



School Brief

Teaching today: Prize and prejudice

Travelogue: A dash of Cologne

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Cover: Nursery Rhyme Week at Cheadle Hulme School

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editor's note

As the dreamy days of summer fade away, it's time for many of us to return to reality. For better or worse, routine is once again imposed on days that used to be free of restriction and schedule, and our thoughts return to practicalities and procedures.

For some, this may include choosing a school, in which case our handy guide to open days (page 15) and to school news (page 5) may be of assistance. For others, this may mean getting to grips with a change in policy regarding nursery care, an issue addressed on page 27. And for those of you who just can't bear to let go of that relaxed summer feeling, we have something on page 24, which we think might get you dreaming about your next break from everyday life!

So as we all wave goodbye to lazier days, let's not be too despondent - after all, there's something to be said for the security and familiarity of the routine. **Zoe x**

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OPEN DAYS

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Parental rights when choosing schools

The school holidays may be over, but what happens if parents cannot agree on which school their child attends? If you have parental responsibility, you are entitled to a say in choosing their school. You automatically acquire parental responsibility as a mother and acquire it as a father if you are married to the mother on or after your child's birth, or if you were registered on the child's birth certificate as their father after 2003.

Parental responsibility can otherwise be obtained by entering into a Parental Responsibility Agreement, or by being granted a Parental Responsibility Order by the court. If parents cannot agree - the first step is for them to discuss options and see if they can reach a decision. However, if agreement cannot be reached, then the unhappy parent has a couple of options:

Seek legal advice (matters may be sorted out if a solicitor contacts the other parent)

Make a referral to family mediation to discuss things

If this doesn't work, parents can make an application to court for one or both of the following:

Specific Issue Order - This is an application to court which can deal specifically with looking at which school a child should attend.

Prohibited Steps Order - This is an order to stop someone exercising their parental responsibility for a child. This can be useful for parents who think that the other parent is going to move their child from one school to another.

A court will not consider an application unless the parent applying has attempted mediation first and then a range of factors will be considered when reaching a decision about a child's school.

For more information and advice, speak to the family law experts at Slater and Gordon Lawyers.

slatergordon.co.uk 0800 916 9055

Withington Girls' School Citizenship Day



Withington's annual Citizenship Day included firmly established activities such as car washing and cake sales to raise funds for The Christie, and new ones such as painting a spectacular jungle-themed mural at Haveley Hey Nursery School in Wythenshawe. It was a day in which pupils set to work making a difference to the local community and considering wider issues, such as the environment and conservation.

The day included a tea party and concert for 130 local senior citizens and a sports day for 60 Year 5 pupils from neighbouring school, Old Moat Primary. Other pupils spent much of the day assisting in the Reception and Early Years classrooms at Old Moat. Junior pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 had an exciting programme of activities including learning vital First Aid skills, making films, creating friendship bracelets and making a 'random acts of kindness' display.

Haveley Hey nursery playground transformed by Withington Girls' School art students (before and after)

Headmistress, Mrs Haslam, said: "We created something wonderful on this day. Citizenship day really is at the heart of what this school is about, in that part of our ethos is to go out into the world and do something meaningful and useful. Citizenship Day has been an annual event at Withington for twelve years, and, considering everything that has happened recently, I believe that this year it is even more important than ever before."



Animal Art at Woodheys Primary School and in the Bean and Brush café



A new children's art competition took place at the Bean and Brush Family Art Café this summer. The competition was part of a community project started by brothers Milo and Dante Houghland (8 and 5 years old respectively) of Woodheys Primary School. Their love of endangered animals encouraged them to fundraise for Orangutans and Giant Pandas, with the aim of having 12 of them adopted for a year. Their efforts led to a 'Wild Art Competition' at Woodheys Primary school this July, where children drew Panda & Orangutan themed artworks. There were 12 winners selected by an International Artist who supported the competition. The competition raised £512 for 2 charities: World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Orangutan Appeal UK (OAUK), alongside further proceeds from a school fundraising stand, a £100 donation from Woodheys Primary and other community based activities.

The 'Art for Animals' competition at the Bean and Brush café was open to the public. Artist Jacha Potgieter displayed his 'junk' Orangutan sculpture made with the help of Woodheys pupils in the café. There was also a Woodheys pupils' 'Art for Animals' display, featuring the 12 winners of the school competition.



Milo and Dante Houghland

Golden year for sport at King's

King's Junior Athletes have excelled this year, not just in their academic endeavours but also in their sporting achievements. Six pupils returned from the Association of Junior Independent Schools' Athletics Championships with a clutch of medals as they proved King's to be one of the top sporting schools in the North. A sensational six podium finishes went to: (from left) Edward Roden, who came third in the 600 metres; Isaac Hughes who won the 150 metres; Oliver Davies who won the long jump and came second in the 150m; Billy Birkett who won the 80 metres; Morgan Davies who won bronze in the sprint relay with his mates Edward, Oliver and Billy; and Sophie Fletcher who won silver in the high jump.

Earlier in the year, the U11 netballers won the local Primary Schools' League in unbeaten style, and the U11 rugby team also recorded an unbeaten season, winning all 15 of their fixtures. Head of King's Junior Sports, Joe Walker, said: "It's been a golden year with wins across all our summer and winter sports. What I like most is the pupils' dedication to training and their team spirit."



Millie's Mark awarded to AESG Nursery

Alderley Edge School for Girls Nursery has been awarded Millie's Mark by the National Day Nurseries Association in collaboration with the Department for Education and Millie's Trust. Millie's Mark is named after Millie Thompson, who tragically died as a result of choking in a nursery in 2012. Her parents Dan and Joanne Thompson have campaigned for all staff to have paediatric first aid training, and being presented with Millie's Mark demonstrates that nurseries have achieved this.

Alderley Edge School for Girls Nursery has gone above and beyond the minimum requirements in paediatric first aid. It is the first independent school in the area to achieve the Millie's Mark award.

Staff, children and parents will be celebrating their achievement and unveiling the official certificate at a special celebration on Friday 22 September.

Bridget Howard, Junior School Headmistress, comments: "We are absolutely thrilled to have been awarded Millie's Mark. This is a special achievement and shows how serious we are about ensuring children are safe when they are in our care."



Time capsule at SGS



Pupils at Stockport Grammar Junior School filled a time capsule with their favourite toys, books and mementos and buried it in the school grounds.

Boys and girls from Reception to Year Six embarked on the project as part of celebrations held to mark the centenary of the school's move to the Hallam site. In lessons, girls and boys talked about what life was like 100 years ago and decided they would try and give future pupils a glimpse of life in 2017. Items included school photographs, items of uniform, class timetables, thumbprints, toys, books, newspapers, food wrappers, utility bills, a list of popular children's names and a selection of current pop songs.

To illustrate what life is like at school in 2017, pupils put in a school tea towel, a whole school photograph, a letter from the Headmaster, a brochure on the history of Stockport Grammar School, the school DVD, a school tie and the school teddy bear. Pupils also included diary entries from their favourite school trips and a copy of the school prayer.

Headmaster Tim Wheeler helped the children to bury the large capsule in the school grounds.

Mrs Neelum Hurst, who co-ordinated the project, said: "We would like to suggest that the capsule will be opened in 25 years and then re buried again until 2117. We are very proud of our school and wanted to be part of its history and part of the future."

MHSG: women who are changing the world

The aim of the Preparatory Department of Manchester High School for Girls is to build a community; a sisterhood for the young girls that will see them through their time with the school and beyond. Manchester High has a long and proud history of educating women who have changed the world; from the Pankhurst sisters who fought for women's right to vote, to present day business leaders such as Nicola Mendelsohn, Vice-President of Facebook EMEA, and Jenny Campbell, millionaire entrepreneur soon to join the Dragon's Den panel. This year, MHSG celebrated strong female role models by welcoming visiting speakers to the school and marking important days such as International Women's Day (IWD).

During this year's IWD, the girls were asked to come to School dressed as women who inspired them. They took to the challenge with great enthusiasm, and a wonderful array of women was represented, from Florence Nightingale to Malala Yousafzai, Laura Kenny to Cleopatra. And many of course were inspired by their own mums.



MGS junior cricketers celebrate hat-trick of trophies

Young cricketers at The Manchester Grammar Junior School are celebrating unprecedented success on the field this year, having won an impressive treble of titles this summer.



