

A close-up portrait of actress Paola Cortellesi, smiling and looking towards the camera. She has dark brown hair with bangs and is wearing a blue textured blazer. The background is a warm, abstract blend of orange and pink.

London Mums

FREE - Issue 42

Summer-Autumn 2024

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Star Mum!

Finding strength
in smiles:

A conversation with
Paola Cortellesi on
laughter and women's
empowerment

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Dearest Gentle Reader,

Hold onto your sun hats for the Summer-Autumn 2024 issue of London Mums magazine! As we soak up the elusive British summer, brace yourselves for the UK parliament elections and cheer on our teams in the Euros 2024 football tournament. We've got everything to make these months unforgettable!

I had a blast chatting with the fabulous Paola Cortellesi about the magic of laughter and women's empowerment. Her insights will leave you grinning from ear to ear and ready to take on the world.

Music fans, meet Toby Lee, the next guitar legend in the making. Follow his journey from budding musician to superstar – you won't want to miss it.

Feeling stressed? Our book corner's got just the thing: *Nature's Remedies for Stress and Fatigue*.

Summer can be a whirlwind, especially for us working mums. Check out our "Navigating the Chaos: A Working Mum's Summer Survival Guide" for tips on keeping your cool and making precious memories with the kiddos.

Bridgerton fans, get ready to swoon! We've rounded up the top filming locations in and around London for you to explore. Plus, we have a treasure trove of children's books, including *The Time Cave – Spanish Man* and *Oscar the Dragon*.

Need a break? Discover Saint-Cyprien, a family-friendly escape on the Vermilion Coast. And don't miss our shopping guides for jet-set travel gear and summer holiday gifts.

Plus, starting from this issue, look out for QR codes throughout the magazine. Scan them to head straight to more exciting content online!

So, grab a Spritz cocktail, put your feet up, and dive into this issue of London Mums magazine. Here's to a season full of fun and adventure!

Cheers!

The London Mums Team

Monica Costa

Editor in chief. Founder of London Mums and mum of almost 18 years old Diego.

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PAOLA CORTELLESI

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Toby Lee at the Gibson Garage
photos by Gibson/Robin Clewley photography

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Star Chat!

Finding strength in smiles: A conversation with Paola Cortellesi on laughter and women's empowerment

By Monica Costa

Already a talented actress and screenwriter, Paola Cortellesi has orchestrated an explosive mix of emotions in her directorial debut, *There's Still Tomorrow*. It's as if she took a bit of comedy, a pinch of drama, and a touch of art, crafting a cinematic bombshell. Set in 1946, when Italian women finally gained the right to vote, the film refuses to leave audiences indifferent. Its narrative resonates deeply, as if every Italian sees a piece of their own family reflected within its plot, exploring poignant and topical issues surrounding the abuse of women.

Drawing from the stories of her grandmothers, Paola infuses the film with authenticity and depth. By choosing to set the story in the past, she sheds light on the toxic machismo still prevalent in our society. Meeting Paola feels like catching up with a long-lost friend; her shrewd wit and overwhelming authenticity infuse *There's Still Tomorrow* with an unforgettable experience.

Monica: Congratulations on your directorial debut with *There's Still Tomorrow*! Your contribution to the emancipation of women through comedy films such as *Do you see me?*, *Nobody Can Judge Me*, and *Mum or Dad* is commendable. I've also been actively involved with *London Mums* for 26 years, striving toward the same goal. What actions do you believe can catalyse significant societal change today?

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“I’ve aimed to play with and shed light on natural facets of women’s lives.”



Paola: Thank you. While a film may not single-handedly revolutionise society, it possesses the power to prompt reflection. In my various works, particularly comedies, I've aimed to play with and shed light on natural facets of women's lives. Addressing topics like wage inequality, as we did in *Sorry I Exist*, serves to highlight issues that persistently affect us. Every story has the potential to inspire change. I hope *There's Still Tomorrow* resonated similarly to my previous works, which I've had the privilege to write and collaborate on with directors such as Riccardo Milani and Cristina Comencini.

Monica: Aristotle famously defined humour as the 'salt of communication', adding flavour and revealing the true essence of things. Your mastery of this art, using satire to tackle significant issues in your work, is truly remarkable. Audiences may initially be surprised by the humour, yet even amidst the tragedy of the plot, they find themselves smiling. How did you find the process of transforming anger into something that brings laughter to people's lives?

Paola: For me, it feels natural to approach even the most tragic events with humour, as humour serves as an immensely powerful vehicle for communication. Making people laugh is a gratifying experience, and I'm indebted to those who have brought laughter into my own life. It was almost instinctual for me to choose this path. I believe that through humour, one can convey profound truths. I don't subscribe to the notion that even the most serious subjects should be approached in a monotonous manner.

Reflecting on the stories of war shared with me by my grandmothers, I recall how they often infused these narratives with irony, perhaps as a means of exorcising the ugliness of those moments, or maybe because it's inherent to our Roman character. Yet, even amidst adversity, there was an underlying absurdity and humour, a naivete characteristic of that generation. Despite the violence they endured, there was a resilience fuelled by outward expressions of levity. That's why it felt natural for me to narrate this story with an ironic, humorous, and sometimes even ludicrous tone.



Monica meets Paola

The ridicule in my storytelling is particularly aimed at the antagonists of the narrative, ensuring they are never glorified or emulated. Through humour, we not only confront but also dismantle the forces of darkness, leaving space for light and resilience to flourish.

Monica: What do you think contributed to the widespread resonance of this film across different cultures?

Paola: The reception of this film as I travelled across Europe was truly unexpected. I never anticipated such a warm embrace for my directorial debut, both in Italy and abroad. Initially, I held certain assumptions about the status of women in various countries, but I was taken aback by the interest even from nations like Sweden, known for their progressive attitudes towards gender equality. It was eye-opening to realise the universality of the themes explored in the film. Whether this commonality is a positive or negative reflection, I cannot say for certain, but it undeniably underscores the significance of the issues addressed.



