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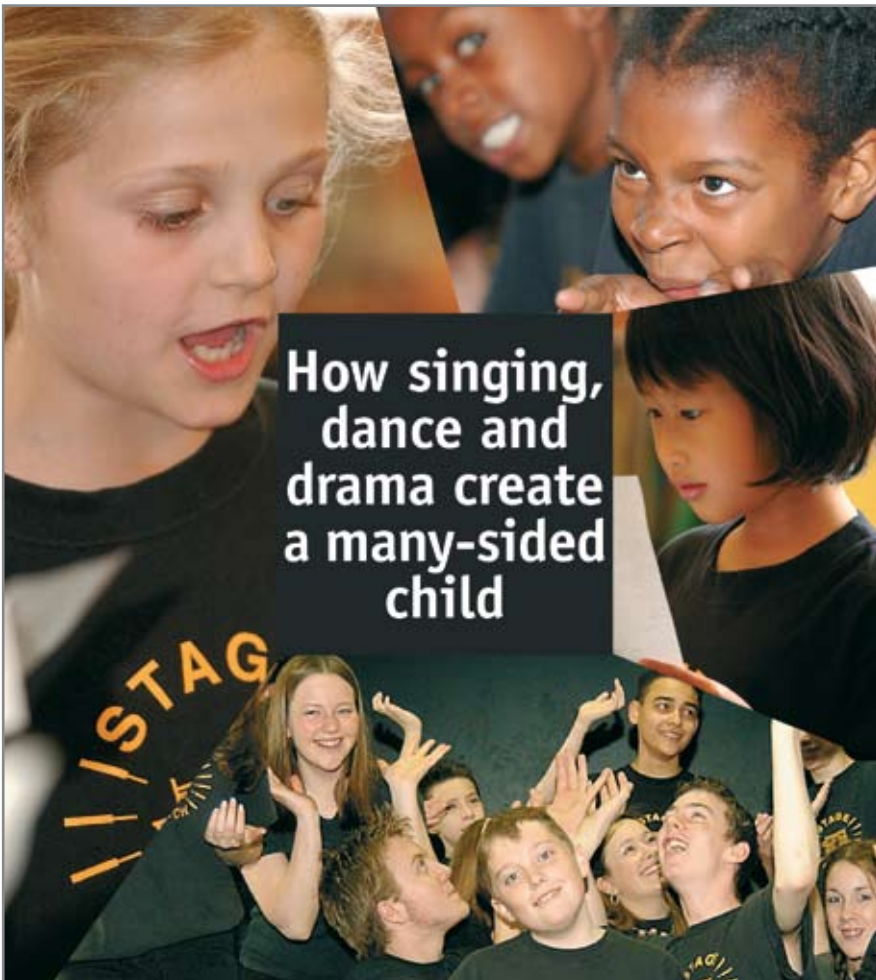
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Families® Welcome

The more things change... the more they stay the same...

Happy New Year! And welcome to the January/February issue of Families North West London Magazine – Packed full of news, informative articles and local listings to help you make best use of your families time and budget after a season of holiday indulgence. This issue's feature is the ever-anticipated PARTIES editorial. Along with some handy tips and advice come an extensive listing of entertainers, services and venues to help you plan that ever important day! Keep it in a safe place until the time of year when your party planning kicks into full gear.

We would also like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce ourselves as the new Editor's of the Magazine. We are so excited to have taken over an operation that is so highly regarded, by readers and advertisers alike, and will endeavour to maintain (and exceed) the high standards Vivienne has achieved to-date. Like the rest of you, we wear many hats – mum; professional; partner; and individual – and hope that Families content meets your needs, whatever 'hat' you wear when you read it!

Wishing you all a Happy and Prosperous 2010! - Heather and Janine

CONTACT US: Families North West Magazine
p.o Box 2378, Watford, WD18 1RF T: 01923 237 004
E: editor@FamiliesNWLondon.co.uk
W: www.familiesonline.co.uk

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NEXT ISSUE: March/April 2010 out from early March. Send in your news, stories and advertising bookings. Copy and advertising deadline: 5th February

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Front cover image: iStock

News and Views from around North West London

Do you need a Kitchen Fairy?

Local London Mum, Audrey Boss, has moved 'Beyond Chocolate' and recently started 'Kitchen Fairy' to help busy mums plan, shop for and make nutritious meals for their whole family at a fraction of the price of pre-prepared meals.

Visit her website www.kitchenfairy.co.uk or email her audrey@kitchenfairy.co.uk for a cooking lesson with a difference!

Learn Animation!

Ever wanted to know how some of your favourite animations such as Wallace and Gromit are made? Well now's your chance! Filmsteps offer 2 fun packed days and the opportunity to learn or brush up on your stop motion animation techniques. Plus



all the animations will be featured on their online TV station Filmsteps TV so you can wow your friends. Filmsteps are running a 2 day animation course at February Half Term in Maida Vale – February 15th – 16th 9am to 4pm Cost: £130 (Siblings £120)

To book: www.filmsteps.com or call 0844 324 5414

Is too Much Screen Time Damaging Our Children?



Sue Palmer

Seminar by Sue Palmer -Saturday 30 January 2010, Hampstead Town Hall

Recent surveys of the amount of time the average British child spends in screen-based activity ranges from 5 to 9.5 hours. There is no doubt that technology is exciting - it makes our lives easier and allows us to do the most amazing things. But what is it doing to our children? Might 'junk play' and 'junk culture' be as damaging for our children's minds as junk food has proved to be for their bodies?

Sue Palmer, renowned writer, broadcaster and consultant on the Education of young children talks about how many scientists and educators are becoming uneasy about the levels of screen-based activity that our children are exposed to - might too much too soon be causing more problems than it solves?

For more information and an application form visit the Montessori Society at www.montessori-uk.org or call 0207 435 7874 email seminar@montessori-uk.org

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News and Views from around

National Family Week Advanced notice:



Following the success of the first ever National Family Week in 2009, where over 4,000 events took place across the UK for families to enjoy, National Family Week is back and will be bigger and better from 31st May to 6th June 2010. The Week is fantastic fun for everyone.

Log on to www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk to find out more and if you are interested in running your own event, make sure you register in the Partner Zone where you will find useful tips and ideas.

Community Meeting Place in Edgware Available For Hire

The RochDale Scout Centre in Edgware has a large activity/meeting hall and two smaller meeting/club/educational rooms. They offer fantastic offers for daytime use (Monday-Friday) and they also have a morning nursery running.

Email Edgwarescouts16@aol.com for more details.



The Starting Over Show

The Starting Over Show was the first UK event to help people bounce back from relationship break ups and life crises, and they're back – with local live event in London, on Sunday 7 March 2010 at the Hilton London Metropole.

Use the promotional code 'sos' to register for two free tickets – <http://www.startingovershow.co.uk/index.php/book-tickets/> And visit the website www.sos-village.org

Northwood College teacher has second book published

A new publication by leading child education expert C J Simister reveals 16 secrets to a successful life and then gives parents a set of games, activities and exercises they can use with their children to invigorate, engage and encourage them to achieve their potential and have the brightest future.

For further information contact Muna Ausat 01923 845072

Chinese New Year Workshop

Sunday 7th February - Midday to 1pm - £6

Lauderdale House is celebrating Chinese New Year (Feb 14th). Be inspired by the morning tales of China and come and make your own lucky Chinese charms to bring you good fortune in 2010. Bring a parent/carer to help you. There are limited places for the workshop so advance booking is advisable. Ages 3 to 8

Call: 020 8348 8716



Pedal it Pink - 28 March - River Lee Country Park

Pedal it Pink, sponsored by Santander, has three ride routes for you to choose between: a full marathon (26.2miles), half marathon (13.1miles) or 5k family lap, which partners and children can join in. All routes are completely enclosed in the park, so it's safe, traffic-free and suitable for both beginners and experienced cyclists. Entries for the first South East Pedal it Pink is now open giving you the opportunity get fit before the event. Entry to the full marathon is £15, half marathon £10, and the 5k family lap just £5.

To join the pink revolution, visit www.breastcancercampaign.org, email pedalitpink@breastcancercampaign.org or call 020 7749 3700.





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A nationwide search is on for **Britain's Most Adventurous Family!**



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North West London

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Every Saturday Morning – in Harrow. Woodcraft Folk 020 8428 2409 or www.harrowwoodcraftfolk.bravehost.com

Halifax pocket money survey 2009

New research from Halifax reveals that the amount of pocket money children receive has risen over the past year, despite the recession. The average pocket money in 2009 is £6.24 per week, versus £6.13 in 2008. This is still £2.13 lower than the highest level of £8.37 in 2005. The survey found children are saving their pocket money regularly.

Pocket money winners and losers

Boys receive over £1 more per week (£6.88) than girls (£5.58). The gap between the amount received by older and younger children is closing slightly with children aged 8-11 receiving £4.80 per week and children aged 12-15 receiving £7.44 per week.



Neighbourliness is alive and well!

A Circle Anglia commissioned study has revealed how neighbourly we all are! Where you lie on the scale seems to depend on your age. 92% of the over-65s say they know the name of their neighbours, this compared to just 66 percent of 18-24s. 44% of people say they 'enjoy spending time' with their neighbours, which rises to 56% for the over 65s, and falls to just 26% for the 18-24s. When it comes to chatting with neighbours, 82% of the over-65s do so on a regular basis, compared to just 44% of 18-24s. And 38% of people say that living in a diverse neighbourhood 'is beneficial to my community.' So come on guys!! Get out there and get chatting to the person upstairs, over the fence or next door!



NCT Nearly New Sale

The NCT is looking for volunteers to help run its next Nearly New Sale on 7th March at Parmiters School, Watford. The format of the sale has changed and is now based on a 'table top sale'. Sellers leave their goods to be sold by the volunteers and collect the unsold goods at the end of the day (as well as their proceeds!)

For more information email Jules.goodair1969@tiscali.co.uk

Speakeasy with your child about Sexual Health and Relationships

Want to talk to your children about growing up, puberty changes and sex and relationships? Don't know where to start? Speakeasy is a 7 week course that will enable you to gain the confidence and skills needed to talk to your children about sex and relationships education.

Thursday 4th February 2010, £10 "donation" to cover booking fee (non refundable) 11am-1.15pm. Hillview Childrens Centre, Sout h Harrow 0208 863 7319



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The MultiMac car seat

The MultiMac car seat is an ingenious invention in child safety and allows up to four children, from birth up until the age of 12, to sit comfortably in the back of an average sized car and is available at a fraction of the cost of a larger MPV.

It is not only the convenience of The MultiMac that gives it an advantage over other child seats available but it achieves the highest standards of safety because of its unique energy absorbing design and special grade aluminum construction. It is secured independently by tether straps, a 5-point harness, patented AdjustaMac/ chest pad design and adjustable legs with the whole assembly designed to give the best possible performance and protection.

The MultiMac converts a five seater car into a six seater, but crucially it does not affect insurance premiums - Norwich Union has specifically approved the MultiMac and also other insurance companies have similarly accepted fitment of the seat with no change in premiums.

For more information on the MultiMac car seat or to register your interest, go to www.multimac.co.uk.

Dinner and Doodles...



The Designer Diner is a funky, wipe-clean placement on one side and a reusable chalk mat on the other. It's a portable imagination station for little artists and a traveling table for little eaters!

Includes a 12 piece box of non-toxic colored chalk and a detachable chalk pouch

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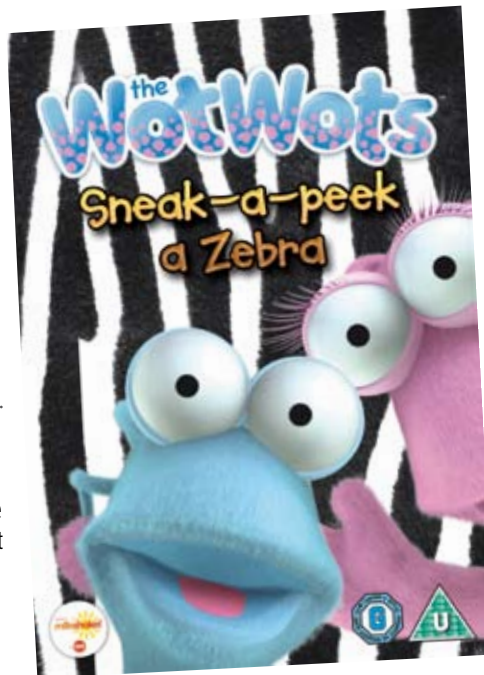
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RRP: £26. Apart from being simply the cutest sheep on the block Ewan™ makes a perfect new baby gift. www.easidream.com



The Wotwots DVD lands in store!



If your toddler can't get enough of the adorable new TV show - The WotWots - there's good news! From March 1st 2010, The WotWots will be available to purchase on DVD from stores nationwide.

The WotWots Sneak A Peek A Zebra™ comes in a funky tactile zebra case and contains the first 7 episodes providing 70 minutes of energetic entertainment. The internationally acclaimed preschool show follows the adventures of the puppet-like WotWot siblings as they land their steam-powered spaceship in the middle of a zoo and delight in discovering the exotic creatures around them. Designed to help children to understand the diversity of the animal world, each episode sees the pair scoot around on their hover-chairs and learn about the animals they encounter.