On 12 June 2017, the boys won the Reeman 6s tournament at Stockport Grammar School for the third year in a row. A week later, and at the first time of entering the competition, the team were crowned champions of Lancashire after a very impressive performance in the Lancashire Cup Final against St James Orrell at East Lancashire Cricket Club. And then, a stunning victory against Stockport Grammar in the Association Junior Independent Schools' Cup saw the team lift its third major trophy in less than three weeks. As champions of Lancashire, the team competed in the semi-final of the National Cup tournament where they booked their place in the National Final. The boys performed magnificently well, and finished in third place - an

astounding achievement considering the calibre of teams drawn from across the country.

The team is captained by Corey Flintoff, aged 11, of Cheshire, and vice-captain Matthew Murthy, 11, of Stockport. Mr Greg Clayton, a teacher at MGS's Junior School and coach for the team, said: "I am thrilled with their success. They have worked hard and have simply been a joy to coach and work alongside. I feel very proud of them." Mrs Linda Hamilton, Head of the MGS Junior School, said: "The boys have supported and encouraged each other throughout the season, demonstrating great sportsmanship and determination. We are incredibly proud of their successes."

Ranking the schools in Greater Manchester

This year, primary schools in Greater Manchester have been rated across more than 30 areas, and ranked in order of performance.

Lower Kersal Community Primary School has been ranked the top state-funded school in Greater Manchester by the Primary Real Schools Guide 2017. This ranking is carried out by taking into account 36 different datasets: including the usual KS2 results, and other factors such as progress, pupil-teacher ratios and absence rates.

The school is amongst the top 3% of schools in England in terms of the progress the pupils make between KS 1 and the end of KS 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Coming second in Greater Manchester is Park Road Sale Primary School, in Trafford. The school website proudly announces: "Our results have been significantly above national averages for the last 8 years. We were recently placed 2nd in the Sunday Times list of the top state schools and our phonics result for 2016 put us in the top 5% of schools nationally." Third place in the whole region went to Gatley Primary School, which was ranked number one in the league tables for the Stockport area.



Reading through the ages at Cheadle Hulme School

Infant and Junior Pupils from Cheadle Hulme School welcomed some very special guests for a celebration of all things literary, when they were joined by their grandparents for an inspirational reading day.

Dressed as their favourite storybook characters, the pupils arrived in School displaying an array of creative fancy dress outfits before having an afternoon picnic and reading with their relatives.

Enjoying their favourite stories, the pupils shared tales with their loved ones and heard their grandparents read extracts from the stories which have inspired them. The pupils were also treated to a theatrical performance of 'Tales That Time Forgot' by travelling theatre company 'Take A Hint' and took part in a special Reading Day Art competition, creating artwork that combined Winnie the Pooh's love of honey with the Manchester worker bee!



Wilmslow Prep is a Top Value Prep School



Teachers, pupils, parents, and staff at Wilmslow Prep School have been celebrating the School's success with their recent excellent feature in The Good Schools Guide.

This follows their listing in the Telegraph as one of the Top 10 Best Value Prep Schools in the UK, for which schools were selected by the Good Schools Guide according to standards and fees. Here is what the guide says about Wilmslow Prep School:

"Founded in 1909, Wilmslow Preparatory School has been both single-sex and co-ed over its century of teaching. Starting out as co-ed, the school became an all-girls school in 1961, until boys were introduced once again in 2013. Small class sizes mean the individual needs of each pupil are recognised and developed, while the school prides itself on its extra-curricular activities on offer." Headteacher, Mrs Helen Rigby, commented on being listed in the guide. She said, "As you can imagine, everyone at Wilmslow Prep School is delighted about being featured in the Telegraph, as one of the top 10 best value prep schools in the UK, and then also in the renowned Good Schools Guide. It is great recognition of what we at The Prep achieve as a small school. It is proof that our ethos of delivering an excellent education, tailored to the individual needs of each child, delivers superb results."

Prize and Prejudice by Mike Stevenson

“How might we as parents recognise teachers’ efforts and help them to help our children...”

Life as a teacher

When I was a primary teacher, end of year gifts for members of staff were simply unknown. Today, an internet search will produce many gift lists which children (financed by the Bank of Mum and Dad) might give to thank their teachers. A tradition has been created whereby children, parents and carers are recognising that their teachers work extremely hard to ensure that every child in their classes makes the best possible progress during the year. All ought to be in harmony between parents and teachers since both groups clearly want the best possible educational outcomes for the children concerned. However, a recent survey shows that a third of all primary school teachers experienced derogatory behaviour from parents either online or on school premises at least once a month. Among secondary school teachers, one in five experienced derogatory behaviour once a month.

Female teachers are more likely than males to experience abusive behaviour by parents on school premises. A fifth of teaching assistants were exposed to negative words or behaviour at least once a month. A third of newly qualified teachers who started jobs in English state schools in 2010 had left the profession by 2015. Acceptances to teacher training courses dropped by 7% this year. The government has failed to recruit its target number of teachers in England for the last five consecutive years. So despite the gifts, perhaps all is not as well between parents and teachers as we might like to believe.

Life as a parent

Several schools have found it necessary to take actions to engage the support of parents in their children’s education. Some schools have drawn up ‘homework contracts’ with parents to make clear that not only

children are held to account, but their parents too. Others have been praised by inspectors for the improvements in children’s progress and attainment that occurred since the schools decided to grade parents on how much they support their children. Parents are marked from A to D based on the involvement they have with their children’s education. Fortunately, not all schools need to resort to such measures to ensure adequate parental involvement in children’s education. The real surprise is that any schools need to, since the evidence that parental involvement in their child’s education is of fundamental importance to the child’s progress and ultimate attainment is undoubted. So, if we really value the good, hard working teachers - how might we as parents recognise their efforts and help them to help our children to do their best at school?

Life as a child

Perhaps we could start by ensuring that our children are really ready and prepared for school at the age of 5 and are able to: *Sit still and listen ~ Be aware of other children ~ Understand the word ‘no’ and the borders it sets for behaviour ~ Understand the word ‘stop’ and that such a phrase might be used to prevent danger ~ Be able to go to the toilet ~ Recognise their own name when spoken ~ Speak to an adult and ask for needs ~ Take off their coat and put on shoes ~ Talk in sentences ~ Open and enjoy a book.* Throughout our children’s time at school we might also consider how we are doing our best as parents to ensure that our children:

- Know that they are loved and can always seek our support and help
- Are always under our supervision or that of an adult well known to us up to age 11
- Are always ready for school with the necessary equipment and uniform

- Have time every day in conversation and play with one of us, and their brothers and sisters, without the distractions of mobile phones, tablets or television
- Know that we trust their school staff and are in regular contact with teachers to determine how well they are progressing
- Hear one of us read to them every day, and read to us, so they learn to read widely and for pleasure
- Learn through experience that when we make decisions we do not easily change our minds
- Are taught to select what TV programmes/computer games to watch or play, within a maximum time allocation we have determined with them
- Are helped by us to join an appropriate, organised youth, sport or arts group.
- Know where we work, what we do there, and why it is important for us, them and other people.
- Spend time every week sharing some activity or visit outside the home with us
- Are being shown how to remain safe and healthy by our examples
- Are helped by us to do something each week which helps someone less fortunate than themselves
- Know what we believe about things that are right and wrong
- Are helped by us to enjoy relaxing time with their friends
- Receive praise for some positive achievement from us every day.

All the studies show that children whose parents are really involved in their education achieve better, have higher self-esteem and are better behaved at school. If most parents regularly did most of the things outlined above, most of our hard working teachers would feel far more valued and supported by parents than they do on receiving an avalanche of trinkets to mark the end of another school year. And our children will benefit greatly from that.