Monica: Could you share more about the significance of the mother-daughter relationship portrayed in the film and what it meant to you personally to explore it?

Paola: This film explores the deep bond between mother and daughter, focusing on a love story that goes beyond romance. My own daughter has been a source of inspiration for me, guiding many aspects of my creative journey. One evening, while sharing a children's book that talked about the struggles for women's rights — a book I selected, as I still guide her reading at 11 years old — the conclusion of this film became clear to me.

I wanted her to understand the sacrifices made to secure the rights she now enjoys and the importance of recognising and defending them. It's vital for her generation, and those to come, to remain vigilant about protecting these hard-won rights, understanding that they're not permanent. Thus, the love story between mother and daughter emerges as the beating heart of this film, conveying a message of solidarity and resilience across generations.

Monica: Why is it so important for you to make a film set in the post-war period?

Paola: I always wanted to make a contemporary film, but I chose to set it in the past to understand

what has changed (fortunately, a lot has changed), but also what has unfortunately remained unchanged: a toxic mentality that poisons a part of our country. I set it in a specific historical moment, in the days of 1946 that were crucial for us women and marked a fundamental change in women's emancipation.

Monica: Your authenticity is admirable, especially in an era dominated by appearance in show business. How have you handled the pressures of image and what challenges do you see in being authentic, especially for women?

Paola: I, at my age, don't struggle because I didn't grow up in the age of social media. I think it is a bit more complicated for young men and women today to come to terms with self-acceptance, considering the models proposed on social media. However, it is a job that is also done in the family, motivating kids in a different way. It's not something my generation feels. We are lucky! It's good to be older.

Monica: They say 50 is the 'Golden Age.' 'There's Still Tomorrow' explores the power of collective action to combat inequality. What main message were you trying to convey with the film's conclusion, and how do you think it can impact both audiences and society in the long run?

.....

"...the film maintains a contemporary perspective"

Paola: Well, the story acts as a starting point, you see. A film doesn't single-handedly change things, but it sparks conversations and a shared determination to address the issues it brings up. Just by talking about it outside the cinema — with friends, family, or your significant other — you naturally get into discussions about women's rights, igniting a collective movement. That's the first step. Then comes the hard work. It's not my job to make big changes, nor do I have that power, but my film stands as a humble contribution.

Monica: 'There's Still Tomorrow' delves into gender roles, social norms, and empowerment in post-war Italy. What led you to tackle such significant topics?

Paola: The issue of violence against women is so widespread that it's hard not to notice. Sadly, it's a problem that's glaringly obvious to all, playing out in the news nearly every day. We're confronted with a femicide every 72 hours, on average — a shocking and unacceptable reality. I've long been an advocate for speaking out against violence towards women. I wanted to tell this story and set it in the past, contrasting a modern-day narrative against a historical backdrop to explore what has changed and what has stayed the same over time. Additionally, I aimed to shine a light on a specific moment in our history.

Monica: The character of Delia seems to embody a particular societal archetype. What inspired her creation, and do you find any personal connections to her character?

Paola: Delia is depicted as a woman devoid of awareness, desires, or ambitions — a product of her upbringing and societal expectations. Personally, I don't see myself reflected in her character;



fortunately, I don't share her circumstances. Her portrayal serves as a reflection of a common reality where women were conditioned from childhood to conform without questioning whether they were pursuing their own desires or the expectations of others. I hope this portrayal encourages viewers to introspect on their own desires and motivations, questioning whether they're truly following their own path or merely fulfilling external expectations.

Monica: What themes or elements of your film do you believe resonated most with the audience?

Paola: I believe the audience was already sensitised to the issue of violence against women, unfortunately due to prevalent news coverage. Thus, it was a highly anticipated topic. Additionally, I think the film's success was influenced by its language and tone, which, despite the tragic theme, weren't overly sombre. I opted for a humorous tone, which I believe is a crucial tool for conveying truth from multiple angles.

Monica: The use of contemporary music in significant scenes added a modern flair to the historical setting. What inspired this creative decision and how do you think it contributed to the overall narrative?

Paola: Despite its historical setting, the film maintains a contemporary perspective. I deliberately avoided mimicking the stylistic features of Italian realist cinema from past masters. What shocks us today and makes us recoil was often deemed normal in that era, such as spousal abuse. I wanted to juxtapose the same reality on

two distinct historical levels, and the same concept applies to the music.

Monica: Why did you choose to incorporate music during the scene depicting violence against Delia, seemingly softening its impact?

Paola: In that moment, I wasn't simply portraying an isolated incident; rather, I aimed to depict the ongoing reality of Delia's life. I chose to depict it as a ritual, a cyclical routine she's trapped in. I selected the well-known Italian song 'Nessuno' (originally performed by Mina) in a dramatic rendition by Petra Magoni. While the song conveys a promise of love ('nobody can separate us'), with Delia's husband, it becomes a life sentence. As a contrast, I envisioned a ritual, and while the music played, I envisioned a violent dance — a dance nonetheless. I wanted the violence to be palpable while also ensuring the graphic details didn't detract from the essence of the situation.

Monica: How crucial do you think it is for distribution companies to enhance the promotion of Italian cinema abroad and ensure accessibility to films for Italian communities worldwide? And what significance do you attribute to an Italian artist expanding their work beyond national borders?

Paola: There's undoubtedly a significant effort, though I'm not privy to all the specifics, to bolster the distribution of Italian cinema internationally. Events like Cinema Made in Italy in London showcase effective film promotion strategies. We could channel more efforts into widespread distribution of lesser-known Italian films and promoting the Italian language, which isn't as prevalent globally. Additionally, engaging with Italian communities abroad was pivotal in my own journey, particularly during the initial stages of my film tour. I hope to see more Italian films reaching global audiences, as they're universally appreciated, and the export of our cinema not only enriches Italian communities but also garners love abroad. It's crucial for Italian films to transcend national borders to extend their impact. Personally, I've found that success abroad can amplify appreciation in Italy too. It's truly gratifying to have our film distributed in the UK by VUE; it breathes extended life into the project. It's like nurturing a little creation and wanting it to thrive for years to come.