From the creative minds of the

Academy Award-winning Weta Workshop - the producers of Lord of The Rings and Jane & The Dragon - The WotWots uses the very latest CGI technology to bring the colourful characters to life; entertaining parent and child, over and over again.

"The WotWots Sneak A Peek A Zebra" is available nationwide from all good retailers from March 1, 2010. RRP: £12.99. www.wotwots.com

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Education/Schools News

with the help of Sarah Husselmann

Nursery Funding Changes in the Pipeline...

Did you know that the nursery funding system is changing in September – affecting your child's pre-school education?

Sarah Kettlewell from Hiawatha Montessori School in Beaconsfield explains.

Next September sees the introduction of a new government requirement for early years funding: the Extended Early Years Funding Formula. Many parents of young children are unaware of this, despite the huge impact it's likely to have on them and their children's early years education.

Early years funding was introduced in 2006. Currently parents can claim 12.5 hours free nursery education a week for their children from the term after they are 3. Nurseries are able to apply this as 2.5 hr per day; many preschool nurseries open for three hours and charge for the extra half hour. The government funding was worked out on a national basis and the rate nurseries receive is about £3.50 an hour – obviously a lot less than childcare costs in the home counties – and without the extra monies the business would be unsustainable for many nurseries.

From September, it is proposed that all parents will now be able to claim 15 hours, and the hours can be applied accumulatively (say, 5 hours on 2 days, 3 on another and 2 on another), and that nurseries cannot charge any extra.

These proposed changes will have potentially fatal consequences for

many small nurseries and the ability of parents to choose the type of education they want for their children. The only nurseries that could survive on the amount of money per child per hour the government funds will be ones that: open long hours and have children attending long hours, as after the 15 hours they can charge what they want (which seems to go against the government respecting the importance of home life); those that pay staff very low salaries (unqualified/untrained); or those that have very low or 'free' rent (eg charitable church hall arrangements, or, areas with very different rental costs than the home counties).

Many nursery schools will be either forced to close or choose not to accept the terms offered by the government, and will therefore have no option but to 'go private', and pass full costs onto the parents. It is also clear from discussions held with various people from Buckinghamshire County Council that there's genuine concern that these changes will result in insufficient nursery places for children in the area.

So what can you do about it?

Write to your local MP, Dawn Primarolo (Children and Young People's Minister) and Michael Gove (Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families) and say that you object to the government forcing smaller nurseries to close or go private by limiting their income. As a parent, you have the right to choose the type and quality of setting you want for your child's early years education and pay more than the government provides if you feel that it is warranted. There is also a petition about the Single Funding Formula on <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/EarlyYearsSFF>.



Image: Back to School 2009 Tu at Sainsburys

Early years – online resources for parents

It's the information age and busy parents, teachers and carers frequently turn to the internet for tips and tricks on caring for children. There are a number of websites aimed at pre-school and nursery children.

www.bigeyedowl.co.uk – provides craft recipes, words and actions to songs and

nursery rhymes, suggestions for role-play, maths, science and physical activities, and a comprehensive 'useful contacts' page.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Preschooldevelopmentandlearning is a government service providing tips on learning with your children from reading, writing and number skills. Information is also available on identifying special needs and getting support.

Finally, you can trust the BBC to have an in depth summary of the questions and concerns encountered by parents – their parenting pages offer age and stage specific sections www.bbc.co.uk/parenting.

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Scrap SATs, review staffing and increase school starting age

Time will tell whether the government implements convincing recommendations set out in last October's Cambridge Primary Review. The report draws on more than 4000 published sources, both national and international, and was written by a team of 14 authors, supported by 66 research consultants and a 20-strong advisory committee, lead by Professor Robin Alexander of Cambridge University. The report concludes that:

- SATs are not fit for purpose – whilst assessment is necessary, a method should be found that is less intrusive on the curriculum.
- A full review of primary staffing is required – pupils will benefit from being taught by subject specialists rather than a dedicated classroom teacher who may only have adequate knowledge of some subjects.
- Children should be allowed to be children - the start of formal education should be delayed until age six.

Recommendations in the report have been widely supported by teachers and teaching unions. In their response to the review, National Day Nurseries Association

“strongly believes that many children, especially summer born ones, are encouraged to start school too early and this can have a long-term impact on educational outcomes.”

The review and the government's response have been widely covered in the media – The Guardian has a comprehensive online summary:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/oct/16/scrap-sats-school-home-work>

Eduvacations: Parents Demand School Rules Change for Holidays

A new 'Eduvacations' campaign by leading family travel website Take The Family, backed by hundreds of parents, will help tackle the issue of 'truancy' by kids who are actually holidaying during term-time.

Almost 65,000 pupils a day missed school in the 2008/09 academic year, according to the Department for Children, Schools and Families. After illness, family holidays taken in term-time were the second most common reason for absence.

The initiative would make the current entitlement to 10 days off during term time a legal right – it's currently offered only at the individual head teacher's discretion, and parents who fly against their school's ruling risk incurring a fine of £100. Parents would have to demonstrate that the holiday will have significant educational aspects by submitting a form to show how the trip will tie in with their child's current learning stage, whilst avoiding critical periods. They would also be required to encourage their children to keep a diary of their trip.

Daniel Raven-Ellison, Geography Educator at the Geography Collective and a Take the Family writer, said: "You can have teaching without learning and holidays that are more educational than being at school. It's about time the public debate about holidays stops being monopolised by target-hungry 'Education Welfare Officers' so we can start a serious conversation about how we can tap the potential of holidays for learning.

Take The Family's new poll reveals that a whopping 92% of parents actively support the idea of holidays with some kind of learning aspect, while only 8% thought that children's learning should be limited to the classroom. Indeed, who's to say that seeing the world will not actually both improve grades later on as well as producing more well-rounded, balanced and broad-minded individuals?

The support of so many teachers and parents for the campaign shows that there's a real need for the government to adopt a more holistic approach towards our children's education. It shouldn't all be about targets and assessments.

REDDIFORD SCHOOL

An independent day school for boys and girls aged 2 years 9 months to 11

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For a prospectus, or to visit the school at work, please contact:

The Admissions Secretary, Mrs Di Murro,
Reddiford School,
38 Cecil Park, Pinner, Middx HA5 5HH
Tel 020 8866 0660 Fax: 020 8866 4847
admissions@reddiford.org.uk
www.reddiford.org.uk
Registered Charity Number: 312641



NORTHWOOD COLLEGE

GSA INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS 3-18 YEARS
JUNIOR SCHOOL GSA IAPS



NEW EARLY YEARS CENTRE OPEN EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2010 – 1.30PM - 3.00PM

TUESDAY, 16 MARCH 2010 – 9.00AM - 10.30AM

TUESDAY, 11 MAY 2010 – 1.30PM - 3.00PM

– PLEASE BOOK WITH JEMMA DAVIDSON, REGISTRAR

Call us on 01923 825446
or go to

www.northwoodcollege.co.uk

Reg Charity No.312646

Top Primary School in North West London

Heathfield Junior School was delighted, but not surprised, to be listed as the highest achieving prep school in North West London in the recently published Sunday Times Parent Power listings. Heathfield Junior School is one of the top fifty schools in the country based on Key Stage 2 SATs results in English, Mathematics and Science over the last three years.

SATs are the only externally marked examinations for primary age pupils and, as such, parents can rely on them to indicate the high level of pupil achievement. At Heathfield, girls throughout the junior school, including Year 6 when SATs are taken, follow a broad and balanced curriculum both in lesson time and as extra-curricular activities. They learn all National Curriculum subjects enhanced by learning a range of languages including Latin, Spanish and Mandarin, reflecting the school's philosophy of preparing tomorrow's leaders. Outside the classroom girls have opportunities to extend their learning through many clubs, sporting fixtures and musical activities. They routinely win all swimming fixtures against other schools and can be seen performing in many local musical events.

Carole McCulloch, Head of Heathfield Junior School said 'Being a pupil at Heathfield is a happy, exciting experience where every girl's individual talents are known and nurtured, every girl is known to every member of staff and every girl achieves the very best that she can. This result is a testament to our dedication of extending excellence.'

Sunday Times Parent Power www.timesonline.co.uk/parentpower/search.php



Forthcoming Independent School Open Days for Prospective Parents

Aldenhams School Elstree WD6 01923 858122. Co-ed 3-18 yrs (Boarding/Day) enquiries@aldenhams.com **Open Day:** TBC

Herbaldashers' Aske's Boys' School Elstree WD6 020 8266 1700 office@habsboys.org.uk. Boys 5-18 yrs. Small group tours on Tues at 9:30am, Thurs at 11am, and Fri at 9:30am. Tel the Main School Reception 020 8266 1700 to make an appointment. Prep school Tours take place on Wed at 9:30am. Tel the Prep School Secretary on 020 8266 1779 to make an appointment.

Herbaldashers' Aske's Girls' School Elstree WD6 020 8266 2300. Girls 4-18 yrs. Habs' To see the school in action contact Mrs. L Devine on 020 8266 2302 or e-mail using the contact form at www.habsgirls.org.uk

Heathfield School (GDST) Pinner HA5 020 8868 2346. Girls 3-18 yrs. www.heathfield.gdst.net. **Open Day: Pre-Prep and Prep** Wednesday 10th March, 10:30-12pm; **Seniors** Wednesday 5th May

Merchant Taylor's School Northwood HA6 01923 820644. info@mtsn.org.uk. Boys 11-18yrs. Tel Mrs Kate Kaye, the Admissions Secretary (01923 845514) to make an appointment for a school tour. **Open Days** are always on Saturdays, between 10am and 1pm. There's no pre-booking necessary – just come along and join us.

North London Collegiate School Edgware HA8 020 8952 0912. office@nlcs.org.uk. Girls 4-18yrs **Open Days:** most Saturdays. Contact the school for more details.

Northwood College Northwood HA6 01923 825446 admissions@northwoodcollege.co.uk. Girls 3-18 yrs. **Open Days:** Wednesday 3 February 2010, 1.30pm – 2.30pm and Tuesday 16 March 2010, 9.30am – 10.30am. To arrange an individual tour of the College at any other time – please contact Muna Ausat on 01923 845072 or tours@northwoodcollege.co.uk.

Northwood Preparatory School.

Rickmansworth WD3 01923 825648 office@northwoodprep.co.uk Boys 4-13 **Open Day:** Wednesday 3rd March (Nursery). Visits for the parents of prospective pupils are normally held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, in term time.

Orley Farm Harrow-on-the-Hill 020 8869 7600. office@orleyfarm.harrow.sch.uk **School at Work Open Mornings** most Weds 9:20-11am. Tel for an appt.

Purcell School of Music Bushey WD23 01923 331100 info@purcell-school.org co-ed 9-18yrs **Open Day:** Sun 7th Feb. Register online or over the phone 01923 331100

Quainton Hall School Harrow HA1 020 8427 1304 admin@quaintonhall.org.uk. Co-ed nursery 2-4yrs. Boys 4-12 yrs. Girls 4-7 yrs. Please contact the Admissions' Secretary to arrange a visit.

The Royal Masonic School Rickmansworth WD3 01923 773168 enquiries@royalmasonic.herts.sch.uk. Boarding and day. Girls 4-18 **Open Day:** TBC

Stanborough School. Watford WD25 01923 673268. registrar@spsch.org. co-ed 4-18yrs. Boarding/Day. **Open Day:** 30th September 2010.

St Helen's School Northwood HA6. 01923 843210. registrar@ssth.norw. Girls, 3-18 yrs. **Senior School Open Morning:** Wednesday 24th June - 10.30am - 12.30pm.

St. Margaret's School Bushey WD23 020 8901 0872. schooloffice@stmargarets.herts.sch.uk. Girls 4-18 yrs (boarding/day). **School 'At Work' Open Morning:** Tuesday 23rd February 2010 09:30-12:00pm.

St. Martin's School Northwood HA6. 01923 825 740. office@stmartins.org.uk. Boys 3-13 yrs. **Open Morning:** Friday 26th February 09:30-11:30 am.

Competition

To brighten up a grey January day...

ZIPPO'S CIRCUS invites you to be CLOWN FOR A DAY!

The band strikes up – the crowd cheer – the lights glow on the white sawdust of the circus ring – the spotlights highlight a gaggle of red-nosed clowns as they tumble into the arena to gales of laughter from the audience.

And now, for One Performance Only, **YOU** could be one of those real circus clowns!

All you have to do is enter our simple competition. The winner's family will watch as he or she takes part in the performance with Zippo's own troupe of hilarious circus buffoons. The competition is open to children from 5 to 14 years old. **The winner gets:**

- ☆ An appearance in clown make-up (provided by the Circus) in the Circus Ring at Zippo's during a performance
- ☆ Coaching from members of Zippo's professional clown group

- ☆ The gift of a clown's red nose
- ☆ 5 VIP seats for Zippo's Circus
- ☆ Candy floss and popcorn for all 5 guests

BE WARNED – if you're the winner, **DRESS FOR MESS!**

There are five Second Prizes of Family Tickets (each for 2 adults & 2 children) for Zippo's Circus.

All you have to do to enter is answer this simple question: **What colour is a traditional clown nose?**

Send your answer to: Editor@FamiliesNWLondon.co.uk or PO Box 2378, Watford, WD18 1RF **Subject:** Zippo Competition to arrive by the closing date of 30 January 2010.