FROM NURSERY TO SIXTH FORM 0-7 Co-ed; 7-18 Single-sex

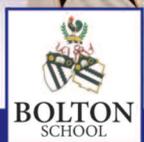
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Open Events 2017

Thu 28 Sept 6pm - 8.30pm
 (Senior School only - ages 11-18)

Thu 19 Oct 10am - 12.30pm
 (Senior School only - ages 11-18)

Sat 18 Nov 9.30am - 12.30pm
 (Whole School - ages 4-18)

Fri 24 Nov 10am - 12.30pm
 (Whole School - ages 4-18)

Assessment for Reception Class and Senior School
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www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/manchesterhigh
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words: Sandi Mann photo: Sarah Jane King

Sandi's Column

Competition: winning, losing, keep going

“Trying even when you may well fail - that is what real winners do”

Rebekah is 18 now and what you might call a 'high flyer'; she is good at a range of things. She won a school poetry competition at the age of 9, was chosen to be a house captain in Year 6 and Head Girl in Year 13. She excels at many subjects and has won academic prizes in almost every school year. When she doesn't succeed at something or 'loses' out to someone else, her parents are quick to reassure her that she can't be good at everything. Her parents firmly believe that competition is good and are pleased that Rebekah has learned that hard work and persistence can pay off - but equally, is able to cope with not being the best. They think that trying to eliminate competition in school is pandering to a 'nanny state' and would have a detrimental effect on children like Rebekah as it gives them something to aim for and helps build resilience when they don't win. Coby's parents have a different view. He is 14 but has not enjoyed much success in school to date when it comes to competitive elements. He has never once won a school prize, has never been chosen for any accolade or achievement and has never won any sporting events. His parents feel that he has spent his entire school life yearning to win something and their hearts have been broken many times

at the sight of his disappointed face as he failed to win yet again. The latest was a school mock election in which he was desperate to be chosen to represent his 'party'; sadly he didn't get selected - another perceived failure for him. Coby's parents feel that he suffers with low self-esteem which they are adamant has been caused by his core belief that he is no good at anything. This is a belief, they feel, bolstered by years of 'failure' at school. To Coby's parents, competition at school is extremely unhealthy. So, who is right? Certainly competition is an excellent force for those kids who sometimes win. It is a just reward for all their efforts but teaches them to cope with losing too. But, as Coby's parents know only too well, it is often the same kids who snap up most of the awards at school, leaving a number of perfectly average children like Coby who never feel good enough. These parents see competition as a dirty word and would far rather that children were rewarded for taking part or for trying hard, than for winning; a proposal that Rebekah's parents would strongly resist. And this is the reality. It is never the parents of high-flying children who object to competition at school; after all, competition is good for them. Competition does indeed bring with it a

raft of acknowledged benefits, such as, driving us to perform better, teaching us to manage our nerves and helping us cope with things not going our way. But these benefits only really accrue for those children who do at least sometimes, win at something. And, yet, competition isn't always good for those who do win. Some kids can get too caught up in the need to win and may even lie, cheat or otherwise unfairly influence the outcome, so strong is their desire to achieve that winner's high. So what is the solution? The answer to me is not to ban competition in schools. I don't think that having a verse-speaking competition or a sports day where everyone is a winner is really the answer, since this is unrealistic and fails to acknowledge success or achievement. And, how far do we take that - no grades to be awarded at GCSE and A levels because not everyone will get an A*? Clearly this doesn't prepare anyone for the real world. Instead I would like to see schools make more efforts to ensure that every child wins at something on occasion during their school life. Plenty of 'average' children are exceptionally good at something whether that be Lego construction, taking phones apart and rebuilding them, being kind, drawing trees or baking

delicious goodies. I would love to see these talents acknowledged so that every child can feel like a winner at something in their school life. If you have a 'Coby' and your school fails to acknowledge their unique talents and skills, then you should take it upon yourself to try to do this in other ways. Find clubs that nurture their interests and continually praise their efforts. Tell other people about them (in front of them) so they know you are proud; in fact, the only time that I encourage Facebook bragging is when your otherwise under-achieving child experiences a rare accomplishment at something. Equally, parents should repeatedly stress to their children that winning really isn't the only achievement. I advised Coby's parents to reward him (with a visit to an ice cream parlour after school) for putting himself forward for the mock election just as much as they might have done had he won. After all, trying even when you may well fail - now that is what real winners do.

Dr Sandi Mann is the director of The Mind Training Clinic and specialises in the treatment of phobias, panic attacks and anxiety conditions. She is also author of *Surviving the Terrible Teens* and *Dealing With Difficult Eaters*, both published by Crimson. www.mindtrainingclinic.com

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School open days

Alderley Edge School for Girls

• **Whole School Open Morning (Early Years through to Sixth Form):**

Saturday 30th September, 10.00am–12.30pm

• **Senior School Open Evening:**

Thursday 5th October, 6.30–8.30pm

• **Sixth Form Open Evening:**

Thursday 12th October, 6.00–8.45pm

• **Working Day Tours:**

Tuesday 21st November, 9.15–10.45am,

11.15am–12.45pm

• **Working Day Tours:**

Thursday 23rd November, 9.15–10.45am,

11.15am–12.45pm

Alderley Edge School for Girls, Wilmslow Road,

Alderley Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7QE

Tel: 01625 583028 www.aesg.co.uk

Bury Grammar School Girls

• **Whole School Open Events:**

Thursday 5th October 5.30pm - 8.00pm

• **Whole School Open Events:**

Saturday 7th October 10.00am - 2.00pm

Bury Grammar School for Girls, Bridge Road,

Bury, Lancashire, BL9 0HH

Tel: 0161 797 2808 www.bsgs.bury.sch.uk

Cheadle Hulme School

• **Senior School Open Day:**

Saturday 30th September, 10am - 12.30pm

• **Junior School Open Afternoon:**

Wednesday 4th October, 1.45pm-3.00pm

• **Whole School Open Morning:**

Saturday 4th November, 10.00am-12.30pm

Senior School Guided Tours:

Monday 13th November, Tuesday 14th November, Wednesday 15th November, 9.50am - 10.50am & 1.45pm - 2.45pm; Please contact Admissions on 0161 488 3345 if you would like to attend one of these tours. Cheadle Hulme School, Claremont Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 6EF

Tel: 0161 488 3330

www.cheadlehulmeschool.co.uk

Chetham's School of music

• **Open Day:**

Saturday 15th October, 10.30am - 3.30pm

(booking required)

Chetham's School of Music, Long Millgate,

Manchester M3 1SB

Tel: 0161 834 9644 chethamsschoolofmusic.com

The King's School, Macclesfield

• **Whole School Open Day:**

Saturday 7th October, 10am - 1pm

• **Infant & Junior Taster Afternoon:**

Thursday 2nd November, 1.15pm

King's School, Cumberland Street, Macclesfield,

Cheshire, SK10 1DATel: 01625 260000

www.kingsmac.co.uk/visiting-kings

Lady Barn House School

• **Open morning:**

Saturday 18th November, 9.00 am - 12.00 noon

Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1JE.

Tel: 0161 428 2912

www.ladybarnhouse.org

Manchester High School for Girls

Open events:

Whole School - ages 4-18: Saturday 18th

November, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Friday 24th November, 10am - 12.30pm

Manchester High School for Girls, Grangethorpe

Road, Manchester, M14 6HS

Tel: 0161 224 0447 www.manchesterhigh.co.uk

North Cestrian Grammar School

• **School Open Evening:**

Thursday 7th September, 5.30pm - 8pm

North Cestrian Grammar School, Dunham Road,

Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 4AJ

Tel: 0161 928 1856 or Email: office@ncgs.co.uk

Stockport Grammar School

• **Senior School and Junior School Opening**

Morning:

Saturday 16th September, 10am to 12pm

Stockport Grammar School, Buxton Road,

Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 7AF

Tel: 0161 456 9000

www.stockportgrammar.co.uk

St Bede's College

• **Prep and College Open morning:**

Tuesday 19th September 9:45am - 11:00am

• **Annual open evening:**

Thursday 5th October 6.30pm - 9.00pm

• **Prep open morning:**

Saturday 14th October 9:30am-11:30am

St. Bede's College, Alexandra Park, Manchester,

M16 8HX. College tel: 0161 226 3323 Prep tel:

0161 226 7156 www.sbcm.co.uk

The Manchester Grammar School

• **Whole School Open Event:**

Thursday 24th September, 4.30 pm - 7.00 pm

Saturday 11th November 9:30am-12:00pm

The Manchester Grammar School, Old Hall Lane,

Manchester, M13 0XT

Tel: 0161 224 7201 www.mgs.org

William Hulme's Grammar School

• **Presentation Evening:**

Thursday 21st September, 7.30-9.30 pm

William Hulme's Grammar School, Spring Bridge

Road, Manchester, M16 8PR

Tel: 0161 226 2054 or Email: enquiries@whgs-academy.org

www.whgs-academy.org

Wilmslow Preparatory School

Open Morning:

Saturday 23rd September, 11am - 1pm

Wilmslow Preparatory School, Grove Avenue,

Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5EG

Tel: 01625 524246 www.wilmslowprep.co.uk

Withington Girls' School

• **Open afternoon:**

Tuesday 26th September, 1.30pm - 3.30pm

• **Whole School Open Evening:**

Thursday 09 November, 4.30pm - 6.30pm

• **Whole School Open Morning:**

Saturday 11 November, 10am - 12 noon

WGS, Wellington Road, Fallowfield, Manchester

M14 6BL Tel: 0161 224 1077 www.wgs.org

Events Watch

Daily 10:00 - 17:00

Experiment!