.....
"I hope to see more Italian films reaching global audiences, as they're universally appreciated..."

Monica: Your English proficiency in 'Do you see me?' was quite impressive! Where did you hone your skills so well?

Paola: Oh, just a good ear, I suppose!

Monica: Well, kudos to you, Paola.

New sustainable baby lifestyle brand CAYO launches unique dummy collection

New British lifestyle brand CAYO, aims to become a part of the family with the launch of its curated collection of unique and stylish dummies to help soothe babies and toddlers throughout their daily routine.



CAYO is elevating the everyday by injecting style and sustainability into the soothing category. The beautifully designed dummies are the perfect accessories to complement a baby or toddler's growing wardrobe.

Manufactured in the UK, utilising recyclable materials, natural rubber teats and fully sustainable packaging, the CAYO range of dummies minimises its carbon footprint – an essential consideration for every parent in today's eco-conscious world.

CAYO's team of Dummy Fairies ensure every baby and toddler has just the dummy they need. When that child comes of age and no longer requires the soothing comfort of their dummy, Sky, Buzz, Sonny, Drew and Orion are ready to whisk it away, creating a seamless transition for parents and child. Soothing infants whilst they need it, and helping children to graduate from dummy use at the right time, is exactly what the Dummy Fairies are here for.

CAYO is at the forefront of baby care, offering the very best soothing products for babies and toddlers. Its dummies are functional, yet lovingly crafted and stylishly designed for modern parents. A CAYO product is with parents, babies and

toddlers night-to-day, dusk-to-dawn, and the logo reflects this – the 'C' represents the moon at night, whilst the 'O' reflects the sun of the new day.

The range is being launched with two charming styles, Aster that is shaped like a flower and Shine incorporating a pattern like the sun's rays. Both dummies are available in four calming colours – Blush, Sky, Beach and Sage – with two teat sizes (0-12 months and 12+ months). Each pack of two dummies is beautifully packaged in a fully sustainable box, and priced at £14.99 (RRP). All products are available exclusively online from the CAYO store www.cayo-baby.com, with more designs to follow shortly.

CAYO is passionate about high product quality, fresh design and protecting the environment for future generations. All CAYO's dummies:

- Comply with European standard EN1400,
- Are 100% free from BPA, PVC and phthalates
- Utilise natural rubber teats
- Are environmentally friendly.

Website and CAYO Store: www.cayo-baby.com



Ask the doctor

Hay fever can be debilitating but there are treatment options for you!



By Dr Olympia Tsilochristou

Hay fever, or allergic rhinitis, results from an allergic reaction in the nose and eyes when the immune system overreacts

to airborne allergens. Affecting about 26% of UK adults, hay fever is more common in those with a family history of the condition. Common triggers in the UK include tree and grass pollen, house dust mites, mould spores, and pet dander, making it challenging for many pet owners.

Contact with these allergens causes immune cells in the nose and eyes to release chemicals like histamine, leading to symptoms such as sneezing, a runny nose, itchy/watery eyes, and an itchy throat/ears. Over-the-counter oral antihistamines can alleviate these symptoms. However, nasal congestion requires regular use of steroid nasal sprays.

Hay fever is a chronic inflammatory condition that can be lifelong and may develop into asthma. Its impact on individuals and society is often underestimated. Patients with severe hay fever experience significant disruptions, such as difficulty concentrating and underperformance at work or school. Studies in the UK and internationally have shown that severe hay fever can impair work productivity by more than 50% and hinder students from achieving their full potential.

For those with severe symptoms unresponsive to steroid nasal sprays and oral antihistamines, allergen immunotherapy (desensitisation) is an option. This therapy addresses the root cause of hay fever by increasing tolerance to the specific allergen, thereby reducing symptoms and medication needs, and improving quality of life.

Studies suggest that immunotherapy can also prevent hay fever from progressing to asthma. While traditionally administered via injections, sublingual immunotherapy is now available as a dissolvable tablet taken under the tongue daily for three years. This long-term treatment aims to correct the immune system's mistaken response to allergens.

Consulting an Allergist can help identify your hay fever triggers and establish an effective management plan to alleviate your suffering.

Wishing you a lovely summer and enjoyable walks in London's parks — don't forget your hay fever medications!

Dr. Olympia Tsilochristou, a Consultant Allergist with over 10 years of experience, practices at the UK's largest Department of Allergy at Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation Trust in London and privately at HCA London Bridge Hospital/The Shard Outpatients. Available for an appointment at info@myallergyclinic.uk or via this webpage www.hcahealthcare.co.uk/finder/specialists/olympia-tsilochristou



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Music star chat! Toby Lee: The next guitar legend in the making

By Monica Costa

Meet Toby Lee, the rock star every parent dreams of! Since he was ten, Toby has been rocking out as a proud Gibson artist, sharing stages with music legends like Buddy Guy, Billy Gibbons, Peter Dinklage, Slash, Lukas Nelson and Kenny Wayne Shepherd. Notably, he even shared the stage with his hero, Joe Bonamassa, at the Royal Albert Hall. This summer, Toby and his band will be gracing the iconic Glastonbury stage, bringing their electrifying energy to one of the biggest music festivals in the world.

But Toby isn't just another rock star; he's the real deal. During our chat, Toby emerged straight out of the shower, dripping wet hair and all, embodying the authentic spirit of a true musician. His genuine charm and rock star presence instantly captivated

me, reminiscent of a clean-cut Kurt Cobain. Toby is as transparent as they come — what you see is what you get. I met him at the opening of London's Gibson Garage, where his band's performance drew in a crowd of enthusiastic young fans. Backstage, Toby's warmth and spontaneity mirrored his on-stage persona, making him a beacon of hope for the next generation of rockers. He's proof that you can rock out without falling into the pitfalls of drugs and addiction.

Monica: Toby, you've achieved so much at a super young age already. What initially drew you to the world of music? How did you develop your passion for playing the guitar?

