart is a real life, fun-loving Miniature Schnauzer who lives in Spain with his mum, Sara Mastriforte and dad, Neil Egerton. He's also one of the newest kids' cartoon characters around, and has just released his brand new website, two latest books and a great FREE ebook!

Boken the cartoon character was launched worldwide in March last year with a new website and his first two free books. These have already been a major success with over 50,000 audiobooks and tens of thousands of ebooks downloaded since then. He's also an award winner with his third book, *'Boken's Big Trip to England!'* picking up Bronze in the e-Lit Awards 2021.

Now, he's just launched his two latest books and they're even bigger and more adventure-packed! *'Boken's Awesome Autumn Adventure!'* Parts 1 and 2 are about Boken's adventures in Ireland and Spain with his parents and have over 300 superb illustrations and seven videos to keep kids engrossed for hours.

They're available right now as both ebooks and audiobooks from the new website at www.bokenthedog.com as well as all major digital retailers including Amazon, Apple, Nook, Kobo, Scribd and major libraries.

'Boken's Awesome Autumn Adventure!' Part 2 also comes with an amazing extra FREE book which can be downloaded from the website – *'Boken's Dream Knight'* using the special code provided in book 5.

New website with even more free activities!

The Boken team have also beefed up his website to include tons more free fun stuff for kids. The first website was a massive help to parents all over the world during the global lockdown last year. Crammed with free games, maths puzzles, crosswords, word search, Sudoku, number search, colouring-in pictures, spot the difference, storytelling ideas and more, it kept children occupied for hours – and gave stressed-out parents a well-earned break!

Boken's new website has even more to help children have fun, be creative and learn, with free ebooks, free audiobooks, blogs, videos, songs, Bokeneer's Fun page full of even more free activities, Boken's Buddies Club and a Pets' Gallery where kids can upload photos of their pets.

Brand new on the site is a special page devoted to helping children deal with bullying. This actually came about because Boken was receiving lots of messages on his social media pages from youngsters around the world who were being bullied. The new 'Nice to be Nice' page helps kids identify bullying, tells them what to do, and how to stay safe both in the real world and online.

To meet Boken and discover literally days and days' worth of great free kids' activities – and hours of peace and quiet for you – go to www.bokenthedog.com!

Arrrhhooooo!
(That's Boken's very loudest and happiest howl!)



Rock Icons!

GUITARIST AND SINGER
DAVE HILL TALKS
SLADE AND TELLS
LONDON MUMS WHY
HE NEVER RESTED ON
HIS GLAM LAURELS

By Monica Costa

Slade is without doubt one of the most exciting bands to come out of Great Britain in the past 50 years. With their unique blend of perfect pop rock 'n' roll, outrageous flamboyance and pure fun, and no less than 23 Top-20 singles of which six were No-1 smash hits plus six smash albums, Slade have become a firm favourite in the hearts of pop fans all over the world.

I have seen them live three times already and I look forward to their Christmas gig in London every year. Slade are pure energy and a band that leaves you with positive vibes. I have been

lucky enough to meet the band backstage several times and I really appreciate the talents on and off the stage.

Founding member Dave Hill is the charismatic leader and Lead Guitar of the latest formation and full of energy even in his mid 70s. He makes a good team with John Berry who joined in 2003 on Lead Vocals, Bass, Acoustic Guitar and Violin. Slade today are still one of the most exciting bands on the road, and their stage performance is a dynamic, powerful and exhilarating roller-coaster ride of pure unadulterated rock 'n' roll.

Q: Dave, how have you been during the pandemic?

Dave: I could not do any shows for 18 months and not touring has been tough. I have always been playing all around the world since 1966. A pandemic and a country in lockdown have been unprecedented in our lifetime. I wanted to be positive so I kept my brain occupied writing a solo album.

I have also collaborated on a glam fashion nostalgia book about my clothes with great photographs and drawings by fashion historian MJ who researched all the flamboyant clothes I used to wear. It will be out in a few months.

Q: Slade's chart career has spanned six decades. It seems incredible but your enduring songs *Far Far Away*, *Cum On Feel The Noize* and *Coz I Luv You* are still featured today in TV commercials for some of the World's biggest companies. What's your secret to stay an evergreen band?