Stare into the mirror of infinity, create a tornado, and watch your own skeleton ride a bicycle. Play with 25 hands-on exhibits and see science in action. Could you lift a MINI? Find out how the power of gears can give even the weakest of weaklings super strength.

Be mesmerised by bubbles passing through giant columns of coloured liquids to demonstrate viscosity, see how many of the city's homes can be lit by using household waste as power, and measure your reactions against the speed of light. Recommended for all ages.

Museum of Science & Industry
Liverpool Road, Castlefield, Manchester M3 4FP
Tel: 0161 833 0027 msimanchester.org.uk

Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays 11:30-15:30

Hop on the 1830 Express

Travel back to a time when cotton was king and railways were about to change the world forever. Buy a ticket for the world's first ever passenger railway and experience a train ride like no other. Let our Explainer team take you on an action-packed, whistle-stop tour of the railways while you speed along the original track that carried passengers from Manchester to Liverpool in 1830. PRICE: Adults £4, Children £3. 25% discount for family groups of 3 or more.

Museum of Science & Industry, Liverpool Road, Castlefield, Manchester M3 4FP
Tel: 0161 833 0027 msimanchester.org.uk

Every Saturday 11am - 12:30pm

Lookout! It's Saturday Playhouse

A free, weekly art activity for children and their families in the dedicated Lookout space for families. Each week we lookout for what we can see both inside and outside, taking inspiration from our theatres, galleries and surrounding landscape at Salford Quays and MediaCityUK.

The Lowry, Pier 8, The Quays, Salford
Tel: 0843 2086000 www.thelowry.com

Last Sunday of every month 11 - 12:30

Relaxed Playhouse!

On the last Sunday of every month Relaxed Playhouse is an accessible visual art activity for children with additional needs aged 5-11 and their families. Led by an experienced visual artist this laid back activity will offer families the opportunity to spend time together doing something creative and having fun. Relaxed Playhouse is free to attend but must be booked in advance as places are limited.

The Lowry, Pier 8, The Quays, Salford
Tel: 0843 2086000 www.thelowry.com

September

England's favourite heritage festival!

Every September some 40,000 volunteers across England organise 5,000 events to celebrate our fantastic history and culture. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences - all of which are FREE to explore.

7, 8, 9, 10 September 10:00-16:00

The Pankhurst Centre

The Pankhurst Centre is the former home of the leader of the Suffragette movement Emmeline Pankhurst, and her daughters Christabel, Sylvia and Adela. It is where the first meeting of the Women's Social and Political Union was held in 1903, and remains open to the public as a legacy to the Pankhurst family and the Suffragette movement. The Heritage Centre will be open to visitors, who will be able to visit the room where

the first meeting of the Suffragettes took place. Pankhurst Centre, 60-62 Nelson Street, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M13 9WP

9 September 10:00-16:00

Didsbury Church of England Primary School

The school dates from 1612. The oldest part on the present site dates from 1878 with a WWI War Memorial which can be accessed from Grange Lane. This year the display will commemorate the former members of the school who lost their lives during 1917.

The Grade II listed Arts and Crafts building dates from 1910. School history books on sale.

Tours available during the day.
Elm Grove, Didsbury, Greater Manchester, M20 6RL

9 September: 12:00-15:00

paid tours 1030, 1500, 1630

Chetham's Library and Medieval Buildings

Come and explore one of Manchester's oldest buildings, where Elizabethan alchemist John Dee conjured up devils and where Karl Marx plotted to overthrow capitalism. Wander through the medieval cloisters which once housed the warden and priests of the Collegiate Church, and soak up the serene atmosphere of this haven of tranquillity in the heart of the city centre.

There will be the opportunity to relax, de-stress and get creative with our popular colouring from the collection (for children and adults).

The whole site will be open and free to explore between 12-3pm, with volunteer guides to answer your questions and show you round.

There will also be guided tours at £10 per head before and after public opening hours, which must be pre-booked. Booking Contact: Jonathan Schofield Tours

www.jonathanschofieldtours.com

Chetham's Library, Long Millgate, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M3 1SB

9, 10 September 11:00-16:00

Victoria Baths

A great opportunity to visit Victoria Baths, widely recognised as Britain's finest municipal swimming pool and a Grade II* listed building. No expense was spared in its construction and today you can still discover the rich terracotta, decorative tiling, sumptuous tiles and mosaics.

You can explore the building using the information boards and view all three pools, the Turkish Baths suite, entrance halls, Superintendent's Flat and other spaces on the ground and first floor.

On both days there is a free photographic exhibition on the theme of Manchester, and on the Sunday free choir performances by Ordsall Acapella Singers at 1pm and 2.30pm.

Victoria Baths, Hathersage Road, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M13 0FE

10 September 10:30-14:30

Cavendish Community Primary School

Cavendish has been the educational heart of West Didsbury for more than a century and continues to serve the community today. The main building, designed by architect Ernest Woodhouse, dates from 1904 and is a fine example of early 20th century civic design.

Cavendish Road Community Primary School, Cavendish Road, West Didsbury, Didsbury, Greater Manchester, M20 1JG

10 September 13:00-16:00

The Towers

Entrance hall only will be open. Built between 1868 and 1872, Pevsner's Buildings of England described it as one of the 'greatest of all Manchester mansions'. Known as Calendar House as it has 12 Towers, 52 rooms and 365

windows it was designed by Thomas Worthington for John Edward Taylor, the first editor of the Manchester Guardian. Bought in 1874 by Daniel Adamson. The historic meeting which led to the founding of the Manchester Ship Canal was held here. Latterly it became the Shirley (cotton) Institute and it is currently part of a business park. The Towers Manchester, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Greater Manchester, M20 2FZ

10 September 10:30 - 16:30

The Worst Children's Jobs in History

Inspired by Sir Tony Robinson's Worst Jobs in History series, find out about the worst children's jobs at Quarry Bank. From catching rats to cleaning the loos (you really don't want to know what a gong scourer is, trust us), there were some pretty icky jobs during the industrial revolution.

Quarry Bank, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 4LA
Tel: 01625 527468

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank

10, 17 September 14:00 - 16:00

Guided Walk around Alderley Edge

Find out about ancient copper mines. Learn more about the mysterious places such as Devil's Grave, Goldenstone and the 'Druids Circle' which provided inspiration for the novel the Weirstone of Brisingamen and of course enjoy the beautiful woodland and fantastic views across the Cheshire Plain.

There will be just one walk but you may choose between a 1 hour, 1.5 hours or 2 hour walk.

Macclesfield Road, Nether Alderley,

Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 4UB

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/alderley-edge-and-cheshire-countryside

12, 19, 26 September 11:00 - 12:00

Mums, Tums and Buggies

We've teamed up with Sarah Parker Fitness to offer a weekly outdoor postnatal fitness class for mums and babies involving a group walk with buggies, cardio, strength and flexibility exercises in the beautiful outdoors at Lyme.

Lyme Park, Disley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK12 2NR
Tel: 01663 762023

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lyme-park

16-17 September 12:00-17:00

Harvest Festival at the Farm



A chance to celebrate the annual harvest by joining in with the Farm's very own harvest festival. See the steam engine running, have a go at scarecrow making and spinning. Make your own corn doll, sheep racing and woodturning demos. Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

16 September 14:00 - 15:00

Behind the scenes - Machines

Look at the Mill and its machinery in more depth. Led by the expert team, this is a real opportunity to find out more about this fascinating place.

Quarry Bank, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 4LA
Tel: 01625 527468

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank

23-24 September 11:00 - 16:00

Tudor Pop Fair

Autumn was the time for hiring new staff in Tudor times. Join us for our weekend fair with living history group Amicorum. Try your hand at one of the trades, collect a mop or badge to show which skill you have, and offer your services to one of the 'Tudor staff', who will explain your conditions of employment. You may have picked well or perhaps not! Little Moreton Hall, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4SD. T: 01260272018

littlemoretonhall@nationaltrust.org.uk

October

1 October 14:00 - 16:00

Guided Walk around Alderley Edge

Find out about ancient copper mines. Learn more about the mysterious places such as Devil's Grave, Goldenstone and the 'Druids Circle' which provided inspiration for the novel the Weirstone of Brisingamen and enjoy the beautiful woodland and fantastic views across the Cheshire Plain.