TL: I've always been a creative person, so I knew I wanted to do something in the creative field. I was never very good at academics, but I always looked forward to music lessons. My parents have always been massively into music, so we had loads of instruments around the house. My art and my freedom to let out everything was music. I started on a ukulele that my grandmother gave me, and I just played it so much until all of the strings came off. I knew then that I had to make music somehow. I started playing drums first because, as a kid, I loved making noise. With a guitar, you'd have to plug it in, wait for the amp to warm up, and get it into so many logistical elements before actually getting to play. With drums, you just pick up a set of sticks and make a lot of noise.



Monica: Maybe it was less appealing to your neighbours... (giggles).

TL: We've always lived on farms in the middle of nowhere, which massively helped. The only complaints we get are the cows sneezing from time to time. Guitar was inevitable because it was an evolution of me playing the ukulele – I always had one with me. It became almost like a teddy bear or a comfort blanket to me. I got my first ukulele when I was about five or six, then an adult-sized guitar at eight, and a full-size one by ten.

Monica: Tell me about your connection to BB King.

TL: I did a video when BB King was just getting ill. It became particularly well-known, and I got a call from his daughters in Memphis, asking if I'd like to come over to his blues club and play with his band. Sadly, he passed away before I got there, but it was still an unbelievable experience to be on Beale Street with his band at 10 years old.

Monica: You've performed with iconic musicians like Brian May. Can you share some standout moments or performances?

TL: Joining Joe Bonamassa on stage at the Royal Albert Hall when I was 13 or 14 was surreal. Joe has been a huge inspiration to me, and standing on that stage with him was unforgettable. Another standout moment was last year with Brian May, James Burton, Tommy Emmanuel, and others. Playing guitar alongside them was a surreal experience.

Monica: Have you ever tried Brian May's iconic Red Special guitar?

TL: I haven't, but my Firebird guitar was sat next to the Red Special on stage. So, my guitar got closer to it than I have.

Monica: Brian May made that first guitar with pieces of his fireplace. You can create your own guitar. The idea alone to create your own guitar for me is so crazily special. You can create the Toby special.

TL: Certain guitar models are associated with certain people like Slash with the Les Paul, Mark Knopfler with the Red Fender Strat, all that kind of thing. Brian couldn't find what he wanted, so he made his own. That's genius.





Monica: You are associated with Gibson. What's your favourite Gibson guitar?

TL: I've been with Gibson for nearly 11 years now. It's always hard to pick a favourite guitar, but I'd say it's my Firebird. It was built in 1964, and I bought it off an old gentleman. It took 4 years of paying it off and selling my 1960s Volkswagen to make it happen. That guitar holds a special place in my heart.

Monica: Who are the rock rebels who inspire you?

TL: My music embodies that rebellious rock spirit but also stays clean. I'm a bit boring as a musician; I don't drink. Many in my age group drink to seem cool, but for me, playing music is everything. My musical influences range from Buddy Holly to Metallica and AC/DC. I take bits from everything and blend them into my own style.

Monica: Tell me about your West End experience. Being cast as Zack Mooneyham in the West End production of School of Rock must have been incredible. How did that role influence your musical style and stage presence?

TL: It was about 7 years ago. I grew up knowing the musical by heart and was even supposed to do it on Broadway. Then, they opened the London auditions, and I got the part. For an 11-year-old with boundless energy, it was an incredible experience. Running around, jumping on stage, and playing guitar live for thousands of people every night for a

year significantly boosted my confidence.

Monica: Your upcoming album, "House on Fire," featuring all original tracks, sounds intriguing. Can you share the inspiration behind it and what listeners can expect from your music?

TL: The album is set to release at the end of 2024. We recorded it about a year ago, highlighting the lengthy process in the music industry. My first album, "Ten," was a family project, recorded nearly 10 years ago. Fast forward, with the rise of social media, there was a growing demand for original content. We initially planned to release an album titled "Fourteen," but it posed a problem, so we named it "Aquarius," a nod to my January birth. To ensure more of my original music was available, we also released a covers album. We wrote and demo-recorded 16 songs in just two and a half days, hence the album title, 'House on Fire'. The final recording process took longer, incorporating cello and backing singers for a fuller production. We're aiming for a release by the end of the year.

Monica: With a busy touring schedule ahead, including performances with Jools Holland, how do you prepare for the road, and what are you most looking forward to about the upcoming shows?

TL: I did a radio show with Karith Matthews, and one of the producers was involved in a movie being filmed in London about blues music. Jools was there, and we hit it off right away. A month



until the day before the first show, I'll have no idea what I'll be playing. But I'm absolutely fine with that.

Monica: You are a star. You resemble a young Kurt Cobain. I wanted to interview you before everybody else. In 20 years' time it will be you replacing Slash and you'll be unreachable. Keep the clean look and feel. The drinks and drugs have failed that generation of musicians.

TL: Oh, no, I'll never be unreachable! But I'll stay clean!

For more information on Toby Lee, visit:
www.toby-lee.com

later, I was in a meeting with my managers, and we got the news about Jools wanting me to go on tour with him for 30 shows, which turned into 65, and then 40 shows with my band as well. It's going to be a pretty crazy year ahead. Jools is a huge inspiration to me. For me, it's amazing because I'm going to play with him and his phenomenal band in some fantastic venues. In terms of preparation,

Read the full interview online:



Book corner

Nature's Remedies for Stress and Fatigue



Brain fog is a common problem these days. Often associated with menopause, there is a clear hormonal element to consider. However, as Medical Herbalist Jo Dunbar explains in

her book, *Nature's Remedies for Stress and Fatigue* (Watkins Press), brain fog also has strong associations with long-term stress and viral infections leading to post-viral fatigue.

Long-term stress results in elevated cortisol levels, which disrupt the immune system and lower its ability to adequately deal with viruses. This also damages certain areas of the brain, particularly the hippocampus, which plays a role in learning and memory.