Dave: When we wrote those songs, our music was so new and fresh. We first hit the road in 1966, touring throughout Great Britain and Europe and becoming a regular concert attraction.

Even the Christmas song is a continual success. For this reason, we undertake an annual UK *Merry Christmas Everybody* tour in December.

No-one could have planned our career and that we would have written all these classics. Our manager, Jimi Hendrix Experience manager, Chas Chandler, told us: 'You are a breath of fresh air' and with him we achieved our first chart hit in May 1971 with the Bobby Marchan song *Get Down And Get With It*. Then, released in October of the same year, *Coz I Luv You* became our first No-1 and a huge hit across Europe.

We were working class guys on council houses. We had a long apprenticeship before we even saw the light of day. The music was more important back then without computers and streaming. There were Vinyl records only. We were young and glam and we changed the face and the look of music. The period of the 70s was very creative. We could consistently write great hits. Amazon Audible has published a whole audiobook based on my autobiography in which I spill the beans about my life story. You get more out of it than the book as you get the emotions out of the story written in my book. ▶



Throughout the seventies, Slade became one of Europe's biggest bands, touring and recording continually and making regular trips to America, Japan and other parts of the world. Our hits are synonymous with the era: *Take Me Bak 'Ome*, *Mama We'er All Crazee Now*, *Cum On Feel The Noize*, *Gudbye T' Jane*, along with many others provided a soundtrack to the Glam Generation and are still today heavily featured on any retrospective of the time.

At the beginning of the eighties, we were invited to appear at the Reading Rock Festival, a massive annual event which attracted over 100,000 people. We stole the show, giving some of the world's biggest rock bands a serious run for their money whilst kindling new interest from a whole new audience. As a result, we signed a new record deal and unleashed the anthem *We'll Bring The House Down*, which reached the Top-10 in the UK in January 1981.

But we never rested on our Glam laurels!

Throughout the start of the eighties we toured and recorded as we were considered a major force in British pop 'n' rock. I have continued to tour the world with Slade until just before the pandemic.

Q: Tell me about your solo album...

Dave: During lockdown I have written enough music for three albums. I'll release them next year. In terms of style, it's a mix of Slade sounds and different English Midlands country music. But during the live gigs with Slade I only play Slade songs because the audience wants that.

It's always great to talk to you. I could do this all day long. I look forward to seeing you at the London Christmas gig on 10 December in Islington. It's our tradition now!



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THE REAL ITALIAN PANETTONE

Serves 8

This Recipe for the real Italian PANETTONE was kindly donated to London Mums by Catherine Fulvio, TV chef and award-winning author of *Eat Like an Italian*. Panettone is a mouth-watering dessert not just for Christmas.



Catherine Fulvio: "I had the pleasure of being taught how to make panettone from the Fiasconaro brothers, master bakers in the town of Castelbuono, Sicily. Their cakes have truly gone into orbit, as they have supplied to NASA in the past. This is my simpler version of this beautiful cake."

150ml milk, warmed
2 tsp dried yeast
100g golden caster sugar
3 eggs, beaten
175g butter, melted
3 tbsp Marsala
1 tsp vanilla extract
500g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
1/2 tsp salt
150g raisins
4 tbsp orange juice or brandy
75g candied peel

To glaze:

1 egg, beaten
2 tbsp flaked almonds

- 1 Place the milk and yeast in a small bowl and whisk together.
- 2 Whisk the sugar and eggs together in a bowl until well incorporated and light, then add in the melted butter, Marsala and vanilla.
- 3 Place the flour and salt into a mixer fitted with a dough hook. Add in the yeast and milk mixture along with the egg mixture and knead for 5 minutes on a low speed. Cover and leave to rise in a warm, draught-free place until it doubles in size, which will take about 2 hours.
- 4 Meanwhile, soak the raisins in the orange juice or brandy in a small bowl.