There will be just one walk but you may choose between a 1 hour, 1.5 hours or 2 hour walk.

Macclesfield Road, Nether Alderley, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 4UB.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/alderley-edge-and-cheshire-countryside

4 October 12:45 - 14:15

Bramhall Hall - family tour

Take a fun tour of Bramhall Hall to find out all about the lives of the people who used to live here. There will be plenty of opportunities to get 'hands on' as we go around the Hall.

Price: £3 (under 5s free)

Bramhall Hall, Bramhall Park, Bramhall, Stockport.
Tel: 0161 474 2020 www.stockport.gov.uk/events/?tag=Bramall%20Hall

6 October 10:00 - 12:00

Bramall Dragon Club

An exciting developmental discovery session for children aged 2 - 5 with stories, play and exploration, linked to Bramall Hall and Park.

Price: £7 per child. Bramall Hall, Bramhall Park, Bramhall, Stockport. Tel: 0161 474 2020

www.stockport.gov.uk/events/?tag=Bramall%20Hall

7 October 10:00 - 11:30

Early Birds in Bramhall

Early opening for families with autism, offering the opportunity to explore the Hall when it's quiet. Enjoy family trails and activity boxes. Staff will be on hand to help you to learn about the Hall.

Bramall Hall, Bramhall Park, Hall Road, Bramhall, Stockport. Tel: 0161 474 2020

www.stockport.gov.uk/events/?tag=Bramall%20Hall

8 October 10:00-16:00

Apple Day

A scrumptious Sunday at the Farm and Gardens to celebrate the wonderful apple. Join in games and children's activities. In the gardens taste delicious varieties from Tatton's historic orchards.

Apple goods on sale in the shops and restaurants. Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire.

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

Events Watch



15 October 11:00 – 15:00

The Secret World of Tatton's Fungi

Join fungus expert Fungal Punk Dave and a Tatton Ranger, on a guided walk of Tatton's Parkland. Young or old, two or four legged, all are welcome on this fun and unique walk, where you will discover the mysterious fungal world. Participants need to bring a packed lunch and dress for the outdoors! It is important to note that the purpose of the foray is to learn about the species found and not to collect for culinary use. Also you will be walking through an area closed off to park visitors containing dead wood habitat and where we are undertaking important survey work.

Price: £10 per person

This event must be pre-booked.

Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

17 October 16:00 – 18:00

Autumn Deer Walk

Triggered by shortening daylight hours and cooler weather, the rut marks the time of year when male deer compete to mate with the females resulting in much posturing, bellowing and wallowing. Join the Rangers for guided walks of the autumn parkland and witness the drama of the rut.

Minimum age: 8 years old. Price: £10 per person
This event must be pre-booked.

Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire.

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

19 October 10:00 – 11:30

Toddler Kiddy Cook

Picking your own fruit and vegetables is the best way to get the freshest and most delicious foods from field to fork and children get to see first-hand how they are produced. Tatton Park has been working with Kiddy Cook for a number of years now, offering sessions for slightly older children. Due to popular demand, we have now created a 90 minute session for toddlers and parents/carers to 'pick and cook' together. Recommended for children aged between 2 and 6 years old. Price: £22 per person

Contact Nikki Geddes at hale@kiddycook.co.uk or on 07976619648.

Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

19-29 October

Manchester Science Festival

It is an annual creative, playful and surprising celebration of science.

It's the largest science festival in England.

The first announced headline for the 2017 edition is Robots, an exhibition exploring humanity's 500-year quest to recreate ourselves in mechanised form. Featuring a unique collection of over 100 robots, from a 16th-century mechanical monk to robots from both science fiction and modern-day research labs, this exhibition will enable visitors to discover the cultural, historical and technological context of humanoid robots. The full programme will be announced in September 2017. MSF website: www.manchestersciencefestival.com/

19 October - 15 April 2018

Robots at the Museum of Science & Industry

We think of robots as a modern invention, but we've been harnessing the power of robotics for more than 500 years.

Get close to a unique collection of over 100 robots, from a 17th century dancing wine goblet and an animatronic baby, to Maria from 1927 film classic *Metropolis* and a news-reading android from Japan.

Go behind the scenes and discover recent developments in robotic research, and learn how robots are being built to resemble us, interact with us and think like us.

Robots at the Museum of Science and Industry explores our obsession with recreating ourselves in human form, and what it truly means to be a human in a robotic world.

Recommended for ages 7 and older. £8 adults, £5 children. Museum of Science & Industry Liverpool Road, Castlefield, Manchester M3 4FP
Tel: 0161 833 0027 www.msimanchester.org.uk

19 October 10:00 - 12:00

Kiddy Cook

Can you think of a more autumnal flavour than the humble apple? From crumbles to pies, sauces to chutneys, apples and autumn go hand in hand. This explains why National Apple Day always falls around this time of year. In honour of this year's apple day, children will be picking apples from Tatton's orchard and taking them back to the Victorian Still Room where they'll be making a delicious apple crumble and hearty soup (with a twist). As part of this session, the children will also get a tour of the Mansion House with the Tatton Housekeeper.

Price: £22 per person

Contact Nikki Geddes at hale@kiddycook.co.uk or on 07976 619648. Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

20-28 October 13:00 - 16:00

The Witch's Potion trail

Toe of Bat, Pixie Wings, Dragons Blood and smelly things all mixed up but some forgotten... Help the witch find the ingredients for her malodorous mixture. If successful you might receive one of her terrifying treats!

Suitable for ages 3-12. Price: £1 per child Adults: standard admission applies. Bramhall Hall, Bramhall Park, Hall Rd, Bramhall, Stockport. Tel: 0161 474 2020 www.stockport.gov.uk/events/?tag=Bramall%20Hall

21-29 October

A Hidden Halloween



Secret Hauntings at the Old Hall: Reputed as one of the most haunted buildings in the country – step into the ghostly Old Hall if you dare!

Discover paranormal activity and secret legends, on a frightening trail in the Medieval home of Tatton's ancient ancestors. "I Spy"... In the Mansion: Sharpen your sleuthing skills as you snoop around the mysterious Mansion... follow the trail to spot the secret treasures of the last Lord Egerton. Mystery Maze at the Farm: Journey through the mystery maze and detect

the surprises as you go. Collect your conker from the secret tree and join in the creepy conker fun. Spooks in the Secret Garden: Unearth the spooks hiding in secret places; track them down on a scary garden trail.

Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

21-29 October 10:30 - 16:00

Hallowe'en at Hare Hill

It's all about owls this Hallowe'en at Hare Hill. Follow our self-guided trail all week, and learn all about that most ghostly of wild birds, the owl. At the weekend, there'll be lots of fun-filled activities: have your face transformed into an owl by our face-painting artist or make an owl mask; try out candle-making, and find out how an owl box is made.

Hare Hill, Over Alderley, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hare-hill#How to get here](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hare-hill#How%20to%20get%20here)

21 October 14:00 - 15:00

Behind the scenes - Machines

One Saturday a month we invite you join us as we look at the Mill and its machinery in more depth. Led by our expert team, this is a real opportunity to find out more about this fascinating place. Quarry Bank, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 4LA. Tel: 01625 527468 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank/

23-29 October 11:00 - 16:00

Hallowtide

Explore a time of superstition and fear throughout October. Discover how the Tudors tried to protect themselves with marks and precious stones and how they stayed safe during the night. Little Moreton Hall, Congleton, Ches., CW12 4SD
Tel: 01260272018 littlemoretonhall@nationaltrust.org.uk

23- 28 October 11:00-16:00

(half an hour sessions)

Meteorites & Fireballs - Cosmodome

Step into space and learn about astronomy in the interactive inflatable Cosmodome this October half term. Run by the physics outreach department from the University of York. As part of Manchester Science Festival.

Book your tickets via the Quarry Bank website.

Adults £2, Children £2. Quarry Bank, Styal, Wilmslow, Ches., SK9 4LA. T: 01625 527468 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank

27 October 14:00 - 16:00 18:00 - 21:00

Fright Run

Ready for a frightening Hallowe'en in the park?

If you are feeling brave, join the Hallowe'en fun run around the park, fancy dress in a must!

If you are only after a little scary, join the 2pm run – perfect for young families. Feeling brave?