There is growing evidence that sufferers of brain fog associated with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Long Covid could have widespread neuro-inflammation in the brain. In such cases, the viral infection triggers the immune system to mobilise inflammatory cells in the brain as a protective response. Consequently, the fine membrane surrounding the brain, known as the Blood-Brain Barrier, becomes more permeable, allowing inflammatory molecules, free radicals, and toxins to enter and harm the brain, resulting in neuro-inflammation. This disrupts the body, leading to memory loss, poor concentration, and difficulty learning, which we refer to as "brain fog."

If the initial stressor is not resolved, the inflammatory molecules (called cytokines) cause ongoing neuro-inflammation, which continues to disrupt the homeostatic balance of the brain and the body, triggering a downward spiral of well-being. It is important to underline here that the stressful events might be mental or emotional stresses, immune stresses such as a long viral infection, environmental (possibly moulds and mycotoxins or heavy metals), or physical (such as an accident or major surgery).

What can be done? The underlying stress must be addressed, and all efforts made to resolve it. Foods rich in vitamin B and healthy fats such as oily fish and walnuts are very helpful at reducing the inflammatory process and providing nutrients to feed the brain.

Antioxidant-rich foods like dark berry fruits and vegetables mop up free radicals and help halt the inflammatory process. Pulses and foods like fennel bulbs are rich in plant oestrogens, which can support the menopausal drop in oestrogen, and sea vegetables support sluggish thyroid function, which can also be an underlying cause of brain fog. Sometimes people really need to take a break from their lives, if they are able — by taking a proper holiday, or at the least, practicing self-care like listening to soothing music or meditating and switching off their screens.



Brain Power Hot Chocolate

- 2 capsules (1/3 tsp) of Lions Mane powder
- A pinch of chili powder
- 1 large heaped teaspoon of raw cacao powder
- 1/3 tsp of Coconut oil
- Xylitol, Stevia or Honey to taste
- 1 cup of boiling water
- A splash of milk or cream (dairy or vegan)

Put all the ingredients into the cup and give it a good whisk, and enjoy.

Jo Dunbar is a qualified medical herbalist and the founder of Botanica Medica with over 25 years of experience successfully treating burnout, brain fog, and long-term fatigue through the use of herbs, nutrition, exercises, and self-help strategies. In her new book, *Nature's Remedies for Stress & Fatigue*, she shares her extensive expertise in treating these conditions as well as demonstrating how to balance blood sugar levels, recover from glandular fever and live sustainably.

You can purchase the book with a 30% discount by following this [link](#), clicking on CART and entering the code NATURE30.

Navigating the Chaos:

A Working Mum's Summer Survival Guide

By Chrissie Stevenson, Sports Centre Operations and Events Manager, Mill Hill School

Being a working mum is no picnic. Even with the best support network, you're always just one phone call from nursery or school away from your working week descending into chaos, suddenly adding 'logistic mastermind' to your CV.



When I returned to work after having my first child in 2019, I barely sat down for my first team meeting before the nursery called to inform me he had been sick and needed picking up immediately. Thankfully, my understanding boss and team were happy to postpone the meeting until the following week, but the experience left me reeling. It took a while to get used to the disruption a sick child can cause.

My children have been in nursery since they were 9 months old, four days a week, from 8 am to 6 pm. There have been times I felt judged for this decision, and the cost is astronomical. However, if the pandemic taught me anything, it's that I do not enjoy being a stay-at-home mum. I love my kids more than anything, but I don't think our relationship would be the same if I were with them 24/7. They say absence makes the heart grow fonder, and this is certainly true when I've dropped them off after



asking them to put their shoes on 20 times before losing my patience and jamming them on their feet, running out the door five minutes late. The workday gives me time to reset, have some me-time, and pick them up in a refreshed headspace. Knowing they are happy and thriving at their childcare places reassures me, and they eagerly look forward to going in every day without a backward glance.

Since my eldest started school in September, we've faced the new challenge of childcare during holidays. Luckily, in my line of work, I have a plethora of day camps to choose from, where I can bring him with me. He looks forward to these camps every holiday and asks throughout the term when he'll be going back. I enjoy seeing his little face throughout the day, having so much fun with his new friends.

If you're in the North London area and interested in the day camps we offer, here are some great options this summer:

Camp Beaumont

Belmont Prep School, Keble Prep School
campbeaumont.co.uk

JoRo Arts/New Stars Lacrosse and Netball Camps/Athleta Olympia Sports Academy/Lemon Jelly Arts/Mother Nature Science

Mill Hill School, millhill.org.uk

Navigating the chaos of being a working mum is no easy feat, but with the right support and a few fantastic day camps, you can make it through the summer with a smile!



Top *Bridgerton* filming locations in and around London

By Monica Costa

Calling all *Bridgerton* fans! If you've ever dreamed of stepping into the glamorous world of the *Bridgertons*, you're in luck. London and its surrounding areas are home to some of the most iconic filming locations from the hit Netflix series. From grand palaces to charming parks, here's London Mums' guide to the top *Bridgerton* filming locations that you can visit for a truly Regency-era experience. Along the way, you'll also discover fascinating historical tidbits and cultural anecdotes about these stunning spots.

Hampton Court Palace

Hampton Court Palace has long been associated with British royalty, famously serving as the home of King Henry VIII. This stunning palace has been a backdrop for many pivotal *Bridgerton* scenes, including the debutantes' presentation before Queen Charlotte and Eloise's intriguing meetings

with Theo Sharpe. The palace gardens, designed by Capability Brown, also doubled as various *Bridgerton* gardens, such as Buckingham and Danbury House. Fun fact: it's said that Hampton Court is haunted by the ghost of Catherine Howard, Henry VIII's fifth wife!

St. James's Church, Piccadilly

St. James's Church, designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the 17th century, set the stage for the dramatic wedding scene between Anthony *Bridgerton* and Edwina Sharma in Season 2. This beautiful church is situated near Piccadilly, in front of The Dilly hotel and near the BAFTA headquarters. Its rich history includes surviving the Great Fire of London and being a refuge for Huguenot refugees in the 17th century. This is one of my favourite *Bridgerton* filming locations as I bump into it very often.