Don't forget to include your name, address, email, and a phone number!

ZIPPO'S CIRCUS WILL ARRANGE PRIZE SEATS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. For full Terms and Conditions see page 31 of this issue



Don't miss your chance to win a Party with Planet Party @ Avenue House – see Page 14 for more details.

OPEN A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES
FOR YOUR CHILD... CREATE LEADERS...



WINNER, LSBC SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR AWARD

WE TEACH CHILDREN FROM 3 ½ AND OUR 3 COURSES COVER THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM TOPICS AND BEYOND. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO BUILD CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE AND CREATIVE THINKERS WHO EXCEL AT SATS, 4+, 7+ AND 11+ EXAMS, WITH A GOOD NUMBER WINNING SCHOLARSHIPS.

• INCREASE MEMORY AND LENGTHEN ATTENTION SPAN • DEVELOP REASONING AND ANALYTICAL SKILLS • EXPAND GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

THE ENTRANCE MATHS PROGRAMME HAS PLUGGED IN ALL GAPS IN MY DAUGHTER'S KNOWLEDGE. JOANNE IS NOW ON TRACK TO TAKE HIGHER LEVEL GCSE MATHS AT 16!

JOSEPH, WINCHMORE HILL

MY SON, TIMI, HAS ATTENDED THE LEADERS ARE READERS PROGRAMME FOR THREE TERMS AND THE EFFECT ON HIM HAS BEEN QUITE DRAMATIC. HE IS NOW THE BEST READER IN HIS CLASS. HIS TEACHER TELLS ME THAT SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING FOR 20-ODD YEARS AND HAS NEVER SEEN A CHILD TAKE TO READING SO FAST!

ALERO, NORTHWOOD

MY 6 YEAR OLD SON CAN WRITE AN ARGUMENT, A REPORT OR A LETTER AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE! THANK GOD FOR THE LANGUAGE SENSE PROGRAMME - HE IS CONFIDENT AND HANDLES ALL LITERACY WORK MEANT FOR 9 YEAR OLDS WITH EASE.

DAPHNE, HADLEY WOOD

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• London Academy, Spur Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 8DE

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Enrol on Saturdays
9am-1.30pm

It's Party Time!

by Rachel Oliver

A note from the Editor [Janine]...

I found planning my son's 2nd birthday party incredibly difficult! Two year olds are too old to sit with toys while the adults chat and too young for parties with 'games with rules'. I scratched my head for many a week trying to think of the perfect party idea. Then it dawned on me... my son just loved the book 'The Tiger Who Came To Tea'. We'd been reading it every night for the last 2 months!! I had already bought him a 'tea-set' as a birthday present, so why not actually have a 'tiger come to tea'??

I called our local costume hire company, tiger in stock – check! I looked for a local park with a tea house for the adults and a play area for the kids – Cassiobury Park, Watford – check! I collared a friend to wear the tiger suit – check! I invited the guests, bought all the food and let the fun begin! It was a hit... not just with my 2 year old son, but the older children even queued up for a cuddle! The tiger played in the park with the children and of course sat down to tea.

What will I do next year? I am not yet sure... but I bet there is something here that will inspire me!



Party organisers say children's parties have become the "acme of competitive parenting" with middle class families spending upwards of £5,000. Forget pass the parcel followed by jelly and ice-cream, today's nippers expect to record their own song in a professional music studio or drive over a car in a military vehicle at a "tank party".

In the US there's a growing fashion for celebrating half birthdays. Campaign group "Birthdays without pressure" have heard of a New York father throwing a \$10 million party for his 13 year old with Aerosmith headlining and a Florida family renting a cougar for a 7th birthday!

But if you really want your child's big day to go with a bang, why not start by reading the guide to successful children's parties by event planning specialists, Les Enfants. Find it free to download at www.lesenfants.co.uk. To really set your party apart, their advice is to choose a theme. Be imaginative. Make it as simple or as elaborate as you like, although complex party themes will be lost on very young ones.

Five to 8 year olds will appreciate themed parties best. Here are a few ideas:

- **Treasure Hunt Party** – Ask guest to come dressed as pirates, explorers, shipwrecked, mermaids. Do a treasure map to the venue as the invitation. Have a treasure hunt as the central activity.
- **Princesses Party** – Pink and glittery food and décor will enchant invited princesses.
- **Backwards Party** – Write the invites in mirror writing. Hang banners upside down. Play pin the donkey on the tail.
- **Alien Party** – Festoon the venue in tin foil. Create a giant moon and planets to hang from the ceiling. Include flying saucers in the party bags.
- **Harry Potter party** – Invites bearing Hogwarts Crest. Sorting hat to put guests in teams. Play "Moaning Myrtle" a version of blind man's buff. Create a potions class.

Should the stress and strain of doing it yourself prove too much, here's a selection of the best entertainers and party organisers around...

Absolutely Potty.

Children's pottery parties in your own home or venue of your choice. 07914 075760 www.absolutelypotty.co.uk.

Action Station.

Entertainers, magic story telling, face painters, make-up and drama with years of experience and training in drama and stage and can offer lots of ideas. 0870 770 2705. www.theactionstation.co.uk.

Visit www.familiesonline.co.uk for more events, news and features



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▷ www.thesoundcube.co.uk



image: bibbysalt

Adam Ants.

With over 15 years' experience Adam Ants offer an unforgettable party experience. One or two hour parties with fun, games, magic tricks, balloon modelling and puppetry. Book a build a bear party, children's disco or sports party or even have your child's favourite character deliver their birthday cake courtesy of the "kid-a-gram" service. Adam Ants can also supply extra tables and chairs, bouncy castle, climbing wall, fairground ride, or even Cinderella's coach complete with white Shetland ponies. Visit www.adamantyparties.com for details and online partyware catalogue.

Adventures in Music.

Nikki Gilbert specialises in creative parties for 3-5 year olds that involve story telling, music making and art work using props, toys and parachute games. Her parties are particularly suitable for children who prefer a quieter way of having fun! For more details or to book call 0208958 2417.

Ice Skating at Alexandra Palace.

Minimum of 10 children from 7 years of age. Two hour parties at the weekend. Priced from £10 per child. N22. 0208 365 4386. www.alexandrapalace.com.

Art4Fun.

Ceramic art/painting (Age 5 and up) - Pick a theme for your party from our wide range including, 'fairy fabulous', 'under the sea', and 'little monsters'. All children paint a plate of their own with the help of our friendly staff as you, the parents,

can relax and enjoy the festivities. Order a pizza or bring in sandwiches as well as the all-important cake! Invitations and a special souvenir tile are included! (min. 10 chn). For parties of less than 10 simply book a table. Choose your items, and get painting with help and hints from our staff. 0207 794 0800. Visit www.art4fun.co.uk for more details - tell them 'FamiliesNW' sent you!

Auntie Julie.

Entertains children's parties with her own mix of magic, puppets and circus skills. 01923 720040 www.auntiejulie.com.

Babybop.

Active, fun-filled music parties for children of preschool age, although older children will love it too! About thirty minutes of action songs, parachute, bubbles and instruments to get your birthday boy or girl bopping. Costs £50 approximately. Call Donna Sheenan on 07957 458537. www.donnasbabybop.co.uk.

Billy the disco dj.

Disco parties for children 5 to 11 years: musical statues, limbo dancing, bubble machine, karaoke, temporary tattoos and lots of prizes. Can supply piñatas and party bags. 07949 936864. www.billythediscodj.co.uk.

Boo Boo's Dazzle disco.

Boo Boo (Sean Hampson) has extensive experience working with children of all ages. His parties include dancing competitions, games, magic, juggling and balloon modelling. Children win prizes and have great fun with his bubble and smoke machines. For information and bookings 0207 727 3817. www.mr-booboo.co.uk.

Boogie Nights Entertainment.

Disco, party games and competitions at "sensible prices". 07972348728. www.discos-karaoke.com.

Boogie parties.

Specialising in children's parties for age 1 and upwards. Parties range from nursery rhymes, puppets, bubbles and instruments for the youngest to High School musical sing offs for the twenies. Call 07960 498208 or visit www.boogiebabies.co.uk.

Boo! Parties.

THE children's event specialists who have spent the last 20 years expertly producing some of the best parties in town. For amazing sets to terrific entertainers, fabulous caterers to perfect party bags, Boo! will make sure it's a day to remember. 020 7287 9090. www.booparties.com.

Build-a-Bear Workshop.

Each guest makes a furry friend. Prices start at £8 a guest with a minimum of 6 children and all guests get to keep their bear at the end of the party. Price includes invitations, thank you cards, gifts for guest of honour and party favours. Build-a-Bear at The Chimes Uxbridge 01895 274307 and Westfield Shopping Centre Unit 1092 - 0208 746 7627. www.buildabear.co.uk.

Butterfly Effects Face Painting Parties.

Let Krista Gendron transform your little one and their guests into growling tigers or glittering fairies. Price dependent on length of party and distance travelled. 07711 926525 info@butterflyeffects-facepainting.co.uk.

Charlie the Clown.

Charlie is a seasoned performer entertaining tots to teens as a variety of characters from clowns to pirates with his story-telling, magic, balloon modelling, singing and dancing. 07808 732 390. www.charlietheclown.co.uk.



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AGES 4 TO PRE-TEEN

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It's fun, formative and a great way of making friends!
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For Harrow, Eastcote, Hillingdon & Uxbridge call 01895 674587
For Watford, Radlett, Borehamwood, Abbots Langley & Bushey call 01727 831867

Children's Parties

Chuckle Parties.

Party games, high energy action rhymes, parachute, pom poms, assault course, mini indoor football, fluff ball attack, limbo dancing, hula hoop competitions and discos for 1 to 12 year olds. Prices start from £130 for an hour's entertainment. 020 8573 6288. www.chuckleparties.co.uk.

Cool Parties.

Specialists in planning themed parties including cars, quad biking, fairies, pirates, girls pampering, princesses and teddy bear making parties. Also hire out bouncy castles, inflatable slides, popcorn and candy floss machines, rodeo bulls, hot tubs and fairground rides. 0844 45 000 45. www.cool-parties.co.uk.

Creative Fun Factory.

Fun parties with lots of action songs, musical games and plenty of props. Mascot "Cheeky Monkey" can even make an appearance at the end to sing Happy Birthday. One hour's entertainment from £120 for up to 30 children. 0208 845 5276. www.creativefunfactory.co.uk

Creative Kids Parties.

Professional party entertainment for children aged 3 to pre-teen combining modern and traditional games. Can provide hand and face painting, balloon modelling and their mini disco/games parties prove popular with older children. Also arrange other events for schools and businesses such as crafts sessions. All entertainers are CRB checked and insured. 0800 027 4860. www.creativekidsparties.co.uk.

Dance Divas Parties.

Learn and perform a dance routine to the birthday girl's favourite song. Vanessa 07712 588177.

Diddi Dance Parties.

Offer your little one an hour of great activities including dancing games, action songs, hoops, dance ribbons, bubbles, balloons and bells. 07973 982790. www.diddidance.com.

Dinky Dancers.

Parties with a mix of high energy music, singing, dance, PE and action for children 2 to 8 years. 01438 831281. www.dinkydancers.com

Dramarama Stage School.

Unique, action-packed drama parties based on a theme chosen by the birthday child e.g. Harry Potter, Grease, Alice in Wonderland and Murder Mysteries. 020 8446 0891. www.dramarama.co.uk.

Dramatica

Dramatica aims to give the personal touch. Every bespoke party uses drama and music in an exciting and stimulating way to delight, enthral or enchant your child and their guests whether it's a Magical Adventure theme or staging their very own musical. 01494 539809. www.dramatica.org.uk.

Enjoy-a-Ball Parties.

Plenty of fun and games led by an enthusiastic coach makes for ideal entertainment for your highly energetic 4 to 9 year old! 08452 26 26 94. www.enjoy-a-ball.com.

Everyone Active.

Choose to have a swimming pool party in the main or learner pool, football frenzy, bouncy castle, trampoline or an all sports party. The party leaders will look after all your needs to make sure everyone has a great time, and they'll clear up the mess too! 01923 296750 www.everyoneactive.com

Competition



Planet Party @ Avenue House You invite the guests, we'll do the rest!

With busy parents in mind, Planet Party offers a hassle-free children's party service at Avenue House, Finchley. The experienced and professional team can take care of every aspect of the party for you – including entertainment, catering, party bags and birthday cakes. They'll even do all the setting and clearing up too! There are a fantastic range of themed parties to choose from with the current favourites including Hannah Montana, Mr Men and Little Miss, Diego and Peppa Pig.

For your chance to win a Perfect Party Package, worth up to £500, with Planet Party simply answer the following:

Name one theme you can choose for your party with Planet Party.

Send your answer along with your child's birthday and your contact details to editor@familiesNWLondon.co.uk before the closing date: 01/02/2010

The winner will receive a Perfect Party Package combined with Catering for Kids for up to 34 children. The prize is valid for 12 months and is suitable for children aged 3 – 8 years old. The Perfect Party Package includes invitations, setting up, entertainment, balloons, prizes, clearing up and the help of a party planner throughout. Catering for Kids is a fun and nutritious vegetarian's children's party menu, including shaped sandwiches and fresh cupcakes.