- 5 Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4. Butter and line a 20cm deep cake tin. Make a 10cm collar with double thickness parchment paper and line the sides of the tin.
- 6 Tip the dough out on a floured surface, mix in the raisins and candied peel and lightly knead for 3–4 minutes. The dough should be soft, so oil your hands well to handle it. Roll the dough into a ball and place it into the tin. Leave it to rise for 30 minutes.
- 7 Brush the top with the beaten egg and sprinkle over the almonds. Bake for about 55 minutes, or until well risen and golden. Transfer to a cooling rack.

Catherine Fulvio has often talked about how to embrace 'la dolce vita' in no time, even in rainy UK! Catherine herself has embraced some Italian mantras:

Stay slim like an Italian: 'Stop when you are full' is a well-known Italian mantra and key to their status as one of the slimmest nations in Europe. Carbs, cheese and glugs of olive oil are all relished – but in moderation!

Work like an Italian: Drop everything for an impromptu trip to the local café with colleagues and never discuss work over lunch!

Shop like an Italian: Italians often shop twice a day for fresh, local produce for lunch and dinner, and use the opportunity to socialise with their neighbours.

Exercise like an Italian: Incorporate your daily exercise into mealtimes. The tradition is to put on your Sunday best and 'promenade' around town after a seven-course Sunday lunch.

THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE WHEN YOUNG

By Rita Kobrak

Five years ago we decided to move from London to Italy with the intention of giving our two children the opportunity of learning a second language and get to know their Italian heritage. Now aged 13 and 8, Alessia and Sebastiano are completely bilingual and are enjoying learning a third language. I teach English in a primary school here and see how easily the children pick up the language the earlier they start and can imitate pronunciation at 5 or 6 years of age which they can no longer do at 10 or 11. This gave me the idea of organising language camps for families in the summer for all ages so that families can enjoy a Tuscan holiday, delicious food, warm weather and spectacular scenery, but also go home with a basic knowledge of the Italian language and some cooking skills.

Here are a few benefits of learning a second language when young.

1. Kids learn faster and easier.
2. Language learning improves problem solving and creativity. Studies show that it strengthens decision-making.
3. It is a good way to connect with other cultures and build tolerance.
4. Learning a second language boosts confidence.
5. It's a great way to see the world and meet new people!
6. Studies show that Learning a second language improves communication skills and vocabulary in your native language.
7. When you learn a second language new brain networks are created making it easier to learn a third or fourth language.
8. It is good for the brain at any age!
9. It improves job opportunities in the future.
10. Best of all, it's fun and sociable!



We organise fun Italian language and cooking courses for all ages at Villa Radicata plus yoga and fitness breaks. We are in a stunning, less touristy area of Tuscany so our guests have plenty of opportunity to practice their Italian with locals, as very few speak English in the village.

Contact

Villa Radicata, Caprese Michelangelo, Tuscany.
Closest airport is Perugia (Ryanair)

www.holiday-villa-in-tuscany.com

Rita: Whatsapp 00447983821282 / 00393495018679

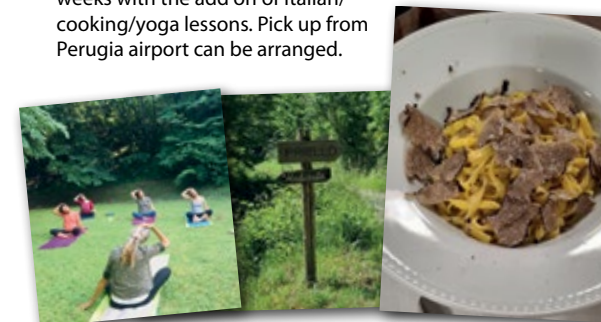
10% discount for London Mums

Price for 7 days, all meals, all classes, excursion to the medieval town of Anghiari £950. Children under 12 half price. Under 5's free. Weekly rentals from £2500.

Why not give a Christmas present with a difference this year?

The villa sleeps 10. 5 bedrooms/4 bathrooms, plenty of outside and inside dining space, fully equipped kitchen, large pool and garden plus outdoor pizza oven.

We run fully catered breaks and also self-catering weeks with the add on of Italian/cooking/yoga lessons. Pick up from Perugia airport can be arranged.