Windsor Great Park, Berkshire

For those who swooned over the romantic horseback scenes between Anthony and Kate in Season 2, Windsor Great Park is the place to visit. This expansive park offers lush landscapes and scenic views, perfect for a leisurely day out. Historically, Windsor Great Park has been a royal hunting ground since the time of William the Conqueror. Today, it is home to the famous Long Walk, a straight path that stretches for almost three miles.





Chiswick House, London

Featured in Season 3 for various church and carriage shots, Chiswick House is a beautiful example of Palladian architecture. Built in the early 18th century by Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington, it was inspired by the classical architecture of Italy. The surrounding gardens, designed by William Kent, are considered the birthplace of the English landscape garden.

Lancaster House, London

In Season 1, Lancaster House provided the regal setting for Charlotte's heartfelt conversation with Edwina in the royal jewel room, following King George III's dramatic appearance. Located near Buckingham Palace, Lancaster House has hosted numerous significant events, including the founding meeting of the United Nations. Queen Victoria once remarked that it was "the most beautiful private house in London."

Ranger's House, Greenwich

Serving as the exterior of the Bridgerton House in Season 2, Ranger's House is a Palladian-style mansion located in Greenwich. Originally built in the early 18th century, it has been home to various notable residents, including the Rangers of Greenwich Park. Today, it houses the Wernher Collection, a spectacular assortment of medieval and Renaissance art.

Osterley Park and House, London

This location hosted the glamorous ball scene in

Episode 2 of Season 2. Osterley Park and House, designed by Robert Adam in the 18th century, offers a glimpse into the grandeur of Regency-era events with its stunning interiors and vast gardens. The estate originally belonged to the Child banking family, and Adam's neoclassical designs turned it into a showcase of opulence.

A Perfect Day for a Bridgerton Fan

Start your *Bridgerton* filming locations adventure with a morning visit to Hampton Court Palace, wander through the regal gardens, and imagine yourself at a royal debutante ball. Next, head to St. James's Church for a touch of drama and history. After a leisurely lunch, take a stroll through Windsor Great Park, followed by an afternoon exploring the architectural marvels of Chiswick House.

Round off your day with a visit to Lancaster House and Ranger's House, soaking in the grandeur and elegance that the Bridgertons call home.

So grab your parasol, don your finest Regency attire (or just some comfortable shoes), and step into the world of *Bridgerton* right here in and around London.

Happy exploring, *dearest Gentle Reader!*

Read the full article online:



Book corner

The Time Cave – Spanish Main

New Swashbuckling Children's Adventure is a Return to the Craft of Good Old-Fashioned Storytelling



It may be seven years since the most recent *Pirates of the Caribbean* film enthralled young adventurers, but the appetite for a good pirate escapade is still as strong as ever.

Trevor Anderson's *The Time Cave – Spanish Main* takes readers on a thrilling pirate adventure with the

added twist of time travel. Two boys, Jack and Tom, are hurled back 300 years, kidnapped by ruthless pirates, and thrust into a life-threatening sea battle. This swashbuckling tale captures the essence of old-fashioned storytelling, promising excitement and danger on every page.

A captivating and original story, Trevor's novel is written for children but has also been embraced by adults. The adventure seamlessly transitions from one exciting escapade to another, with the time-travelling protagonists elevating the narrative. This book fulfills Trevor's dream of crafting a children's story he would have loved, leaving readers eagerly awaiting more high-seas adventures.

The story

Join two boys, Jack and Tom, on an exciting and highly dangerous journey that hurls them mysteriously, back three hundred years to 1720. Kidnapped by marauding, murderous pirates, being part of a terrifying, life-threatening sea battle, with chase, escape, recapture and shipwreck; plus the horrifying possibility that Jack and Tom will be trapped in the 18th century forever. This swashbuckling, page turning adventure will have readers spellbound, looking for more.



The author

Trevor Anderson is a father and grandfather, is retired and lives in the South East of England.

He says: "My background is British Army, after which, a career in sales and management for a major financial services company, followed by the setting up and running my own successful recruitment business for over 20 years.

"Since childhood, I have always been and still am, an avid reader. I'm passionate about literacy and love the way books open minds; and how even a fictional story with some historical basis, can lead to a learning opportunity through curiosity and discovery of the actual background. This passion led me to the decision some time ago, that I would write a book for children, with the kind of story that I would have enjoyed as a child, packed with adventure, danger and thrills, and a basis in history. I believe I have achieved that with this middle grade (9-13 year old) children's book."

Published by Michael Terrence Publishing, *The Time Cave – Spanish Main* is available to purchase in paperback (ISBN No: 978-1800947191) priced £7.99 and Kindle format (£2.99) on Amazon.

Book corner

Youth Novel: *Oscar the Dragon* by Desmond McMullen

London Mums' book of the week last February, *Oscar the Dragon* by Desmond McMullen, is a captivating tale for self-doubting youngsters. Filled with messages of friendship and support, it follows Oscar's journey from loneliness to becoming a confident, self-aware young dragon.

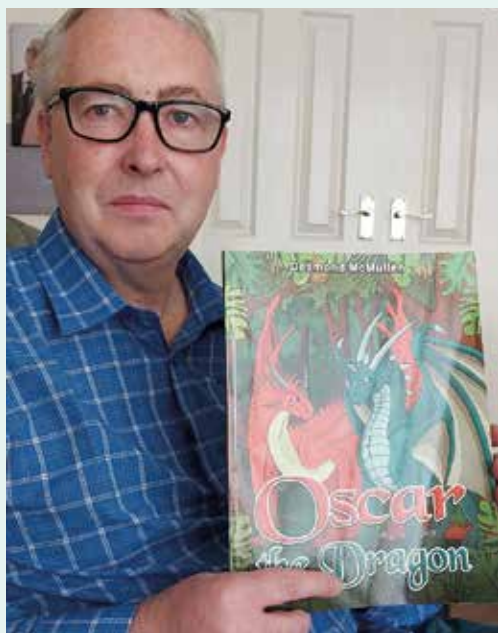
With themes of self-doubt, loneliness, and bullying prevalent among children today, *Oscar the Dragon* resonates deeply. Originally conceived 25 years ago, McMullen's story portrays a young dragon finding his place in the world, despite feeling alone even among family.