Join the 6pm scare-tastic run in the dark. Get dressed up and make the most of this scary event. Head torch required. Sturdy footwear a must. £2 per person. Lyme Park, Disley, Stockport, Ches., SK12 2NR. T: 01663 762023 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lyme-park

28-29 October 10.30 – 17:00

Food & Gift Fair

Want to tickle your taste buds? Do not miss mini shops filled with specialist retailers from the northwest and artisan food producers with tempting treats. You will find everything from art to fashion. Free admission to the fair in the Tenants Hall.

Contact Countrywide Events on 01530 834056 or www.countrywide-events.co.uk
Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire.

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

November

1 November 12:45 - 14:15

Bramhall Hall - family tour

Take a fun tour of Bramhall Hall to find out all about the lives of the people who used to live here. There will be plenty of opportunities to get 'hands on' as we go around the Hall.

£3 (under 5s free). Bramhall Hall, Bramhall Park, Bramhall, Stockport. T: 0161 474 2020 www.stockport.gov.uk/events/?tag=Bramall%20Hall

4, 5 November 10.30 - 17:00

Christmas Gift Fair

Christmas gifts for all the family and ideas for presents not usually found in high street shops. Free entry to the fair in the Tenants Hall.

www.countrywide-events.co.uk

Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

18 November 14:00 - 15:00

Behind the scenes - Machines

One Saturday a month we invite you join us as we look at the Mill and its machinery in more depth. Led by our expert team, this is a real opportunity to find out more about this fascinating place.

Quarry Bank, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 4LA
Tel: 01625 527468

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank

20 November - 3 December 11:00-17:00

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Join us as we count down to the big day and learn the secret symbolism behind this well-known Christmas carol. Go on a magical journey through the festive Christmas Mansion, decorated with fresh foliage and greenery, inspired by turtle doves, gold rings and ladies dancing! Music, laughter and secrets weave through the grand staterooms and servants' quarters with festive treats and seasonal craft demonstrations on offer.

Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire.

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

24 November Parade starts 6pm

Lantern Parade

Light Father Christmas' route as he arrives to spend Christmas at the Farm. Bring your own lantern (instructions are on the website) or buy your own on the night to light his way as he and his elves glide in on his sleigh. Remember to take your Christmas list to put in our special postbox! Mansion, Gift Fair, shops and restaurants will be open late. Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire
Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

25,26 November 11:00 – 16:00

Father Christmas at the Farm

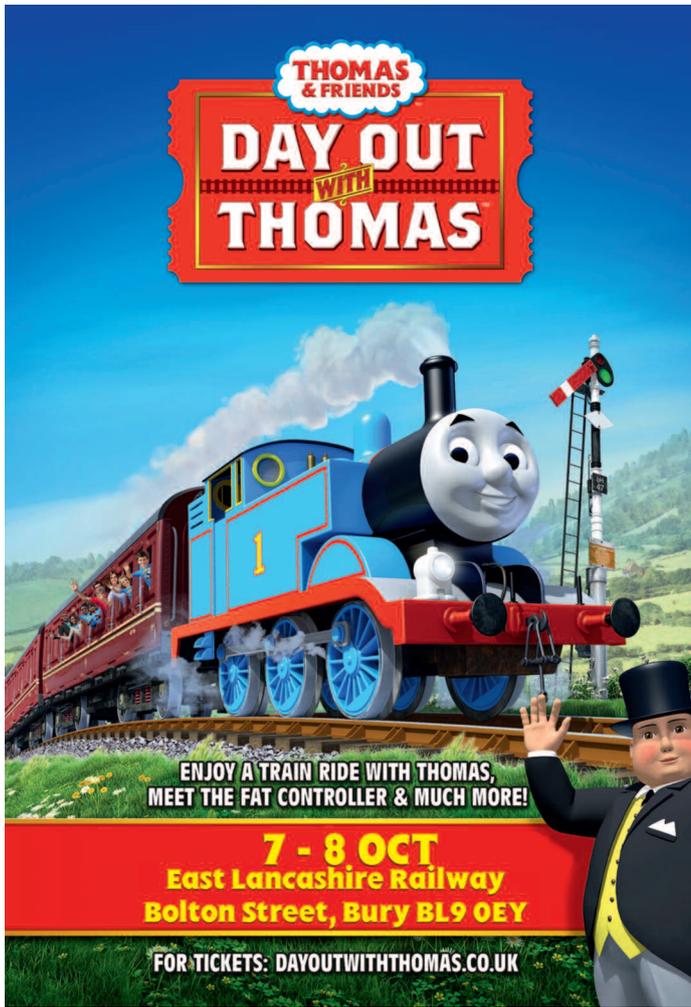
Come and see your favourite farmyard friends when you visit Father Christmas and his reindeer, Prancer and Dancer.

Special admission price for this holiday event: £7 per adult, £6.50 per child (includes gift from Father Christmas).

Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire.

Tel: 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk

The M&D Events Watch and School Open Day listings have been carefully selected to offer our readers useful information. Although every effort is made to ensure that information is correct at time of going to press, M&D cannot be held liable for any errors or omissions. We strongly advise you to check details with the event organisers.



THOMAS & FRIENDS
DAY OUT WITH THOMAS

ENJOY A TRAIN RIDE WITH THOMAS, MEET THE FAT CONTROLLER & MUCH MORE!

7 - 8 OCT
 East Lancashire Railway
 Bolton Street, Bury BL9 0EY

FOR TICKETS: DAYOUTWITHTHOMAS.CO.UK



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amazing animals
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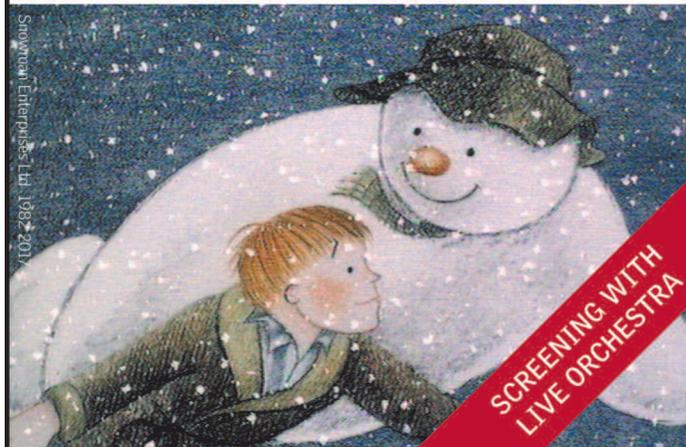
Get even closer to the animals with our Keeper Experience