The venue hire fee, a birthday cake, any refreshments for your adult guests, and party bags are not included in the prize. The party can either be hosted at Avenue House, N3 or at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, N2. Planet Party can help with all additional party requirements, but you are under no obligation to engage their services beyond what is included in the prize.

www.planetparty.co.uk

See page 31 for Terms and Conditions



Make it special

Fantastic themed children's parties with great sets and terrific entertainers!



Call us now for more information
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www.booparties.com

Fairy Spangles.

Let "Spangles" be your fairy godmother and take you on an enchanted journey to the land of make believe with mystical stories, magic, balloons. 0208 429 1146. www.fairyspangles.co.uk.

Farmyard Funworld.

Birthday parties take place in the "party loft" where children of all ages can enjoy their party picnic and close encounters with some unusual animals. £8.95 per child includes entry to Farmyard Funworld and play area, food, host, party hat and birthday certificate. 01923 233841. www.lincolnsfields.co.uk. [Editor's note: We celebrated our son's first birthday here last year and had a great day! - Heather]

Fit for Sport.

The team that bring you kids camps and fitter family activities also offer an extensive package of Birthday parties at local venues. 0845 456 3233. www.fitforsport.co.uk.

Froggle Parties

Froggle Parties have the kids in fits of laughter from beginning to end. Our fun packed shows include magic, puppetry, games, themes, costumed characters, balloon modelling, music, discos, face painting, glitter tattoos, clowns, bubble and snow machines and prizes for all the children. Perfect for all ages and every occasion. Froggle Parties brings everything so you don't need to worry about a thing. 08450 504 509. www.froggleparties.com



Gymboree

Imagine A Party.

Children's entertainer. Themes include fairies, pirates, circus, private detectives, space adventures and more. 07794 084671. www.myspace.com/fileila_the_fairy.

Playgolf Northwick Park.

Budding Tiger Wood's can have a round of adventure golf on the "Mini Majors" crazy golf course, 45 minutes on the driving range, kids' meal and a game in the baseball & soft ball cages. £20 per child 8 players minimum all over 6 years. 020 8864 2020. www.northwickpark.com.

Gambado.

Party at the ultimate indoor play centre complete with giant playframe, full scale climbing frame, dodgems and carousel. 08456 43 43 23. www.gambado.com/watford.

Go Kart Party.

Treat your birthday boy or girl to their first real driving experience! Suitable for ages 4 to 11 years, the children drive the electric karts round a fun safe inflatable track in a mini grand prix to win trophies. 07956 142 771. www.go-kartparty.co.uk.

Go Potty.

Mobile pottery painting studio can come to you with everything you need for your creative Arty Party. 07894311670. www.gopottywithd.co.uk.

Groovy Arts Workshops.

Tailor made art and crafts parties for 5 to 11 year olds. Activities range from mask making to furniture design; from balloon to digital art. 0844 3578817. www.groovyartworkshops.co.uk.

Gymboree.

Custom made parties from your child's favourite games, songs and activities. Venues in Harrow 020 8863 5191; Uxbridge 01895 252550; Brent Cross 020 8201 7778. Watford 01923 250 440. www.gymboree-uk.com.

Hartbeeps.

Age appropriate musical parties. 1st Birthday based on a magical enchanted garden theme. 2nd & 3rd Birthday is a make believe sound journey and 4 years plus enjoy a mini-me disco. www.hartbeeps.com.

Hillingdon Outdoor Activities Centre.

Activity sessions are an extremely popular way to celebrate a birthday. Pick one of nine options for your party: kayaking, climbing and abseiling, raft building, archery and orienteering, high ropes and zip wire or high ropes and cows tail, 3G swing and orienteering, caving and low ropes or fencing.



Willows Farm

Session are 2 ½ hours and teach the basic skills of the activity together with lots of fun and games. All the Instructors are fully qualified. Birthday parties can be booked day or evening during the summer months. 01895 824 171. www.hoac.net.

Honky-Tonks.

Singing, action songs and musical instruments. 01707 859828. www.honky-tonks.co.uk.

Jacqu'in the Box.

Themed stories, dressing-up, music and movement, instruments. 01296 589335. www.jacquinthebox.com.

Jasmine's Magic Parties.

Specialising in parties for all ages from magic parties to meet the snake parties to makeover and karaoke parties. 020 7249 9118. www.jasminemagicparties.co.uk.

Jenty the Gentle Clown.

Magic tricks, guitar and banjo playing and a gentle approach. Good with mixed ages. 020 8527 4855.

YOUR CHILD deserves the best, while you take a rest. Traditional fun, planned with you & your child, food and pinatas optional. **Parties TO REMEMBER** Age 3 to 12 yrs **020 7249 3242** www.partiestoremember.co.uk

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Mr Magic.

Wonderful, funny show using magic, puppets, balloons and spinning plates for 3 to 7 year olds. 020 8238 9117. 07752 133871. www.ianmanly.co.uk.

Mr Marvel.

Shows feature magic, Punch & Judy, live rabbit, disco, bubble and snow machines. 08707662525. www.mrmarvel.co.uk.



Mr Smiffy.

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Creative fun: baby prints, sand art, fabric fun, fun with foam. 01895 441881. www.paintandmake.com.

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What's in a name?

By Liz Bourne

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Naming a child is a tricky yet important business. Some decide upon a name before the baby pops out, others wait to see what the baby looks like – surprising that more are not called Winston, then. If my brother had his way I would have been called Fire Engine.

Naming in history

Naming a baby used to be a simple process. When most people didn't travel far from home, a given name (or first name) sufficed. If there were two people of the same name in the village, a nickname was given. As people were exposed to more people, the family name was added, then the middle name.

A hundred years ago, people tended to name their children after religious figures or political heroes. In 1907, Joseph became one of the most popular names because of the Tory radical Joseph Chamberlain. However I don't think many children are being named Gordon this year.

Celebrity culture

Some may wince at the celebrity habit of giving their children 'different' names, but they are not as individual as they may first seem. Back in 1870 a baby was named Brooklyn, and in 1853 a child was named Apple.

The first baby to be registered with the name 'Princess' was in 1847 and has since been used at least 1,800 times. The Victorians were also swayed by popular culture and the name Ellen became popular in the 1870s after the popular Shakespearean actress Ellen Terry.

Living up to your name

Some parents believe that a name can carry great aesthetic or even predictive powers. For example, in 1958 in New York, a man named his seventh child Winner. Three years later he had another baby boy whom he named Loser. Loser became a sergeant in the New York Police Department and was known as James, Jimmy or, occasionally, Lou. But never Loser. His brother Winner, despite his name, was noted for his impressively long criminal record.

Who's a naughty boy then?

A recent study by parenting club Bounty.com has shown that 49% of British teachers make assumptions about a child based on their name, with boys called Callum assumed to be the most naughty.	Top 10 naughtiest boys 1. Callum 2. Connor 3. Jack 4. Daniel 5. Brandon 6. Charlie 7. Kyle 8. Liam 9. Jake 10. Brooklyn	Top 10 naughtiest girls 1. Chelsea 2. Courtney 3. Chardonnay 4. Aleisha 5. Casey 6. Crystal 7. Jessica 8. Brooke 9. Demi 10. Aisha
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The weird and the wonderful

Hearing of a family naming a child after the entire Liverpool football team seems mild in comparison to some. Who can forget the New Zealand couple who named their twins Benson and Hedges? Or another Kiwi family who called their child 4Real?

In China, nearly 3,500 children were named Aoyun, meaning Olympics, after the bid first came up to host the event. And in 2007 a Chinese couple tried to name their boy @, stating that using this universally recognised symbol reflected their love for him. In their defence, to a Mandarin speaker



Names made-to-order from AlphabetSoup
 prices from £8, email: alphasoup@btinternet.com

Current Top 10 baby names in England and Wales

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. OLIVIA | 1. JACK |
| 2. RUBY | 2. OLIVER |
| 3. EMILY | 3. THOMAS |
| 4. GRACE | 4. HARRY |
| 5. JESSICA | 5. JOSHUA |
| 6. CHLOE | 6. ALFIE |
| 7. SOPHIE | 7. CHARLIE |
| 8. LILY | 8. DANIEL |
| 9. AMELIA | 9. JAMES |
| 10. EVIE | 10. WILLIAM |

These rankings have been produced using the exact spelling of the name given at birth registration. Similar names with different spellings have been counted separately.
 Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

saying the word 'at' in English sounds like 'ai ta' which means 'love him'.

Even more controversially, the case of the New Jersey family who have children named Adolph Hitler and JoyceLynn Aryan Nation, raised questions when they asked their local supermarket to write young Adolph's full name on a birthday cake.

Changing a name

Over the past 5 years, 200,000 people have changed their names through the UK Deed Poll service. Most notable is the man who decided that Daniel was too normal and so became Happy Adjustable Spanners. Other name-changes include Jellyfish Saveloy, Jojo Magicpacemonkey and Daddy Fantastic.

Whatever you choose to name your child, do think long and hard about the poor child's future. No one wants to spend their life having to spell out their name, trying to squeeze all the names of the England football squad onto an application form, or be forever having Monty Python scenes quoted at them.

Welcome to the family: The rise of Naming Ceremonies

By Liz Bourne

My mother likes to remind me how much I screamed throughout my christening, although why they chose to put me through this religious ceremony, I don't know – they are staunch atheists. In today's more secular society, some people have turned to alternative naming ceremonies.

The need for Naming Ceremonies

Social activist, the late Michael Young, Lord Young of Dartington, was concerned about rising divorce rates and absent fathers. He set up The Family Covenant Society to provide welcoming ceremonies for children, helping to cement the bond between parents, children and their families. In 1994 this was known as The Baby Naming Society, an organisation dedicated to helping families create a ceremony that they could carry out themselves.

Many parents however, preferred to have a professional Celebrant to deliver the ceremonies and when, in 2002, Civil Ceremonies Ltd was launched, it provided trained Celebrants to carry out naming ceremonies.

The Baby Naming Society was incorporated into Civil Ceremonies and today the organisation has a nationwide network of some 200 Celebrants.

Why choose a Naming Ceremony?

- Couples who do not have religious beliefs still think it is important to hold a ceremony to welcome the child into the family and make a commitment to their welfare.
- For couples with mixed beliefs a naming ceremony can be a good alternative to having to decide on one religion to welcome the child into.
- A ceremony is an excellent way of welcoming (rather than naming as such) step children or adopted children into the family.



Angela Holmes with Isobel and Finn

Promises are made to the child by the parents, by supporting adults and, quite often the grandparents too. Families can also choose to include favourite readings, poems or music and have a naming day certificate as a special memento.

Case study

Angela Holmes's first child was christened at a Catholic church, but she chose a non-religious naming ceremony with Civil Ceremonies for her son Finn.

'I was brought up as a Catholic, which was why I chose to have Isobel christened in church, and I planned to do the same for Finn,' said Angela. 'I approached my church, but as I don't attend Mass regularly they declined. We did want to welcome Finn formally into the family though, so I started to look on the internet at some alternatives and found out about civil naming ceremonies.'

Angela's husband, Jamie, was baptised in the Church of England, but he was happy that a civil naming ceremony gave Finn the chance to eventually choose his own faith.

The ceremony was a great success. 'The grandparents loved it, each of them made a promise to Finn and felt very proud to be able to do so. My mum said it was very special to be involved. In a church christening it's only the godparents who participate and the grandparents all felt this was a lovely way to recognise their contribution to the family.'

Spring is the peak time for enquiries as families plan celebrations for the popular summer months.

What happens at a Naming Ceremony?

There are several providers of naming ceremonies:

1. Some local authorities in England and Wales offer this service, which must be held at licensed premises and cannot include any religious content.
2. Most naming ceremonies in the UK are conducted by Civil Ceremonies. These can take place anywhere, for example a home, garden, hotel or park, and will always be delivered by a fully trained Celebrant. Parents can choose from a classic or bespoke service, enabling them to incorporate some religious elements if they wish.

At christenings, traditionally the service focuses on welcoming the child into the church and religious faith, whereas naming ceremonies concentrate on the relationship between the child, the parents and the wider family.

To find out more, take a look at these useful links:

- Civil Ceremonies Ltd
(www.civilceremonies.co.uk) 0845 0048608
- The British Humanist Association
(www.humanism.org.uk) 020 7079 3580
- Humanist Society of Scotland
(www.humanism-scotland.org.uk) 0870 874 9002

The 'most depressed' day of the year 2010:

Monday 18 January

It's January: Christmas is a distant memory, the credit card bills are hitting the doormat, the days are shorter, you've broken all your New Year's Resolutions already, you feel de-motivated but know that you should be taking some sort of action. Take heart, this is as bad as it will get: **it's Blue Monday.**

Psychologist Cliff Arnall has calculated that Monday 18 January will be the most depressed day of 2010, known as 'Blue Monday'. His formula uses six factors to calculate the day of the year on which people are most likely to be depressed: the weather conditions, debt level (the difference between debt accumulated and our ability to repay the debt), the time since Christmas, the time since failing to keep our New Year's Resolutions, low motivation levels and the pressure to take action.