Targeted at children aged 4 to 10 and featuring full-page colourful illustrations, *Oscar the Dragon* appeals to both independent readers and those who enjoy bedtime stories with a parent or guardian. Oscar's transformation and relatable struggles ensure that this lovable dragon will be cherished by all.

The Story



Oscar the Dragon is a charming and entertaining children's book that imparts important lessons about friendship, self-awareness, and open-mindedness. Oscar, a young dragon living in a house full of family members, still feels alone. Through his journey of self-discovery, he learns who he truly is and what is expected of him. This heartwarming story reminds us that while we can't pick our family, we can choose our friends, and no matter how bad things get, help is always available. With its relatable message and lovable characters, *Oscar the Dragon* is a must-read for children



struggling with feelings of loneliness or self-doubt.

About the Author

Desmond McMullen, 56, has held various jobs throughout his life, primarily serving as a civil servant with a focus on customer service for nearly 30 years. Currently, he is a full-time carer for his partner, who is living with cancer.

The author says:

"I have many stories to tell but have never held the belief that my work is good enough to be considered for publication. *Oscar the Dragon* is a book is to help children who are having difficulties with mental health issues, feelings of loneliness and self-doubt, or are being bullied. The message is that no matter how bad things get there is always help available. It is a story that has been on the back burner for over 25 years but now is the time to tell it again."

Published by Austin Macauley Publishers, *Oscar the Dragon* is available in paperback (ISBN No: 978-1398498006) priced £5.99 and Kindle format (£3.50) on Amazon at: <http://tinyurl.com/3mrshhwu> and <http://tinyurl.com/y3e32xnj>. It is also available from other book retailers.

Book corner

***The Fun We Had*: A Touching Tale of Love and Loss**



London-based debut author Charissa Coulthard shares her heartfelt journey in *The Fun We Had*, a touching tale of love and loss that resonates deeply with personal

experiences. Inspired by her mother and eldest son, Charissa's story delicately explores the enduring comfort of cherished memories when faced with adversity.

"The Fun We Had is a personal story of love and loss, inspired by my mum and eldest son.

In 2018, shortly after my first child was born, my mum was diagnosed with stage four cancer. Despite knowing time was limited, and never being able to pick him up, she and my son developed an incredibly close bond.

When he was three, my son - armed with his doctor's kit - asked if there was any way he could make Nana better. As hard as it was, I told him he couldn't make her better - nobody could - but he could still do something really important: he could make her smile. And that became the seed of this book. The love they shared, the joy they brought

each other and the memories they made were far more powerful than any illness would ever be.

The Fun We Had is a sad story, but it is also a happy one. It celebrates how precious our memories and mementos of loved ones are, and how much comfort these can bring us when we no longer have that person close.

The memories you see on the pages are inspired by my own childhood: moments spent outdoors playing in the woods, camping in the sunshine, splashing on the beach. Sam Usher's illustrations have such a timeless and nostalgic quality that I hope will resonate with readers of all ages.

My mum didn't get to see this book before she died, but I did sit and read her the text. I was always sharing stories I'd written with her, and she was my biggest cheerleader. But I knew that sharing this story would be different - and incredibly difficult - for both of us.

She told me if I wasn't going to try and get it published, I was an idiot. I think she may have been right. Mums usually are.

Thank you so much for reading this book. It has my heart. I hope it can bring comfort to any reader, old or young, who has lost a loved one or is seeing them through illness."



Book corner

Captain Fantastic and *The Undersea Monster*



Captain Fantastic, from the UK's top children's party franchise, recently visited Godstone Farm in Surrey to launch the new children's book, *The Undersea Monster*. Kids enjoyed a fun-filled reading and magic tricks by

the book's creator, Tommy Balaam.

Tommy Balaam, Director of Fun at Captain Fantastic explains: "We are on a mission to spread happiness and make memories and I wanted to give children more opportunities to explore and engage in the wonderful world of Captain Fantastic. They can enjoy our themed parties hosted by professional actors and entertainers, watch our YouTube channel 'Captain Fantastic Adventures', listen and read. We try and create a 360° experience all around adventure, fun and games to create a magical time for everyone.

"I'm dyslexic and growing up I was great at maths but really struggled with English and reading, although I loved stories and songs. For me, rhyme comes more naturally and it's more engaging and great fun, I know my own kids love it! Therefore, it made sense to create a rhyming picture book for more children to enjoy. The story is brought to life with brilliant illustrations by Daniel Howard, so any child aged between four and seven can



connect with the story wherever they are in their development."

The Undersea Monster is aimed at Key Stage One and is the third title in the Captain Fantastic series available to buy on Amazon. The story follows our intrepid hero Captain Fantastic and his loyal canine companion Wilson, as they travel through space to land on a remote blue, sea planet. But Captain Fantastic doesn't listen to Wilson's wise words about the water and dives too deep, needing to be rescued right out of the jaws of the (not so scary) Undersea Monster!

Simon Ingram, General Manager, Godstone Farm confirmed: "We welcomed Captain Fantastic to Godstone Farm to launch the new Undersea Monster book and wow, what a brilliant performance! The children were excited and captivated to learn about Captain Fantastic's latest adventures and the performance was a treat for all!"

The Captain Fantastic franchise was set up more than ten years ago by actor Tommy Balaam as an entertainment company to create journeys of fun and safe adventure for children across the country, organising more than 2,000 parties and events for 60,000 children every year. From pirates to princesses, science to disco, each party theme has been created by professional actors and are all designed to be full of fun, excitement and laughter.

Captain Fantastic has been voted the UK's Number One children's entertainment company by the trusted reviewing site FreeIndex.