Win a Planet Mermaid Goodie Bag!

Here at Planet Mermaid, children's fairy tale dreams come true with 100% swimmable mermaid tails. We design and create mermaids' swimwear and accessories right here in the UK. Exploring the Mermaids' world is an exciting adventure!

For those who want to go that extra mile and swim like a mermaid, there are plenty of mermaid tails for adults and kids to choose from. To finish the look you can also accompany your tail with a mermaid top or mermaid bikini, mermaid leggings, monofin, mermaid accessories including scrunchies, mermaid T-shirts, and swim bags. Please visit www.planetmermaid.com for some perfect Christmas treats!

Go on, let your imagination shine through, and enter our December Colour & Win Competition. Please send your coloured picture with name and age of child to win@planetmermaid.com and why not share your work of art on #planetmermaidcomps – we'd love to see them and share them with fellow mermaid lovers. Please note the competition is open to ages 3-16 worldwide.

Planet Mermaid launched a monthly Colour & Win Competition to help combat boredom during lockdown earlier in the year.

The technological boom means that children are becoming computer experts at a very young age. However, there are some negative sides to this – experts believe time spent on social media or using technology can directly be tied to increased depression.

Studies show that colouring calms down the busiest of minds. Thanks to its basic, repetitive motions, colouring engages parts of the cerebral cortex while relaxing the amygdala, the brain's fear centre.

Each month, children email in their completed themed picture, and a winner is randomly selected. Prizes vary but each winner receives a Goody Bag which includes a

Deluxe Mermaid/Merman Tail Set worth over £90.

The competition has been a huge success, with entries being sent from all around the world. In fact, June's winner was a 7-year-old girl named Amellia who was from Indonesia.



So who are Planet Mermaid?

For over ten years, Planet Mermaid has been capturing a part of life that is vanishing for some children – and our loyal mermaids are proof that it doesn't just sell swimwear, it sells an experience that keeps on giving.

Most little girls can only dream of becoming a mermaid, but when Planet Mermaid swam into the swimwear scene back in 2009, these dreams could suddenly become real. And now there are Planet Mermaid mermaids all over the globe, fighting the good fight against climate change and plastic-free oceans.

Growing up with Planet Mermaid has almost become a rite of passage for many of our customers, and it's easy to see why younger siblings are often quick to follow in the fins of their older sisters or brothers.

We just love the fact that everyone can get involved. Have you tried mermaid swimming yet? Go on have a splash and join the fun!

www.planetmermaid.com

Colour Me & Win! • • •

HAVE A Merry Christmas!



Win a Goodie Bag! It's easy! Just email us your Planet Mermaid coloured picture, share it on any of our platforms below and tag it #planetmermaidcomps

WWW.PLANETMERMAID.COM

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Email: win@planetmermaid.com

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Alan Clark talks the DIRE STRAITS LEGACY



Ahead of their 2022 world tour As close as you can get to the Dire Straits!

Editor Monica Costa has caught up with keyboardist Alan Clark, one of five members of Dire Straits Legacy who recorded and toured as members of Dire Straits, and was recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a significant member of Dire Straits.

Like millions of other people around the world I'm a big fan of Dire Straits and I can recall many special moments of my life that have their music as the soundtrack. I am glad Dire Straits Legacy will bring the music of Dire Straits played by musicians who made it around the UK in 2022. The band topped the charts with hits from 79 through to the early 90s that included *Sultans of Swing*, *Romeo & Juliette*, *Money For Nothing*, *Brothers In Arms* & *Walk Of Life*. Fans can expect to hear these and many more favourites at The Indigo 02, London on 15th January 2022.