For some people the whole winter period can feel like Blue Monday 10% of the population people are said to be affected by the 'Winter Blues' or Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.). December, January and February are the most difficult months for sufferers who typically experience

symptoms of tiredness, lethargy, sugar cravings, depression and a general decline in their well-being.

For sufferers of S.A.D., or for anyone experiencing Blue Monday, one of the ways to reduce the severity of the symptoms is to bring a little light into your life using light therapy.

"Up to 85% of sufferers of Seasonal Affective Disorder see their symptoms improve when they use light therapy", says light therapy expert and managing director of The S.A.D. Lightbox Company, Carol Barksfield.

"Research studies show that in the last half of the 20th century the light reaching the earth has reduced by as much as 2-3% and many people spend their winters working in offices and shops with tinted glass and deliberately low levels of lighting. Our body clocks really do react to light and as a result light can be used to help improve how we feel and how we function, particularly in the winter months when there is less natural light around us. Lightboxes can be used to lift and enhance mood and so restore the ability of S.A.D. sufferers to cope, marshal their inner resources and improve so many aspects of their daily life – all through literally bringing light into their life!" notes Barksfield.

The S.A.D. Lightbox Company is one of the pioneers in the field of light therapy for treating symptoms of S.A.D. and has been manufacturing and retailing lightboxes in the UK and around the world for over 20 years. Simply using a lightbox for 20 – 60 minutes a day (preferably in the mornings) will increase your energy levels and can help to reset your



LitePod

body clock. Lightboxes are available from The S.A.D. Lightbox Company from £115.00 – 265.00.

For anyone suffering from Blue Monday the DawnLite Natural Alarm Clock is the perfect purchase to help you to get out of bed with a spring in your step. The DawnLite Natural Alarm Clock is a gentle and altogether calmer way to start the day. Instead of being shaken awake in the dark winter months with a noisy radio or bleeper alarm the DawnLite will naturally and gradually increase the light in the room to replicate a summer dawn.

The DawnLite is available for just £79.90 and would make an excellent gift for anyone suffering from Blue Monday or S.A.D. All lightboxes are available on a 30 day home trial to allow the purchaser to see whether light therapy works for them without financial risk.

For a free information pack on light therapy please call S.A.D. Lightbox on 0845 095 6433 or visit www.sad.uk.com



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Nurturing the spirit of the child for a peaceful world

(New Year's Resolution) Don't be a Competitive Dad

By Kevin Ryan

Many years ago the television comedy series *The Fast Show* created the character Competitive Dad.

He is the best at everything and torments his long-suffering children with constant challenges they can never live up to. This carefully crafted character is true for both mums and dads. So, be careful when helping your children set their goals; are they their goals or are they yours?

New Year is the time when families start thinking about the following year and it is good to start making plans and setting goals. It is important to find out what the children have in mind and what their interests are. What do they see themselves doing in 2010? It is good to talk and see how these ideas can blend in with the rest of the family's aspirations and activities

For young children interests can be fleeting. What is the centre of their life one week, the thing that fills all their waking thoughts, can be totally forgotten the following week. However, even from an early age children can develop activities and skills that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. An interest in drawing can be cultivated; an interest in sport encouraged. Each of these interests needs to be explored and developed, but willingly dropped if the child loses interest. Every child's room is full of half-read books or unplayed-with toys, the debris of a lost passion. To the parents this might appear a waste of time and money, but for the child it is vital for finding out who they are.

From a very early age your child is on a lifelong mission to discover where they are in the world, what will stimulate them and make them grow. Just as importantly, they need to discover what does not interest them and to let these things go. The child should always lead; the parents can offer encouragement, suggestions, guidance and practical help, but they should always follow the child's explorations and investigations.

There is a danger that you can become Competitive Dad-type parent. Sport and games are Competitive Dad's biggest interests - from cricket to tennis and fishing, not to mention weight-lifting and Monopoly. Simon Day, the character's creator, said that the character was inspired by a dad he once saw at a swimming pool. He challenged his two young children to a race, but instead of giving them a chance, he raced off across the pool then waited smugly for his struggling offspring to catch up. This comedy character reveals an awful truth about how the goals, interests and ambitions of the parent become imposed on the children. The two children might have learned to love swimming for pleasure or as a sport, but the actions of their father risked killing that interest stone dead.

It is essential to encourage children to do things that they might not naturally be inclined to do, such as reading, writing and maths. It is advantageous for the children to pass down family traditions and the parent's own enthusiasms. These are the things that can bring a family closer together. However, it is vital to check yourself and ask: who am I doing this for? When does communicating my love of swimming stop being encouragement and start becoming imposing? Children's development can be hampered when the parent starts living out their own goals and ambitions through their children.

It is essential to listen to your child, to their wants and interests. Space should be given for experimentation and maybe eventual rejection. Sometimes it can be truly heartbreaking for a parent when their child shows no interest in something that is so essential for them. It has the pang of rejection of who they are. This is especially true if the child showed an initial interest and then loses it. It takes a lot of courage to acknowledge that this is not your child's interest and move on. Allowing your child to find their own way is to allow their individuality to grow. You never know, you might have planted the seeds of a passion that they will return to in later life.

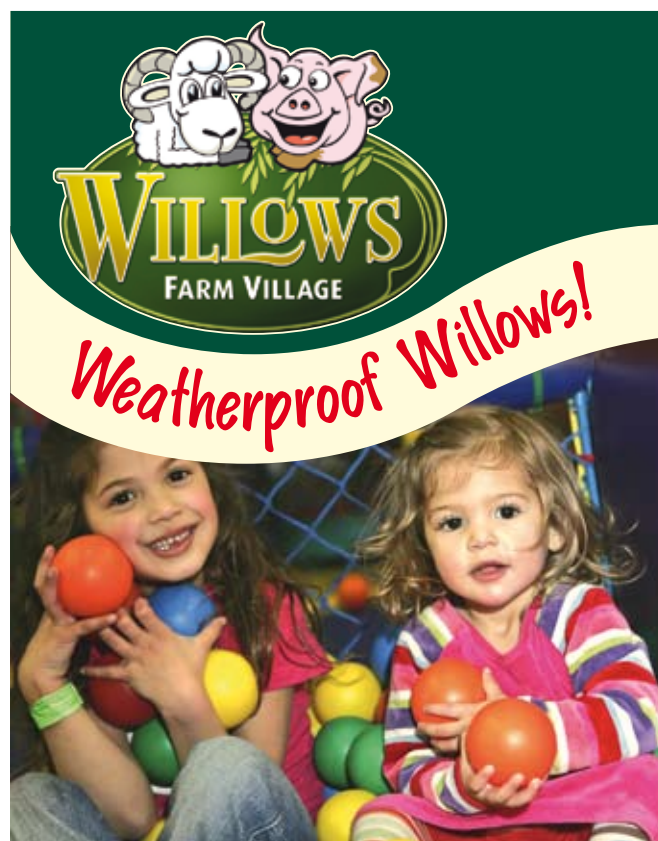
So when you are next at a sports day or junior football match and see some parent, red-faced, shouting at their children from the sidelines, be glad that you are not one of them.

Kevin Ryan - Moving On Coaching

Phone: 020 8400 9045 Web: www.movingoncoaching.co.uk



Kevin Ryan



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14529a 12.09



Geocaching – on the traditional

By Sarah Husselmann

If you're stuck in a rut during the school holidays or simply looking for a new outdoor activity for the entire family, geocaching may be just the thing. This high-tech treasure hunt using global positioning system (GPS) devices starts and concludes on the internet. For those with techie children, the use of technology alone should be enough to get them hooked.

How does it work?

Geocaching is a treasure hunting game, also referred to as a sport, where participants retrieve GPS coordinates from the internet and navigate to the outdoor location using a GPS device (Garmin, TomTom). The aim is to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, and then log adventures online. Since September 2000, geocaching has grown from 75 geocaches to over 860,000 active geocaches worldwide. It is estimated that there are between 2 and 3 million active geocaching participants around the world.

Use it as an excuse to visit your local park or to venture further afield and explore new areas.

Want to take part?

- 📱 Register for free at www.geocaching.com
- 📱 Under "Search for Geocaches" type your postcode, or town. This will display a list of caches near you.
- 📱 Click on the cache name to display; coordinates of the cache's location, additional information about the location, difficulty rating, clues and hints.
- 📱 Print the page to take with you, and if you're unfamiliar with the area pack a map just in case.

- 📱 Tap the coordinates into your GPS device and follow the directions until you reach "ground zero" – to geocachers this is the point where your GPS device shows that you have reached the location
- 📱 Look around you and if necessary use the additional clues and hints to find the cache, you will usually be looking for a small plastic weatherproof container.
- 📱 Be discreet – Geocaching etiquette says you shouldn't let non-geocachers, see what you're doing.
- 📱 Found it? Once you find the container, open it and enjoy your victory. All caches contain a log book but many contain prizes and other small objects. If you take something, leave something of the same value.
- 📱 Go home and log your visit on www.geocaching.com
- 📱 Didn't find it? If you didn't find it, go online and log that too, try again or try a different cache.

Once you're in the swing of it, why not place your own cache? It can be very exciting for children to maintain the cache and track visits online.

Further details on getting started, what GPS device to use and regular geocaching events can be found at www.geocaching.com.



Trackable Items

Some geocaches contain trackable items such as Geocoins and Travel Bugs. These items have a unique IDs

and their location and activity is logged on www.geocaching.com. Many coins travel the world as they are passed from geocache to geocache and their online history tells an exciting story



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A modern take family treasure hunt

Here's the Little Terra Top Five Geocaching questions and answers

1. What is Geocaching?

It is essentially a new, high-tech form of treasure hunting or hide and seek.

2. What do I need to go Geocaching?

All you need is a GPS unit, some basic understanding of how to use it and lots and lots of enthusiasm. Even if you don't have a GPS you can still take part by downloading the OS map coordinates and plotting them on a map!

3. What is a GPS?

GPS stands for Global Positioning System. It is a system of satellites that work with a GPS receiver to determine your location on the planet (within around 6 - 20 feet). Coordinates are normally given in Latitude and Longitude. You can use the device to navigate from your current location to another location.

4. What are the rules in Geocaching?

- If you take something from the cache, leave something of equal or greater value.
- Write about your find in the cache logbook.
- Log your experience at www.geocaching.com.

5. How do I find out more information?

If you would like to find out more or would like some information on buying a GPS then please visit www.geocaching.com or Little Terra at www.littleterra.co.uk which offers a wide range of high quality gear to kit-out children for all outside activities.





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Mummy on the Edge

Mummy on the edge tries not to pass on long-standing homework anxiety to Mini-Me and makes a New Year's Resolution on the way.

Mini-Me's homework is getting weightier in quantity and required quality. And I am feeling the pressure. The latest assignment was a project on Victorian Schools which we – I mean SHE - forgot all about – until it was mentioned by my friend, another mum, in passing. This left us – I mean HER – 2 and a half weeks to complete it, instead of the 4 weeks that we – I mean SHE - should have had.

It was time to take affirmative action. Which meant not spending half the available working time on the following pencil-related activity: 5 minutes: lecture on not using a pen for homework because it always turns out messy, despite the fact that she has been told repeatedly with near Joan-Crawford-wire-coat-hanger clarity that all homework should be done with a pencil, NOT a pen. 10 minutes: looking for a pencil, despite the fact that she has precisely a zillion of them. 4 minutes: looking for a sharpener (ditto). 1 minute: sharpening the pencil, 2 seconds: the lead breaking because she's dropped the pencil several times, 1 minute: re-sharpening the pencil, 5

minutes: looking for a less-pointless (har har) sharpener that didn't con its way into our house via a party bag. That's over 20 minutes used up without writing a single word. According to the homework guidelines that Mini-Me brought home in her first week of Year 3, homework shouldn't take more than 20 minutes. So we are – I mean SHE is behind before she's even started.

We needed to re-assess the use of time and allocate minutes more effectively.

So, while at the pound shop picking up padded envelopes (£1 for a pack of 6!) I also bought some auto-poppy pencils. (Plus a pot of pickled peppers! Amazing what you can get there...)

"What did Victorian children do at home mummy?" Mini-Me asked me that evening.

"Well," I answered thoughtfully, "they had to keep their house very, very tidy." Mini immediately skipped off up the stairs to clean her room and I was left wondering how I could milk this thing. Could

I also tell her that Victorian children helped their mothers empty the dishwasher and washing machine and vacuum the interior of the car?

So for two weeks, spurred on by her tyrannical Victorian schoolmarm mother (just to give her a realistic experience, you understand,) Mini-Me spent an hour and a half every evening reading several books and scanning websites. She diligently wrote and illustrated sections of her project on Victorian school punishments (finger-stocks for fidgets – fantastic idea!) equipment, clothing and Other Stuff. Sentence by spidery sentence, she worked her way through the project, with an admirably fastidious commitment to putting things in her own words that sometimes turned up-side-down what she meant to say.

It seems harsh but I just feel I have to train her from an early age not to turn out like me. I mean, look: I was supposed to email this article this morning and I'm writing it this evening! I have come to feel



Victorian Mini-Me

inured to this sick feeling at the pit of my stomach, always knowing that there is something I need to have done. It is an inheritance I would be eternally grateful not to pass down.