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- Scottish wildcat
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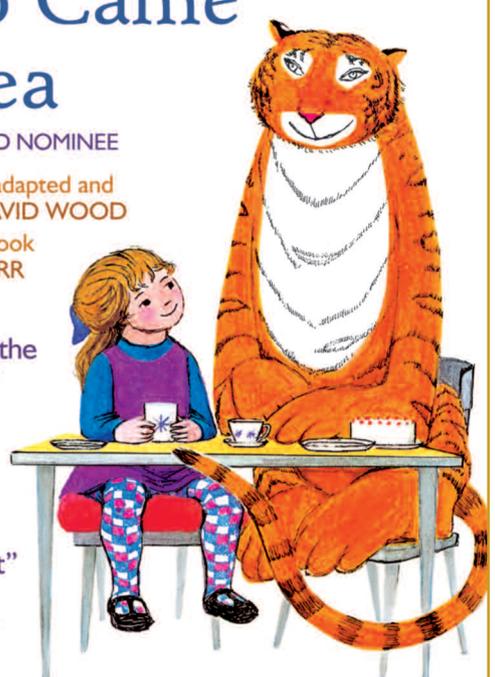
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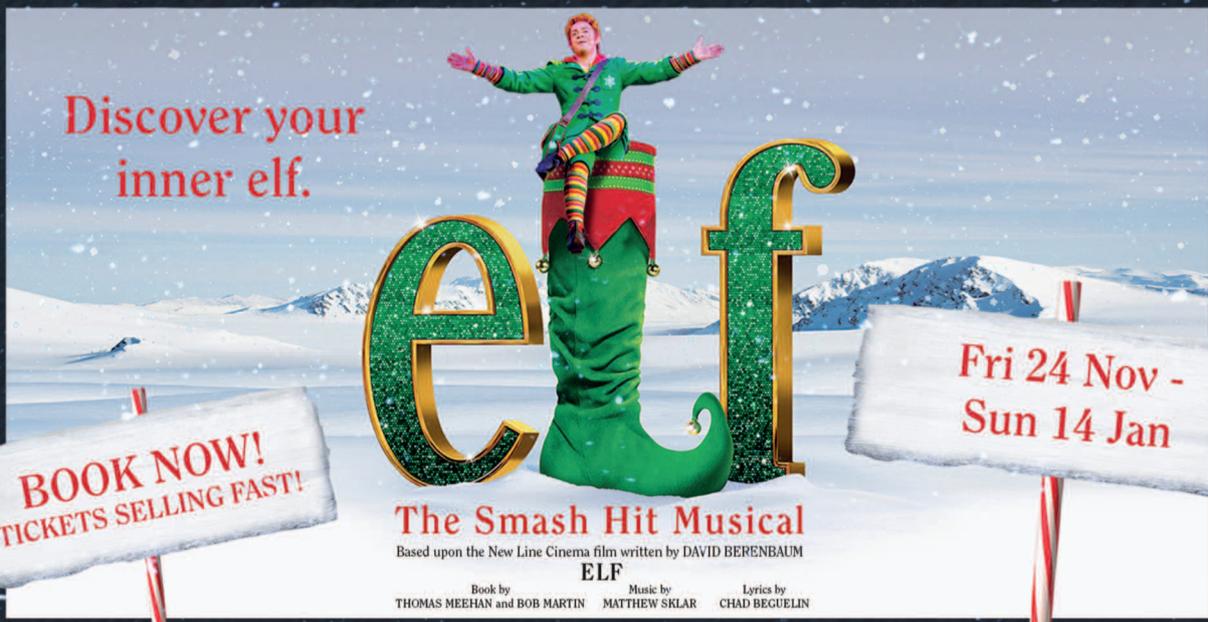
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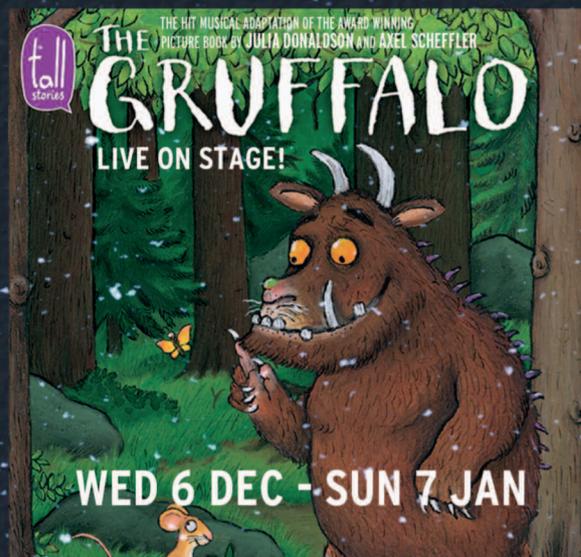
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Rokit Performing Arts schools on Tuesdays in Knutsford, Wednesdays in Wilmslow and Thursday in Hale provide classes for 4 - 16-year olds in acting and performance, including dancing and singing.

Victoria Thomas-Gough, who runs the school, says, "Our classes are inspired by pop music, TV, music videos and cinema. The students will learn a pop song, a dance in the style of a music video and an acting piece taken from popular children's TV shows, films, and soaps. This unique combination is called Rokit POP. Rokit's aim is to empower students and increase their confidence through performance technique classes."

Contact Rokit on: 01565 654482 or email: info@rokitperformingarts.co.uk Visit: www.rokitperformingarts.co.uk



Rokit also run Rokit Actor Management, a professional children's actor agency, providing representation for select students and securing castings for them for TV commercials, Soaps and Films. One of their students recently starred in a national TV commercial campaign.

Victoria continues, "During our Autumn term professional cameraman, David Parry, will be running a two week acting for TV camera session at Rokit! Don't miss out and contact us to register your child for no obligation trial class."

And that is what one of the parents says, "My daughter has been attending ROKIT for quite a few years now and has recently moved up to the acting pro class, now that she has turned 14. She thoroughly enjoys her classes and has gained two Lamda awards, passing with merit for the first and a distinction with her second exam. The teaching is excellent! My daughter's confidence has doubled since attending Rokit."



Stage Squad from Stockport



Our first production of Alice in Wonderland was a huge success in April with sell out shows and happy performers. Our next audition workshops will be held on the 24th September in our bespoke studios in Pear Mill, Stockport. We are currently applying for the rights to Aladdin script (please see Stage Squad website for confirmation). Those who are successful at audition will then take part every Friday evening learning routines, songs and lines, being part of a team to perform a high standard production."

The performance is planned for January 2018. With professional tutors, a professional stage and sound and lighting technicians, the end result is definitely something to look forward to. The process itself is something Stage Squad Youth can be proud of. As Danielle, a parent of the children who took part in Alice in Wonderland last year says, "Both my children enjoyed it immensely, made new friends and acquired new confidence! A fantastic experience!"

Jennie continues, "Our aim at Stage Squad Youth is to create a high standard show, encourage team work, develop skills and confidence and share our passion for performing arts."

All information about Stage Squad and Stage Squad Youth can be found on www.stagesquad.co.uk or you can find them on [Facebook](#).

Stage Squad Youth is a spin off production company from Stage Squad. The adult company was established in 2005 and performs cabarets, charity nights, pantomimes - family and adult. They are expanding their repertoire into plays and musicals in 2018 and always looking for new members. Last year they started a new group for children aged between seven and seventeen.

Jennie Kennedy, Company Producer, explains, "Stage Squad Youth is a children's production group that specialise in performing one off shows for children to be a part of."

Benefits of swimming for babies



Vicki and David Oldfield from Water Babies are passionate about teaching babies to swim and feel that all children should start learning to swim from as early as possible so that they can have fun, bond with their parents or carers and, should they ever fall in the water, have the best possible chances of surviving.

Swimming has lots of benefits, some of which you may not have even considered!

- **It is great for a baby's physical and mental wellbeing** - Swimming is the perfect way to getting little ones exercising from a really early age and each swimming lesson provides a complete body work out. Starting early can instil a lifetime habit of exercise.
- **It promotes bonding** - Skin to skin bonding really strengthens the connection between parent and child. And while in day to day life Mums have more bonding opportunities with their babies, swimming offers an excellent chance for Dads to bond too!
- **It develops baby's co-ordination** - Being in the water helps improve co-ordination and balance and learning to swim with the help of toys helps with hand-eye co-ordination and motor skills. Research has found that babies who swim have better balance and can grasp objects more easily.
- **It builds baby's strength** - Buoyancy and water-resistance means that babies exercise more muscles, more effectively, in the water than on land. Swimming gives babies excellent muscle control which really helps when learning to walk!
- **It develops baby's learning skills** - Responding to repetitive voice commands can sharpen a baby's mental skills and increase their levels of understanding. A German study found that babies who swim had advanced motor development, social skills and intelligence.
- **It provides structure for babies** - weekly lessons can help structure a parent's day/week and it provides a regular fun and social activity (for both parents and babies!) This type of activity is great for helping to combat PND.
- **It boosts baby's confidence** - Classes help babies/toddlers to build social skills and also help parents to become more confident in the water, especially if they are unable to swim. Exercises that involve moving more independently in the water and holding onto the side are fantastic at improving early years' confidence. All this confidence is then transferred onto dry land too!
- **It enhances wellbeing** - Warm water helps to relax babies and swimming stimulates their appetite, these all help to improve eating and sleeping habits which can only be good news for parents!

Water Babies run baby and toddler swimming classes in the South Manchester area. If you would like any more information please don't hesitate to email 123swim@waterbabies.co.uk or call **0161 928 6385**.

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Cooking with your children *Big and little cooks at Food Sorcery, Didsbury*

If you are looking for something a little different to do as a family, then try the Big & Little Cook sessions at Food Sorcery. Scheduled monthly at the purpose-built kitchen in Didsbury, it's a real treat to have Chef Jason guiding you through the afternoon, entertaining with tales of his cookery travels, while seamlessly teaching you and your child to make a side dish, main course and pudding.

In our busy lives, there are rare opportunities to share an uninterrupted 3 hours with your child ... no screens, no distractions and an inspiring chef making sure both parent and child are learning new skills. The session starts with some basic knife safety, the 'spider fingers' technique will become a well-practised art at home, and then onto the cookery. Confidence, enthusiasm

and laughter spreads through the group and the session concludes with a social dinner around their affable table - the food is genuinely delicious and the children (and parents) are proud of their efforts. Food Sorcery is fully licensed and there is a glass of wine included for the parents.