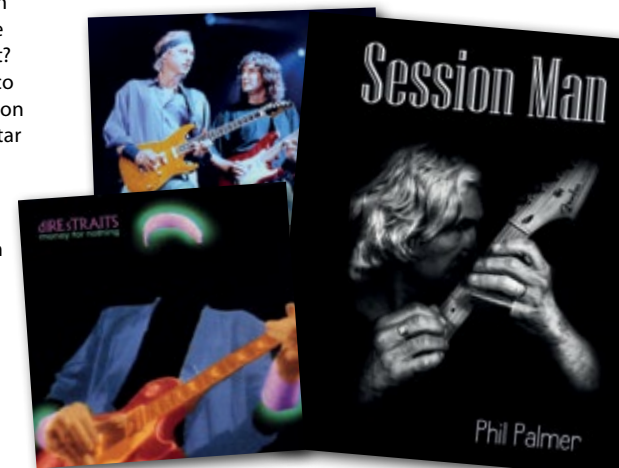
Of course, Dire Straits cannot exist without Mark Knopfler, but Dire Straits Legacy is the next best thing, along with the exciting addition to the band of the hugely successful Bass player Trevor Horn!

To join them is Guitarist Phil Palmer and percussionist Danny Cummings, who played on Dire Straits' *On Every Street* record and world tour and the *On the Night* live record. Sax player Mel Collins featured on Dire Straits' *Love Over Gold*, *Alchemy* and *Twisting by the Pool* records as well as touring for several years with Dire Straits and he's currently touring the world with reformed King Crimson. And who can forget Jack Sonni, Dire Straits' "man in the red coat" dancing around the stage on the *Brothers in Arms* world tour and Live Aid concert? He's with Dire Straits Legacy too! Frontman Marco Caviglia is one of the world's leading authorities on the music of Dire Straits and Mark Knopfler's guitar style and Primiano Di Biase is one of Italy's most sought after keyboard players.

Q: Alan, Dire Straits Legacy will be on tour soon. What can fans of Dire Straits expect from this formation?

Alan: What we have is a collection of my Dire Straits colleagues. We get together occasionally to play for fun. Dire Straits Legacy was actually created as a fun band. I've spent about 20% of my life as a member of Dire Straits and then when the band stopped playing together in the

early 90s, I spent quite a lot of time not playing Dire Straits music and then 10 years ago we put a band together called The Straits for a charity show at the Royal Albert Hall. It was a tremendous success. Then I had the idea of continuing occasionally with my Dire Straits colleagues for fun. Because we were involved in the process back then, we play the songs better than anyone. Of course, we don't have Mark Knopfler, who was the most important member of Dire Straits, but we have our Italian frontman Marco Caviglia who masters all songs to perfection. He even knows different tour versions. It's incredible. We'll make a very good noise, I promise you that. We'll play all the hits and a few other songs from various albums. ▶





Q: What's your favourite song to perform and why?

Alan: Maybe *Private Investigations* because it is such a great song to play. We often choose to play it as the opening song when we come on stage although it is a bit daring as normally bands play an up-tempo kind of song. PI draws the audience in. There's an interesting story about that song. People assume that it is about private investigators. But in actual fact, Mark actually told me that it is about the process of writing a song in the dead of night. Teasing up the entire song is an intense experience and takes maximum concentration. It is a very clever piece of writing. Most of Mark's songs have a much deeper meaning than they were initially portrayed.

Q: Which one of your own songs is your favourite?

Alan: It has to be my latest song, which is a piano solo piece. I have a piano solo album called *Backstory* which came out last week.

Q: Alan, you've had such a great music career. You were recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a significant member of Dire Straits.

Alan: That award has changed my mantelpiece. When I first heard about the award, I did not take it seriously because it's more of an American thing. But then I saw that there was a long line of musicians who had received it. So, I bought a very expensive tuxedo and had a lovely weekend in Cleveland, Ohio. I came back with a very heavy trophy.



Q: How heavy is it?

Alan: I lift it up with one arm, but if I had an intruder, it would make a useful weapon. (*Giggles*)

Q: Will you be bringing out a new Dire Straits album with new songs?

Alan: We have no desire to bring new Dire Straits songs out but we recently produced an album called "3 Chord Trick" including eleven songs. It's an album of songs made in the old way – 4 guys in a room at the same time bouncing ideas around to find the optimum solutions for groove, structure, melody, and atmosphere. The way albums used to be made with passion, care and a mysterious and elusive alchemy that defies explanation. Listen to it.