I can still feel the itch on the end of my nose that I couldn't scratch myself, because my hands were soaked in wallpaper paste, while working with BFFB (best friend fashion buyer) on a joint primary school project on Astronomy. While our classmates were diligently writing, heads down, we wasted all class project time farting about with balloons and papier maché with the vague and doomed intention of making a moving model of the solar system. Because it was hilarious fun. Needless to say, we didn't finish it. At the last minute, we changed the subject to Astrology and copied most of the information from an article from my older sister's ancient Jackie annual.

Anyway, by the time it came to handing in Mini-Me's project, I felt like I had taken part in a BBC Three reality show called "The most impatient parent in the world". Any minute I could be kidnapped, locked in the conference room of the Watford Travelodge with Mini-Me and a psychologist, and made to watch video-footage of myself in our house, barking about pencils and dishwashers. What an ordeal. And what a relief that it's over. Hopefully, both Mini-Me and I have learnt our lesson. Our New Year's Resolution is to start our homeworks the very day we get them. So I'm going write next issue's article RIGHT NOW. Happy New Year.

Angelina Melwani runs Sing and Sign baby signing classes in Harrow, Bushey, Stanmore and Rickmansworth.

More info at www.singandsign.com

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The Faraway Tree - www.farawaytree.co.uk

by Amita Mehta



"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing." - George Bernard Shaw

I have always dreamt about running my own business but never had the courage to take the plunge. This was until the perfect opportunity arose and I decided to pursue my dream. I decided my life needed a change in direction and after years of being signed up to various websites about businesses for sale, I saw something I could let my creativity and imagination loose on. I had received an email about a toy shop selling traditional wooden toys, which is something I am truly passionate about! I started my preliminary research and knew instantly that although buying the shop was not an option for me, I could develop the website arm of the business.

After deliberation with my very supportive husband and family (plus a few sleepless nights!), I dived in with an offer. I didn't actually think my offer would be accepted, but when it was, I was over the moon and full of enthusiasm for my new venture. After that I was busy spending my time on research, how to run an online business and speaking with suppliers. This was all new to me and I felt like I was on the fastest rollercoaster ride ever!

Slowly things started to fall into place, and with all hands on board we converted my house to accommodate the growing number of stock which was starting to be delivered. My true passions came to light whilst researching and selecting the toys and gifts I was to sell and I re-launched The Faraway Tree, toys and gifts in October 2009. I will never forget the magical feeling when I received my first order, I was finally there!

As a mother I fully understand and appreciate the importance that toys have. My aim is to provide affordable, traditional and durable toys with an emphasis placed on quality products which can be enjoyed by future family generations. I have carefully selected imaginative and educational toys which will inspire creative play for many years to come. My long term ambition is to be able to support children's charities and projects as my business grows. I have been inspired by what I can achieve and hope other mums like me will take the plunge.

The Faraway Tree sells traditional wooden toys and imaginative gifts for children. If you are looking for high quality children's wooden toys, we have an amazing range. Each item is made to exceptional standards, adhering to strict European safety regulations and specialising in traditional toys to suit children of 3 years and above.

Come and visit our online store; www.farawaytree.co.uk



image courtesy Faraway Tree

Oaklands Pre-School Play Group: Northwood's Best Kept Secret!

by Kiran Grover

People often tell me how lucky I am to work locally, be near my children and, work the hours that suit me. What I generally don't tell them is that this was not a coincidence! I knew that when I had kids I wanted to be near them, I also really wanted a dog and knew I could not have one in central London, where I used to live so had to move out of town.

As a self-employed working mummy fitting everything in- work, family, and home stuff - are like pieces of a jigsaw. My latest challenge is now fitting in my second baby who is 6 weeks old into the jigsaw. The down side of running my own business is not really being able to take any time off. However, I still think it is a really good option for mothers as you can fit in your work around your family, something that can be really difficult to do when you are employed by another.

I now find I have to get up even earlier than the baby and the toddler in order to enjoy the luxuries of a bathroom to myself for a few minutes! As a Homeopath my patients expect me to be a healthy role model and I find at the moment with the new baby make up really helps me look better than I feel!

I seem to spend a lot of time running around, looking after the clinic, dealing with the admin, answering phone calls and e-mails whilst still looking after kids. Fortunately I am blessed with some great childcare, my super mummy who also still works but manages to fit us in, my husband who helps out on weekends and then the Oaklands Pre-School Play Group, www.oaklands-playgroup.co.uk which is affordable and really near my home. The ladies who run it are like kind, but firm aunties who my daughter loves to visit every day! My daughter really enjoys going to this local play group and often refuses to come home as she is having so much fun! This gives me real piece of mind, knowing that she is looked after, enjoying herself and, learning through play to interact with children of her own age.

Kiran Grover BA, MA, LCHC RSHom is the founder of the Healthy Homeopathy clinic in Northwood Consulting Rooms www.healthyhomeopathy.co.uk. North -West London. She is a Graduate of the Centre for Homeopathic Education and a Registered Member of the Society of Homeopaths (www.homeopathy-soh.org). For more information contact her on 07983 788762 or e-mail, kiran@healthyhomeopathy.co.uk.



Family dining can improve your child's health, success and happiness

Research shows that family dining makes kids more intelligent

According to a poll of British families, only one family in five eats together once a week or less. Even when families do eat together, three quarters of them watch TV at the same time. A survey conducted by BBC's Newsround showed that 13% of children never eat together as a family – a worrying statistic which could be seriously detrimental to our children's health and wellbeing.

It is doubtlessly difficult in our modern lives to put time aside for every member of the family to sit together long enough to eat a meal. But there is strong evidence to show that children who regularly sit down to eat with the family achieve better GCSE grades than those who do not (according to a report by the Department for Children, Schools and Families).



Mark Elliot furniture, handmade in England, is specifically made with family life in mind. Mark Elliot designed his

Macintosh chairs with a smooth curved back for supporting the spine, encouraging good posture to aid healthy digestion. The range even includes a gorgeous bench seat which kids love to sit on at dinner time.

So does the furniture designer practise what he preaches? According to Mark their table is an evocative reminder of family life: "Our table is constantly in use be it for homework, enjoying a quiet read of the newspaper with a cup of coffee, preparing family suppers or as a social hub for when friends come round."

Sitting down together as a family to enjoy a meal gives you time to laugh, talk and learn about each other's lives. Eating together at the table is also widely believed by nutrition experts to reduce obesity as it encourages slower eating. Although it is not always easy to organise, the benefits of doing so are well worth the effort.

Mark Elliot stores are found in Altrincham, Bishop's Stortford, Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge, Cheltenham, Holkham, Holt, Monmouth, Norwich, Snape Maltings, Southwold and Stamford. Or buy online at www.markelliot.co.uk

Competition



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Are you lacking inspiration at mealtimes?

Are the demands of today's hectic lifestyle making you reach for the takeaway menu or ready meals more often than you would like? Menus4Mums likes nothing better than searching in supermarkets for the best deals and then turning them into delicious food all the family will love. Visit www.menus4mums.co.uk and buy 4 weeks of menu plans for just £6.95, and we'll get you organised in the kitchen in no time at all. Costing less than the equivalent of one small ready meal per week, the savings could be huge!

Enter to win two free 4 week menu plans!

Send your name and contact details to:

Editor@familiesNWLondon.co.uk – Subject: Menus4Mums

See page 31 for terms and conditions

Cook with the Kitchen Fairy



A home cookery session with the Kitchen Fairy solves the never ending dilemma of what to cook for your children week in, week out. We all do it - the pasta salads from the supermarket, the fish fingers, the sugary snacks. It's OK - but it would be even better if we were giving our children, proper, home made stuff made with ingredients we'd personally picked out and at half the price. Spend a few hours cooking with the Kitchen Fairy and see for yourself how easy it is to make delicious, healthy food for your children. It is home cooking made magically simple.

Visit www.kitchenfairy.co.uk or email her audrey@kitchenfairy.co.uk for a cooking lesson with a difference!

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What's On

To see your March, April or early May 2010 family event listed in these pages for FREE, send in your entry by Friday 5th February. Email your free entries to: Editor@familiesNWLondon.co.uk or post to: What's On Families North West, PO Box 2378, Watford WD18 1RF. Our listings are packed with diary dates for the coming months. Please check details before setting off in case anything has changed since going to print.

Researched by Yolanda Cogan

Courses

Sat. 24th Jan.

ONE DAY PAEDIATRIC FIRST AID COURSE

Discuss and learn about the recognition and treatment of a variety of First Aid situations for children and babies, as well as having time to practise life saving skills such as CPR, Recovery Position, Management of a choking Casualty and Severe Bleeding. £35. 10.00am-4.00pm.

1st Rayners Lane Scout Hall, Entrance to Roxbourne Park, Rayners Lane, Middx HA2 9TB. Contact Margaret on mcstraining@hotmail.co.uk or phone 0208 866 1170 to book a place.

Mon. 22nd Feb.

THE POWER OF POSITIVE PARENTING.

8-week 'Triple P' programme which uses effective discipline strategies. Behavioural family intervention designed for delivery to groups of parents who wish to learn a variety of parenting skills to apply to multiple contexts. Delivered by a qualified provider to parents of children aged 0 to 12 years. The program involves five (2 hour) group sessions that educate and actively train skills, and three (15 to 20 minute) individual telephone consultations that follow a self-regulatory format to facilitate. £10 (to secure booking) which includes crèche if required. 11am-1pm.

Hillview Childrens Centre, 2 Grange Road, (off Northolt Road), South Harrow, HA2 0LW.

For more info 020 8863 7319 or www.hopeharrow.org.uk

Events for All

Every Mon.

PREGNANCY EXERCISE CLASS.

Meet other expectant mums and get your body in the best shape ready for labour. For all stages of pregnancy. Free parking on site. 7.30pm-8.30pm. £4.

Beechen Grove Baptist Church, Clarendon Road, Watford. 07832 116920. www.peachypostnatal.com

Every Mon.

BUMPS & BABES - HILLINGDON NCT.

Meet with pregnant and new mums for support and company. Lovely soft play environment for babies up to 1 year. Entry: £1.50 donation. 1-3pm.

Upper Room, St Margarets Church, Uxbridge. 0870 421 4730 or just drop in.

Every Mon. (except School & Bank Holidays).

BUMPS & BABES - HARROW NCT.

Meet other mums to be and other new parents with babies aged up to 1 year. Entrance £1 per family. Car parking. 2-3.30pm. £1 per family.

North Harrow Methodist Church Hall, Pinner Road, North Harrow. Lisa 020 8868 8483 or email: lisa@greavesie.com or just go along.

Every Tues. WATFORD BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP.

Drop in for information, support and to meet other breastfeeding Mums. 11am-12.30pm.

Westfield Children's Centre, 22 Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18. Entrance off Croxley View.



Taekwondo

Every Tues. HILLINGDON BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP.

Postnatal course with Peer Support Workers available for support or just to chat. 11am-1pm.

Elers Road Clinic, Hayes.

Every Wed. WATFORD BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP.

Drop in for information, support and to meet other breastfeeding Mums. 1-2.30pm.

Berrygrove Children's Centre, Cow Lane, Watford WD25. Car parking in Sainsbury's car park.

Every Wed. HILLINGDON BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP.

One-to-one style drop in with peer support workers for information, support and a chance to meet other breastfeeding mums. Siblings welcome, mums-to-be welcome. 9.30-11.30am.

Oak Farm Children's Centre, Windsor Ave (off Long Lane).

Every Wed. HILLINGDON BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP.

Peer support workers at an existing toddlers group - information, support and a chance to meet other mums while older children can play. Siblings and mums-to-be welcome. 10-11.30am.

St Margaret's Church, Windsor Street, Uxbridge Town Centre.

Every Wed. during term time. "FUN HOUSE" FOR THE UNDER 5s AT HARROW MUSEUM.

FREE drop-in session for parents with children under the age of five: touch museum objects, do simple art activities, join in with songs and actions. 2pm.

Harrow.museum@harrow.gov.uk. 020 8861 2626.

Every Thurs. during term time. "ARTY PANTS" FOR THE KIDS 5-11 AT HARROW MUSEUM.

Children's creative art sessions. Different themes: clay, plaster and materials used to make boxes, decorations and more. £2.50. 3.45-4.45pm, term time only. £2.50 per child. No need to book.

Harrow.museum@harrow.gov.uk. 020 8861 2626.

Every Fri. (Maida Vale)

Every Sat. (Belsize Park)

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Maida Vale: 4.30pm to 6.30pm. Belsize Park: 11am to 1pm. 0844 3245414. belsizepark@filmsteps.com / maidavale@filmsteps.com. www.filmsteps.com

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January

Throughout Jan.

SHERLOCK HOLMES HOTEL MOVIE PACKAGE.

In celebration of Guy Ritchie's new action adventure 'Sherlock Holmes', Park Plaza Sherlock Holmes London is offering an exclusive hotel movie package this January priced from just £154 for two people. The package includes one night's stay at the four-star boutique hotel, a two course dinner* and breakfast at the award winning Sherlock's Grill, two Sherlock Holmes or Dr Watson speciality cocktails served in Sherlock's Bar, use of the hotel's fitness suite and two tickets to see 'Sherlock Holmes' at independent cinema Everyman Baker Street.

Book yourself a Sherlockian adventure.