For further information about Captain Fantastic's parties and events please see: <https://captain-fantastic.co.uk/>



Discovering Saint-Cyprien: A Family-Friendly escape on the Vermilion Coast

By Monica Costa & Diego Scintu

In today's fast-paced world, family travellers crave exploration and cultural immersion. Saint-Cyprien meets these demands with heritage sites, local specialties, leisure activities, and eco-friendly tourism. My teenage son Diego and I recently visited **Pierre et Vacances'** new resort there and enjoyed a well-deserved rest and sunshine for a few days. Here's all about it.

A futuristic retreat: Exploring Pierre et Vacances Resort

Nestled between sea and mountains, Pierre et Vacances resort is a futuristic oasis with 151 bungalows, including 79 villas and 72 apartments, designed for groups of 4 to 6. Each unit reflects the resort's commitment to sustainability, equipped with well-stocked kitchens.



The prime location offers relaxation and adventure, with Spain just a 40-minute drive away and scenic bike tours through wetlands, villages, ports, and beaches. Accessibility is a priority, with 8 villas and 8 flats for guests with special needs, using locally sourced Douglas wood.

Convenience is key, with a fish and produce market 200 metres away and sports facilities within 500 metres, including horseback riding, kite surfing, tennis and rugby. The resort caters to all ages with activities like mini-golf, skateboard parks and muscle awakening sessions. Diego and I enjoyed table football and made new friends.

Sea amenities include boat trips and regatta races, with Southern France's sun and sunsets as a perfect backdrop. As a multi-generational holiday concept, Pierre et Vacances Resort combines sustainability, luxury, and adventure for an unforgettable family escape.

Unveiling the allure of Saint-Cyprien

Saint-Cyprien is a seaside haven beckoning travellers with promises of adventure, culture, and eco-conscious living in the heart of the Vermilion Coast. Diego and I embarked on an investigative journey into this coastal gem to uncover its hidden treasures.

A cultural mosaic

Saint-Cyprien's charm lies not only in its picturesque beaches but also in its rich cultural tapestry. With a population of 11,398 in winter swelling to 85,000 in summer, this resort town pulses with life and energy. Its historic centre, characterised by steep alleys and brick constructions, offers a glimpse into its Catalan heritage, where the language still echoes in the streets. The town's festivals, including Saint-Jean, Saint-Pierre, and Festa Major, attract residents and tourists alike, fostering a sense of community and celebration.

An outdoor playground

For outdoor enthusiasts, Saint-Cyprien is a paradise waiting to be explored. With 6 kilometres of Blue Flag-certified sandy beaches and 80 kilometres of greenways for cyclists and pedestrians, the possibilities for adventure are endless. The Grand Stade Les Capellans sports complex boasts 16 outdoor tennis courts, 4 indoor

.....
**"A whole new
world of epic
landscapes."**



tennis courts, 3 outdoor padel courts and 3 squash courts, catering to amateurs and high-level practitioners alike. Additionally, the Aquasud aquatic complex offers a wide range of activities year-round, from aqua gym to diving baptisms, providing entertainment for visitors of all ages.

A culinary trip

No visit to Saint-Cyprien is complete without indulging in its culinary delights. **Food trucks** such as **Les Roulettes** line the streets, offering a taste of Catalan cuisine, from savoury crepes to traditional fideua. Every Saturday, the port hosts a grill event, showcasing the region's gastronomic prowess and inviting visitors to savour the flavours of Northern Catalunya. For those seeking a more refined dining experience, the town's restaurants – such as **Can Paco** – serve up a feast of fresh seafood, local produce and world-class wines, tantalising the taste buds and satisfying the soul.

Sustainable living

Saint-Cyprien showcases eco-responsibility with green initiatives and eco-friendly practices. Pedestrian, cyclist and horse rider paths offer

peaceful, sustainable transportation. The Remarkable Garden botanical gardens, with plant species from around the world, attract nearly 90,000 visitors annually, promoting biodiversity. Prade Park, the “green lung” of Saint-Cyprien, provides a tranquil oasis, fostering a deeper connection with nature.

Accessibility and connectivity

Located just 2 hours from Barcelona and 45 minutes from Figueres, Saint-Cyprien offers easy access to major cities and attractions in Northern Catalunya. Flights from London to Perpignan or Toulouse provide convenient transportation options, followed by a short drive or taxi ride to the resort. Whether arriving by air or land, visitors can expect seamless connectivity and efficient transportation services, ensuring a hassle-free journey to their destination.

As we bid farewell to Saint-Cyprien and our lovely bungalow at Pierre et Vacances, Diego and I carry with us memories of warmth, hospitality and the spirit of discovery that defines this enchanting destination.





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<https://rokalondon.com/collections/waterhouse>



Animal Men's Kai Rash Vest

Available at Mountain Warehouse for £1999. UPF 50+, quick-drying, chlorine and saltwater resistant, perfect for water sports.



Animal's Iona Halter Bikini

Sustainable, chic swimwear for sunny days. Recycled fabric, adjustable fit. RRP £22.99.

Available at Mountain Warehouse.



The Studio Creator 360 Video Maker Kit

enables young creators to produce professional digital content effortlessly with a 25cm LED ring light, green screen, and versatile tripod. Ages 8+, RRP £39.99. Available at Amazon, Smyths, Argos and Very.

Summer Holidays Gift Guide



Plus-Plus Tubes
RRP: £6.99 (100pc), £11.99 (240pc)

Stockists: Available from amazon.co.uk and other good toy and gift stores



Plus-Plus HEXEL®
RRP: £12.99

Stockists: Available from amazon.co.uk and other good toy and gift stores



Plus-Plus Learn To Build
RRP: £15.99

Stockists: Available from amazon.co.uk and other good toy and gift stores



Farplace Games
RRP: £5.00 each

Stockists: Available at farplacegames.com



Anger Smash
RRP: £14.99

Stockists: Available from amazon.co.uk



A Weekend Trip
RRP: £11.99

Stockists: Available from good booksellers. For stockists visit prestel.com



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