DIRE STRAITS LEGACY featuring Trevor Horn & Alan Clark & Phil Palmer from Dire Straits will be performing at the O2 Indigo, London on 15th January 2022.

Tickets available via: <https://www.theo2.co.uk/events/detail/dire-straits-legacy>

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LONDON MUMS' EDITOR MONICA COSTA'S DEBUT BOOK AND NEW WORKSHOPS TO HELP WRITE AND SELF-PUBLISH A BOOK

By Donatella Barbini



Monica Costa's debut memoir (in Italian) *Noi di Lido Adriano – Storie di Romagna* is a book about holiday-making on the Adriatic Coast in Italy between the '60s and today.

This book idea and project is the brainchild of our Italian-Londoner editor who wrote and self-published it and enjoyed enormous success with the public and raving reviews in the media both in Italy and in the Italian community in Great Britain. Asked by wannabe authors to provide tutorials on how to get a book done from A to Z, Monica will also launch themed workshops in 2022.

400 books sold in 20 days is no small achievement for a debuting author: *Noi di Lido Adriano – Storie di Romagna* has clearly been the favourite reading on the beaches of the Ravenna Riviera this summer 2021.



Readers were enthusiastic not only because they found their own memories reflected in Monica's stories but also because her sentimental style of writing brought out intense emotions, in addition to the laughs for the hilarious characters whose stories continue to be the talk of town on the beaches of Romagna, as well as the summer adventures that remain indelible through the decades.

This book not only contains very intriguing stories but also 40 pages of unique and historical photographs that have the same effect of a time machine.

Born in Faenza (Italy), raised in Bologna and a Londoner for the past 23 years, Monica Costa has a special bond with Lido Adriano. A real "love" for the summer in Romagna. As Monica often said during many presentations held last August, "the book was born from the heart and from the exaggerated love for my region". Two decades spent in London have made her understand the importance of her Romagna roots.

The idea of writing a book about Lido Adriano and Romagna started from the author's desire to share the somewhat reckless adventures of her childhood and adolescence with her (now teenage) son Diego (born in London) including anecdotes from toga parties, boat hitch-hiking (an original aquatic 'hitchhiking' aimed at passing boats), 'trips' on the high seas with the windsurf.

The generation from the 70s and 80s is defined as 'free range' for their freer and unconscious way of life. This is because compared to the big cities, Lido Adriano is a safe place to experience more freedom. Back then helicopter or tiger parenting did not exist. Mums and dads were more relaxed and left their children on the beach alone for hours to encourage their offspring to assess risks by themselves and learn the 'art of living'.

Noi di Lido Adriano includes hundreds of interviews with people and witnesses of those crazy years,



anecdotes and vintage photos. One of the most interesting interviews is with the lifeguard-singer Renato Ricci that reveals the myth of the renowned beach womanisers, famous throughout Italy and abroad.

Many readers have commented on the Facebook group named after the title that they were often moved to tears and to laughs in equal measure while reading the book.

Noi di Lido Adriano – Storie di Romagna is not just the ideal reading during the summer but especially during the grey winter afternoons, when there is a need to recall or imagine moments of carefree life. The stories of Lido Adriano and its people fascinate and involve as much as those of the protagonists of the most beautiful novels.

Copies of the first limited edition (in Italian) are available from <https://londonmumsmagazine.com>.

To find out more about the forthcoming 'write and publish your own book' workshop, send an email to info@londonmumsmagazine.com

Author: Monica Costa

Genre: memoir

Publisher: Free Range Press (a sister brand by London Mums magazine)

RRP: £16

ISBN: 978-1-3999-0046-1

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Christmas Gift Guide



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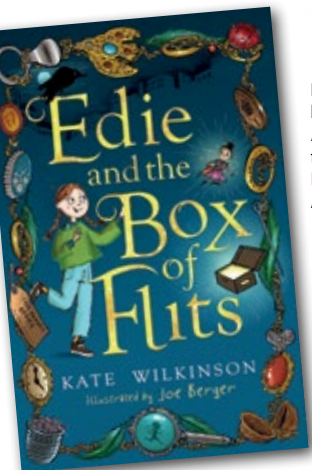


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