Park Plaza Sherlock Holmes, 108 Baker Street. London, W1U 6LJ For more info or to book call 020 7486 6161. www.parkplazasherlockholmes

Sat. 9th Jan.

WASSAILING AT SHENLEY PARK.

This year Wassailing (ancient practice of blessing Apple Orchards to ensure that there is a plentiful crop of wonderful apples the following year) is in conjunction with the Radlett Players, The Singing Circle and Shenley Drama Group - it promises to be better than ever. Meet at the Orchard Tea Room. at 6.30pm (event lasts a couple of hours). Come dressed in "old English Folk style clothing", bring a torch or lantern and something to make a noise with - such as a drum, a saucepan!, bells - anything you like.

Shenley Park Trust, The Bothy, Shenley Park, Radlett Lane, Shenley, Herts, WD7 9DW. 01923 852629. admin@shenleypark.co.uk. www.shenleypark.co.uk



Shenley Park

Sat. 9th Jan.

ANCIENT EGYPT SHOW AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Watch an interactive performance that explains and enlivens the beliefs and daily lives of the Ancient Egyptians. Recommended for ages 5+. Free. 12pm, 1.30pm, and 3pm. Sessions last about 60 minutes. BP Lecture Theatre.



Following the huge success of the Little Kickers football training programme for kids, here is another great idea we decided to run with. Little Rugby is a fun introduction to the sport and is non-contact, so it's safe and friendly.

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What's On

continued from page 27

Sat. 9th Jan.

EGYPT EXPLORERS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Become an archaeologist for the day and use interactive scrapbook software to create your own diary! Use the green screen to transport yourself to Egypt and photograph yourself with the objects you find. Combine your photographs with drawings and text to create an online diary of your trip to look at when you get home. 11.30am and 3.30pm. Recommended for ages 7+. Activity takes about 45 minutes. Free, just drop in. British Museum, Great Russell St, London, WC1B 3DG. 020 7323 8000. www.britishmuseum.org

Tues. 12th Jan. to 23rd Feb.

NCT/SURESTART PREGNANCY AND POSTNATAL WORKSHOPS

Tues. 12th Jan. Birth Workshop.

Tues. 19th Jan. Breastfeeding.

Tues. 26th Jan. 1st 6 Weeks Postnatal Plus Eating For Motherhood.

Tues. 2nd Feb. Baby Massage.

Tues. 9th Feb. Reflexology/Indian Head Massage.

Tues. 23rd Feb. Crying And Sleeping.

Oak Farm Childrens Centre, Windsor Ave, off Long Lane, Hillingdon.

To book a place call Zoe on 01895 254408 or email zchinery@hillingdongrid.org

Sat. 16th Jan.

CREATE A COMIC AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Learn the secrets of some of the world's best comic artists and create a comic of your own to take home. Explore basic elements and techniques used in visual storytelling through illustrations, comics and graphic novels from different cultures. Then, use comic book software to tell your own story using images of objects and artwork from the Museum's collection. Recommended for ages 9+. Free. 11.30am and 3.30pm. Sessions lasts 1 hour 15 minutes. Booking required.

Book through the British Museum Box Office 020 7323 8181.

boxoffice@britishmuseum.org British Museum, Great Russell St, London, WC1B 3DG. 020 7323 8000. www.britishmuseum.org

Sat. 16th to Sat. 30th Jan.

STITCH!

An exhibition of children's and teen's applied stitched art and design. This exhibition of stitched creations celebrates the creativity and talent of the diverse group of young makers who attend Stitch-London classes.

Admission Free, Harrow Arts Centre, Uxbridge Road. Hatch End. Middlesex HA5 4EA. Call Sam Harvey on 07950 300 1024 or email sam@stitch-london.co.uk.

Stitch-London runs Stitching Clubs at the Harrow Arts Centre and other venues in the area for Children, Teens and Adults. www.stitch-london.co.uk

Sun. 17th Jan.

ST GEORGE AND THE DRAGON ANIMATION WORKSHOP AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Learn basic animation techniques and create your own animated film. Retell the famous story of St. George and the Dragon through stop-frame animation. Work as a group to create clay figures and puppets, then use video cameras and animation software to bring your characters to life. Recommended for ages 7+. Free. 1am and 2pm.

Booking required. Book through the British Museum Box Office 020 7323 8181. boxoffice@britishmuseum.org

Sat. 23rd Jan.

MAKE A MEXICAN HEADDRESS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Make a feathered headdress based on those worn by Aztec warriors. Learn about the different styles of headdress worn in the Aztec army and create your own using a range of brightly coloured feathers and fabrics. Recommended for ages 5+. Free. 12pm, 1.45pm, and 3.30pm. Sessions last about 60 minutes. Ford Centre for Young Visitors.

Suns. 24th Jan and 7th Feb.

SOUND BYTES PODCASTING WORKSHOP AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Record your own podcast inspired by some of your favourite objects in the Museum. First, explore the galleries with a digital audio recorder to capture sound clips. Then, learn basic sound editing techniques as you combine your clips with music and sound effects to create a podcast to share online. Recommended for ages 9+. 11.30am and 2.30pm. Session lasts 2 hours. Free, just drop in.

British Museum, Great Russell St, London, WC1B 3DG. 020 7323 8000. www.britishmuseum.org

Tues. 26th to Thurs. 28th Jan.

THE MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS: LEGENDA - ONCE IN A LIFETIME

The worlds most famous circus is hosted by legendary Russian folklore figure Rasputin to create a sensational show that combines contemporary and classical circus at its very best. Many of the critically acclaimed acts are pushing the boundary of human physical ingenuity to its limits. Tues. 8.00pm, Weds. and Thurs. 5.00pm & 8.00pm. Tickets £14.00, £18.00, £22.00. Concessions £3.00 off (top price seats). Groups 10+ 1 in 10 free, Family Ticket £70.00.

The Beck Theatre, Grange Road, Hayes, Middlesex, UB3 2UE. 020 8561 8371. www.becktheatre.org.uk

Sun. 31st Jan. Sun. 28th Feb. and Sun. 28th Mar.

GETCOMPOSING AT HANDEL HOUSE!

Do you play an instrument and would like to be able to write music to play yourself? Then sign up to one of these workshops and be inspired to compose in the house where Handel wrote so much brilliant music! Please bring your instrument with you and also bring a CD with a song or a piece of music that inspires you, to the first workshop. At the end of the three workshops you should have learnt lots of the skills to be able to write your own music. This introduction to composition is designed for ages 8-13 years. 2-4pm. Tickets: £15 for all three workshops. Please note, it is not possible to book for just one workshop.

25 Brook Street, Mayfair, London, W1K 4HB. Entrance in Lancashire Court. (Nearest tube: Bond Street / Oxford Circus). 020 7495 1685. www.handelhouse.org

Sat 30th Jan.

NATION

- A live performance from the National Theatre broadcast to 75 cinemas around the UK NATION is an exhilarating adventure story of survival and self-discovery featuring live music, dance and extraordinary puppets, suitable for ages 10 and above.

For a full list of participating locations and ticket information visit www.ntlive.com

February

Tues. 2nd Feb.

WORLD WETLANDS DAY AT WORLD WETLAND CENTRE.



London Wetland Centre. Image: bibbysalt

Visit the London Wetland Centre on this international day set aside to celebrate wetlands and all they do for us. Adult: £9.50, Concession: £7.10, Child: £5.23 (4-16 years), Family: £26.55 (2 adults & 2 children, 4-16 years), Children (under 4 years): Free. 9.30am to 5.00pm (last admission 4.00pm).

WWT London Wetland Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Barnes, London SW13. 020 8409 4400.

info.london@wwt.org.uk www.wwt.org.uk

From Feb. Half Term.

BOTTLE FEED LAMBS AT ODDS FARM PARK.

Youngsters can bottle feed cute lambs at Odds Farm Park. Plus with many lambs expected you might even see one born! Plus, in the Indoor Playbarn children can whoosh down a three lane Astra Slide, board Ride-on Toys and scale the Bale Climb. And not forgetting the parents, they can relax too in the heated Playbarn Gallery and watch their little ones play in the special Soft Play area. Combined with Go Karts, the Adventure Maze, Rabbit World, Cow Milking, Piggies Tea Time and so much more, it will be hard deciding what to do first. Adult admission is £8.50, Child admission (2-15) is £7.50, Under 2's are free. Open daily from 10am.

Odds Farm Park, Wooburn Common, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 0LX. 01628 520188. www.oddsfarm.co.uk

Sat 13th to Sun. 14th Feb.

LOVE IN THE FORCES AT THE ROYAL AIRFORCE MUSEUM.

Come and see the display of trinkets and love tokens. Children can make their own sweetheart brooch for their loved one. Session times are 11.00am - 1.00pm and 2.00pm - 4.00pm.

Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, London, NW9 5LL. 020 8358 4896 or email: london@rafmuseum.org www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london

Sat. 13th and Sun. 14th Feb.

ANIMAL MAGIC WEEKEND AT WORLD WETLAND CENTRE.



Meet some friendly farm animals from Miller's Ark Animals. Don't miss the popular animal demonstrations, including rabbit and guinea

pig handling and pony grooming. 12pm-4pm. Adult: £9.50, Concession: £7.10, Child: £5.23 (4-16 years), Family: £26.55 (2 adults & 2 children, 4-16 years), Children (under 4 years): Free. 9.30am to 5.00pm (last admission 4.00pm).

WWT London Wetland Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Barnes, London SW13. 020 8409 4400. info.london@wwt.org.uk

www.wwt.org.uk

Feb 16th Feb.

THE GREAT SPITALFIELDS PANCAKE RACE

Teams of 4 race up and down Dray Walk to raise funds for charity.

Old Truman Brewery, 91 Brick Lane, Spitalfields E1 6QL. 12.30pm Adm Free For application forms and info call 020 7375 0441 email info@alternativearts.co.uk

Sat. 13th to Sun. 21st Feb.

HALF TERM AT WORLD WETLAND CENTRE.

Daily children's activities to educate and entertain the kids from pond-dipping and arts and crafts to seasonal children's activities. Adult: £9.50, Concession: £7.10, Child: £5.23 (4-16 years), Family: £26.55 (2 adults & 2 children, 4-16 years), Children (under 4 years): Free. 9.30am to 5.00pm (last admission 4.00pm).

WWT London Wetland Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Barnes, London SW13. 020 8409 4400. info.london@wwt.org.uk www.wwt.org.uk

Sat. 13th to Sun. 21st Feb.

HALF TERM AT THE LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM.

Families are invited to re-construct London's Capital and fill it with the tallest towers, strongest structures and brilliant bridges. This programme of activities forms part of Capital Science 2010, a celebration for the 350th Anniversary of the Royal Society.

LONDON LANDSCAPES.

Budding builders can re-construct the Capital, designing new structures out of card and displaying them on our model of London's ever changing landscape. The model city will be displayed for all to see in the heart of the Museum's galleries. Daily between 12pm and 3pm.

Suitable for ages 3+

SING-ALONG SUBURBIA.

Sing along to a selection of hand-picked songs about life in the garden, including old favourites Incy wincy spider and Wiggly woo the worm. 11am and 4.30pm drop-in (session lasts 20 minutes). Suitable for under 5s. Adults £8.00; Senior Citizens £6.50; Students £5.00. Accompanied children under 16 free.

London Transport Museum, 39 Wellington Street, London WC2E 7BB. www.ltmuseum.co.uk.

Sat. 13th to Sun. 21st Feb.

FEBRUARY FROLICS LAMBING EVENT AT WILLOWS FARM VILLAGE.

Come and see new born lambs every day of this special lambing event with a fun-packed programme for half-term, including: farmyard animals, adventure play, Tristan the Runaway Tractor, undercover Tractor Trek and Woolly Jumpers indoor play barn. Open 10am-5.30pm. Call for admission prices.

Willows Farm Village, London Colney, St Albans AL2. 0870 129 9718. www.willowsfarmvillage.com.

Mon. 15th to Fri. 19th Feb.

SEARCH AND RESCUE WEEK AT RAF MUSEUM

A week of activities exploring RAF Search and Rescue Operations. Admission Free.

Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, London, NW9 5LL. 020 8358 4896. london@rafmuseum.org www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london

Mon. 15th to Fri. 19th Feb.

FIT FOR SPORT KIDS CAMP - HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIVITY.

Fit For Sport Kids Camps are designed to educate children in the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle, whilst encouraging them to try their best & have fun. A typical day includes: multi sport sessions, such as; handball, dodgeball, hockey, rounders, 'Keeping the Future Fit' healthy lifestyle activities, plus a swim session (venue dependent). Chill out sessions will be arts and crafts based, with activities such as: crazy crafts e.g. designing sports kits. Standard day 9.30am-4.30pm £25 / extended day 8.30am-5.30pm £32. 3-12 years. 3&4yrs stay only for £ day 9.30am-1pm.

Early bird 10% booking discount for Feb - book by 22/01/2010 & quote 'strawberry'

Saint Christmas School, 25 St Edmunds Terrace, St Johns Wood, London, NW8 7PY

And Willesden Sport Centre, Donnington Park Road, Willesden, NW10 3QX. 0845 456 3233. www.fitforsport.co.uk

Mon. 15th & Sat. 20th Feb.

REPTILE ROADSHOW AT MEAD OPEN FARM.

On special days throughout the year, come face-to-face with real snakes, lizards and other reptiles.

Adult £6.95, Child £5.95, Senior Citizen £6.50.

10.00am - 5.00pm.

Stanbridge Road, Billington, Nr. Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 9HL. 01525 852954. www.meadopenfarm.co.uk

Tues. 16th to Fri. 19th Feb.

ENJOY-A-BALL HOLIDAY CAMPS

Break up the school holidays with our fun-packed camps for girls and boys aged 4-9. The day will kick off with some team building games and activities where the children are encouraged to make new friends. Thereafter, we ensure plenty of variety and children try out a wide range of sports, games and creative activities as they rotate through different activity stations. Fun-packed activities vary from day-to-day and week-to-week, so there's something for everyone.

For more information contact Nicole on 07989 748 999 or at nicole.golemba@enjoy-a-ball.com

Fri. 19th Feb.

HALF TERM SHOWING OF 'UP' FRIENDS OF WATERSMEET FILM SOCIETY

Cert U 96 mins. Tickets: Adults £3 Children £2 - Groups of 10+ 10% discount.

Watersmeet, High Street, Rickmansworth. 01923 446728.



Image: Royal Air Force Museum

Mon. 22nd to Sun. 28th Feb.
FEED THE CHILDREN (UK) NEW BREAKFAST2LIVE CAMPAIGN



Image: Feed The Children (UK)

During this week Feed The Children (UK) charity is encouraging people to eat a hearty breakfast to save someone else's life? Cafes, restaurants, schools, colleges, businesses and people at home are being asked to get involved by staging breakfast events to raise money for the charity's life saving projects in developing countries and breakfast clubs in this country. The website gives visitors information on the campaign and also holds documents that supporters can easily download to use to promote their events like posters, leaflets, invites and other templates.

For more ideas about the 'Breakfast2Live' or to take part, call Feed The Children on 0118 932 0095. www.breakfast2live.org.uk

Sat. 27th and Sun. 28th Feb.

ST DAVID'S DAY ACTIVITY AT RAF MUSEUM.

Children can make their own dragon to take home and learn more about Welsh RAF personnel on our trail. Dragon making session times are 11am-1pm and 2pm-4pm in Aeronauts Interactive Gallery. All dragon making materials are free of charge. Entry Free.

Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, London, NW9 5LL. 020 8358 4896 or london@rafmuseum.org www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london

March

Sat. 6th and Sun. 7th March.

COMMONWEALTH CELEBRATIONS AT RAF MUSEUM.

Learn about the brave pilots and ground crew who joined the RAF from overseas, their cultures, and how they contributed so much to the development of the RAF and the defence of democracy during the 20th Century. Children can also make the flag of their favourite Commonwealth Country to take home and keep. Flag making session times are 11am-1pm and 2pm-4pm with all materials supplied free of charge.

Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, London, NW9 5LL. 020 8358 4896. london@rafmuseum.org

Sun. 14th March.

MOTHERING SUNDAY CARVERY AT WORLD WETLAND CENTRE.

Treat your mum to a memorable Mothers' Day with a delicious three course lunch at the centre's spectacular Water's Edge Room overlooking the reserve. Booking is essential.

WWT London Wetland Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Barnes, London SW13. 020 8409 4400. info.london@wwt.org.uk www.wwt.org.uk

Visit www.familiesonline.co.uk for many more local events.

What's On in Children's Theatre

We aim to be as accurate as possible, but these listings are compiled several weeks beforehand and may be subject to change. Please check details.

The Alban Arena

Civic Centre, St Albans 01727 844488 www.alban-arena.co.uk

25 - 30 Jan. **Joseph and the Amazing**

Technicolour Dreamcoat Craig Chalmers, from BBC series 'Any Dream Will Do' takes on the title role. Retelling the Biblical story of Joseph, his eleven brothers and the coat of many colours, this magical musical is full of unforgettable songs.

Artsdepot

5 Nether Street, North Finchley, N12 0Z0 8369 5454 www.artsdepot.co.uk

Sun 17 Jan. **The King's Got Donkey's Ears!** Good King Orik goes for a walk in the woods... he goes in smiling, and comes out with big furry donkey's ears! Ages 4 - 10

Sun 24 Jan. **The Ugly Duckling** Mocked and ridiculed for looking different, the Ugly Duckling is forced to leave the farmyard and venture out into the big wide world. Ages 3+

Sun 31 Jan. **Clever-Clogs and the Cunning Princess** Clever-Clogs is a soldier who thought there must be more exciting things to do in the world than guard a tower. The Cunning Princess thought there must be more to life than having to marry a daft prince - however rich. Neither of them was prepared for the unexpected appearance of the Naughty Imp. Ages 5 - 11

Sun 14 Feb. **Finding Alice** An interactive adventure with the characters from Alice in Wonderland. Mr. Rabbit is looking for Alice. The Mad Hatter is looking for his cricket ball. And the Queen of Hearts is threatening to chop off everyone's head as usual. Jump down the rabbit hole and join us for singing, dancing and a tea party to remember. Ages 4+

Wed 17 Feb - Sun 21 Feb. **Don't Let The Pigeon Drive The Bus!** The friendly bus driver leaves us with one simple instruction: "Don't let the pigeon drive the bus!" However, Pigeon is very clever; he whines, bribes, pleads and even sings a song to get his own way... but will you let him drive? Ages 3+

Sun 28 Feb. **The Selfish Giant** The Selfish Giant built a high wall all round his lovely garden to keep the children out. But it also keeps Spring away, so it is always Winter in the garden, and the North Wind and the Frost and the Snow dance about the trees. Then one morning the Giant looks out and sees a most wonderful sight... Ages 4+

The Beck Theatre

Grange Road, Hayes. 020 8561 8371 www.becktheatre.org.uk

Sat 23 Jan. **Mark Jones - That's It** Mark Jones returns to perform stand up comedy for children... and grown-ups who really should know better! Suitable for ages 6 to 106, with no rude bits, lots of silly bits and as it comes so soon after Christmas maybe some wobbly bits. Warning - this show may contain weak language! Ages 6+

Tue 26 - Thur 28 Jan. **The Moscow State**

Circus The Moscow State Circus returns to the UK with a huge cast of Russia's greatest and most flexible circus performers. Many of the critically acclaimed acts are pushing the boundary of human physical ingenuity to its limits. Ages 3+



Sat 13 - Tues 16 Feb. **Charlie and Lola's bestest play** Don't miss everyone's favourite brother and sister in their extremely ever-so wonderful stage show! Ages 3+

Chicken Shed

Chase Side Southgate N14. 020 8292 9222 www.chickenshed.org.uk

Fri/Sat - 29/30, Jan; 5/6, 12/13, 19/20, 26/27

Feb. **Tales from the Shed** Tales brings both original and traditional stories to life, in a land of colour, characters and fun. This interactive performance introduces children to a universe where there is no edge to the stage, so children and performers travel a theatrical journey together. Each show is different, but all work creatively to improve literacy, numeracy and communication skills for the under 7s.

Lauderdale House

Highgate Hill, Waterlow Park, N6 0Z0 8348 8716

Sat 16 Jan. **Henry & the King's Birthday by Pippin Puppets** The King's birthday party goes with a swing until Susie Slither loses her tail and Pum Pum the baby penguin gets lost. But Henry the Hedgehog makes sure it all turns out OK with the help of a wizard, a fairy and, of course, the children. Ages 2 to 6

Sat 23 Jan. **Elliott Goes to the Circus by Bangers & Mash Theatre Company** Elliott the dog is up to mischief again! He's off to the circus... but disaster's struck! The star of the circus, Tiddles the Cheeky Lion, has run away! Can you help Elliott and his new found friends - the clown that can't juggle, and Roger the Raven - track Tiddles down? Acting, puppets, songs, games and lots more. Ages 2 to 5

Sat 30. **Billy Banjo** An introduction to the wonderful world of imagination through music and magic. Always gentle and often silly, Billy's relaxed warm manner is a big hit with the very young. Ages 2 to 6

Sat 6 Feb. **Mouse's Tail** The tale of a young girl and the capers of her tiny dog called 'Mouse' - so small he can squeeze down a rabbit-hole and meet with lots of furry friends. A lively puppet show action-packed with dance, song and audience participation. Ages 2 to 5

Sun 7 Feb. **Dragons & Monsters; the Stories of Chinese New Year** Veronica Needa tells stories from her childhood in Hong Kong. Chinese people all over the world celebrate the lunar New Year with firecrackers, bright colours, lots of special food, and strange customs. Tickets will be available on the door. Ages 3 to 8

Sat 13 Feb. **Houmah-jalajah by Rubberface the Clown** A fantasmagoric feast of classy clowning, perky puppets, silly songs, and nonsense verse, from a Lauderdale perennial. Ages 3 to 8

Sat 20 Feb. **Anansi Tales & Tiger Tales by Pekko's Puppets** Delightful stories from the Caribbean, with mischievous Anansi Spider (up to his tricks as usual), Tiger, Snake, Monkey and more. Full of fun, colour, and wonderful puppets. Ages 3 to 8

Sun 21 Feb. **John Hegley & Otiz Cannelloni Family Show** A family show of utter hilarity featuring rib-tickling rhythm, stand-up comedy and manic music. An all-fun, all-laughter programme for everyone over the age of 3! Age 3+

Sat 27 Feb. **Captain Bluster** Meet Captain Bluster, the meanest and bravest pirate on the high seas - except that spiders make him cry, boats make him sea-sick and he can't swim! Help him search for buried treasure, slay seas monsters and sing along with your favourite sea shanties. Ages 3 to 8

Puppet Theatre Barge

Little Venice W9 020 7249 6876

www.puppetbarge.com; puppetmovingstage.co.uk



Puppet Theatre Barge

Sat/Sun 9/10, 16/17, 23/24, 30/31 Jan, Sat/Sun 6/7 Feb, Sat 13 - Sun 21 Feb, Sat/Sun 27/28

Feb. **Joey's Fireworks** A wonderful spectacle celebrating the arrival of the New Year. Full of fun, Movingstage has given the strings back to traditional characters such as Burglar Bill, Dog Toby, Joey the Clown and Mr Punch with the Beadle keeping an eye on the goings on.

Little Angel Theatre

14 Dagmar Passage, London N1 2DN 020 7359 8581 www.littleangeltheatre.com

Sat 2 - 30 Jan. **Petrushka** Petrushka is a special puppet, living a life without strings, but he yearns for true freedom, beyond the control of his puppet master and in the arms of his elusive ballerina love. Age 5+

The Radlett Centre

1 Aldenham Avenue, Radlett, WD7 01923 857 546 www.radlettcentre.co.uk

Tues 16 Feb. **Katy and the Nurgla** Katy's holiday in Majorca turns into an unexpected adventure when she meets the Nurgla, a mysterious sea monster with an eventful past. Ages 4 - 9

Weds 17 Feb. **Burglar Bill** Who's that creeping down the street Who's that climbing up the wall? Who's that coming through the window? Every night Burglar Bill has stolen fish and chips and a stolen cup of stolen tea for supper, then he swings a big stolen sack over his shoulder and goes off to work, stealing things. Ages 3 - 8

Unicorn Theatre

147 Tooley Street, SE1. 020 7645 0560 www.unicorntheatre.com

3 - 24 Jan. **Cinderella** Cinderella is at the end of her tether bailing out the family business, a floating retirement home for elderly magicians.



3, 17, 24 Jan. **Family Days** Enjoy the full Unicorn experience - attend an entertaining 90-minute theatre workshop, see Cinderella and then meet some of the cast. Book early as places are limited to only 20 people per session. Ages 6+

Wed 27, Thur 28 Jan. **Rigged** Nathan spends his days in arcades and picking fights in the street, whilst his girlfriend wants to continue her studies and dreams of independence. Are they heading in the same direction? Can the two of them escape their background of dysfunctional families, or is 'the system' stacked against them? Ages 14+



Images: Joey's Fireworks
The Puppet Theatre Barge



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Next issue: March/April 2010 out from early March.
Copy and advertising deadline: 5th February

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Send your ad in along with your name, address and date to:

Personal Free Ads, Families North West London Magazine, PO Box 2378 Watford WD18 1RF or email to: Editor@FamiliesNWLondon.co.uk Free for non-commercial use.

PARTIES

See also page 16 for party classified

- Silly Millie The Clown
- Adam Ants
- Boo Boo
- Boogies Parties
- Go Potty
- Froggle Parties
- Messy Play Parties

COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Terms and conditions for all competitions: 1. Only one entrant from same e-mail address or household will be accepted. 2. Under 16s must obtain parental consent before entering. 3. Entries must be received by the closing date and proof of sending cannot be taken as proof of receipt. 4. Winning entries will be randomly drawn from all correct entries. 5. All decisions of Families Magazine are final and no correspondence will be entered into. 6. No prize is exchangeable for cash or any other prize. 7. Winners' details will be supplied to the Promoter of the competition. 8. Families Magazine is not liable for any delay or failure by the Promoter to deliver any prize or for the quality of the prize or for any loss or damage arising in connection with the competition. 9. By entering the competition, entrants will be deemed to have accepted and agreed to these terms and conditions.

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If you would like to stock copies to give to parents, please let us know.

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