All dietary requirements can be catered for and the Food Sorcery team are very happy to try and incorporate requests. The menu varies and will follow a theme - Turkish, The Deep South; South East Asia; Best of British, Italian and Classic French to pick a few.

If you would like further information please contact: lovetocook@foodsorcery.co.uk or call 0161 706 0505. Dates are published on www.foodsorcery.co.uk



activities

Discover the universe at Jodrell Bank

Home to the world-famous Lovell Telescope, a visit to Jodrell Bank makes for an exhilarating day out.



Seeing the near 90m high radio telescope up close is an incredible experience and the Discovery Centre's exhibitions, interactive displays and galleries, will help you understand how it works and what it's looking for.

You'll also find 35 acres of gardens and arboretum, complete with picnic areas, playground, galaxy garden, and the pop-up Potting Shed Café. There's an extensive gift shop too, packed full of science and space-inspired gifts, games, and books. And, don't miss out on a visit to the Planet Pavilion Café, complete with a stunning terrace overlooking the telescope, where you'll find delicious breakfasts, salads, stews, sandwiches, and home-made cakes.



What's on this Autumn...

Family Stargazing Nights

Thursday 26th October and Thursday 2nd November
6:30pm - 9:30pm

An unmissable after-hours evening of stargazing at Jodrell Bank and a wonderful opportunity to get started in astronomy.

Tickets: £8

October Half Term: Live Science Shows

Monday 23rd October - Friday 3rd November

Weekdays only: 11:00, 12:00 and 14:30

Jodrell Bank's popular live science shows feature interactive demonstrations & fascinating experiments - perfect for all the family.

Tickets: FREE with general admission

Find out more: Jodrell Bank is near Macclesfield, Cheshire and you can find out more, including how to get there, on their website at www.jodrellbank.net

There's plenty of extra activity throughout the year as well, including their ever-popular family science shows at half terms and holidays, and evening events such as stargazing nights.



A dash of Cologne

by Paul Wojnicki

Holidays are all about compromise when you have a family, and with cultural holidays it can be particularly tricky to keep younger children interested. So when I heard that Cologne has some of the most child friendly attractions in Germany, as well as an abundance of heritage, I jumped at the chance of planning a cultural trip with the kids.

Our trip begins with the DFDS ferry from Newcastle to Amsterdam. Harrison and Ella have fallen in love with boats over the last year and the ferry terminal is easily reached via the Trans Pennine Express. It's not just a convenient ferry terminal either, the free activities onboard the DFDS Ferry are probably the most child friendly we've come across; face painting, a good sized soft play and staffed kids club to keep the tots entertained.

It almost feels like a shame to arrive in Amsterdam the following morning because the kids are having so much fun onboard, but they're eager to see the canals and bridges that I've been telling them so much about, Amsterdam's historic centre is full of architectural delights and surprisingly child friendly - apart from the odd "joss stick" smell. We spend an hour or so simply strolling along the cobbled streets and canals admiring the distinctive tall 17th Century townhouses and stopping for an ice cream along the way.

Afterwards, we explore the city's canals on a pedalo which we spot right outside the Anne Frank Museum and which only costs 8 Euros to rent. It takes a few moments of getting used to the controls but Harrison and Ella love it and keep calling it DFDS!

Then it's all aboard the ICE train which whirls us to Cologne at speeds that the Trans Pennine Express can only dream of. The children are buzzing with excitement as they can see the driver and the whizzing landscape through the giant glass doors to the cabin. When they tire of staring at the driver we watch the flat Dutch landscape heighten and we're zooming through Germany, all the way to Cologne.

The first thing we see as we approach the station are the twin towers of the UNESCO listed Kolner Dom - or cathedral - which stand at a staggering 157 metres and are a mere stone's throw from the station and our hotel. We spend an hour or so exploring the city's main square and taking in the massive gothic façade from a variety of angles before hopping on board another train - in the case the mini-train to one of Cologne's most popular museums.

Let's face facts; museums can be tedious for children - but this is no ordinary museum, it's a chocolate factory-cum-museum so we have no trouble at all cajoling Harrison and Ella inside.

The museum begins with a greenhouse full of cocoa trees, and takes us on a journey from bean to bar, including a mini factory where the chocolate is produced and a 10 foot chocolate fountain where it is heartily consumed by kids and parents alike. It's a delicious way to learn about the environment and food production.

Afterwards, we stroll along the banks of the Rhine watching hundreds of boats small and large ply their route down the legendary river.

"Can we go on a boat, daddy?" Harrison asks.

"Those will have to wait until tomorrow," I tell him, pointing my finger toward KölnTriangle, a 100m high tower with a glass walled observation deck behind us. "We're going up there now."

"Wow!" Comes the reply.

The following morning we're up early and eating German bagels at the hotel before heading back to the mini train. This time we rumble through the atmospheric cobbled streets of the old town to the riverfront where we jump onboard one of KD Rhine's daily sailings down the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. It's hard to imagine a more exciting journey for children between two UNESCO listed sites and well worth the 32€ for a hop-on-hop-off day ticket (under 15's pay 6€). This might seem a little expensive but the five star cruise boats that are sailing beside us charge thousands of pounds to sail the exact same route.

Harrison and Ella point and wave at dozens of these luxury vessels as we cruise to Königswinter where we disembark and peer up at the legendary German hill. After all, it's not every day you get to visit somewhere that a dragon once lived. But Königswinter - which is also easily accessible by train - is home to the legendary Drachenfels, or Dragon's Rock!

Harrison looks a little worried, especially as the ruins of an ancient castle are perched at the summit, but I assure him that the dragon is long since slain by Siegfried, Germany's equivalent of King Arthur.

To be honest, the hill looks a little daunting to me too - not because of dragons but because the road that leads to the summit is so steep - for 1 year old Ella's pushchair. Luckily there's a funicular service from the town to the summit if you're less energetic.

We decide to walk and around half an hour later we reach Schloss Drachenburg, a fairy tale palace halfway up the hill. We're all out of breath

except Ella in her pushchair, who's rearing to go. Despite the exhaustion the views of the Rhine from the palace grounds are easily worth the effort. Our eyes follow the same river that we sailed down that morning all the way back to Cologne on the horizon. It's possible even from this distance to make out the KölnTriangle observation deck that we'd been up yesterday and the twin towered Dom which I've learned was built using stone quarried from this very hill.

We're too far away to see the world renowned zoo, the children's museum, or the city's cable car but then again we'll be seeing those up close tomorrow!

Practicalities

We travelled with DFDS because the children love boats, DFDS have the closest port to Amsterdam and DFDS have excellent child facilities. Dog owners will also be delighted to hear that, as of this year, DFDS have introduced a limited number of dog friendly cabins.

If you prefer to take the ferry in one direction and fly back then Ryanair begin flights to Cologne from Manchester in October.

Cologne is a wonderful city year round and boasts no less than seven Christmas markets - indeed the mini train in this feature becomes the Christmas Market Express between 27th November and 23rd December. If you do plan to visit during this time remember that Germans celebrate Christmas on the 24th December.

DBahn, the German rail operator, offer tickets between Amsterdam and Cologne for as little as 29 Euros (under 6s travel free), you are also allowed two free stopovers on these tickets so could visit multiple German cities on route.



Alderley Day Nursery: Expansion plans!



Alderley Day Nursery are thrilled to announce the imminent opening of their new extension, designed to increase the number of places on offer to local families.

Nursery owner, Melanie Hallam, explains, "In 2016 we found the demand for our services rocketed from both existing customers wishing to increase their nursery days and from new families requesting places. Additionally, changes in Government policy due to be implemented in September 2017, offering eligible children 30 hours of free childcare, further increases the demand for places". For these reasons, Alderley Day Nursery submitted a planning application to Macclesfield Borough Council to extend their current facility and were thrilled to have this accepted and commence building work in 2017.

"Our priority is to build a facility that matches our current high specifications, maintains our personal family feel and causes minimum disruption to our current business. We have nearly completed our build project and are now taking bookings for January 2018. Undoubtedly the building work has brought different challenges for the team, however we believe the end-result, an enriched facility, will benefit all of us, making this a very exciting time in our history". If you would like to see what a Montessori environment can offer your child, please contact the Alderley Day Nursery Team on **01625 860660** to arrange a meeting.

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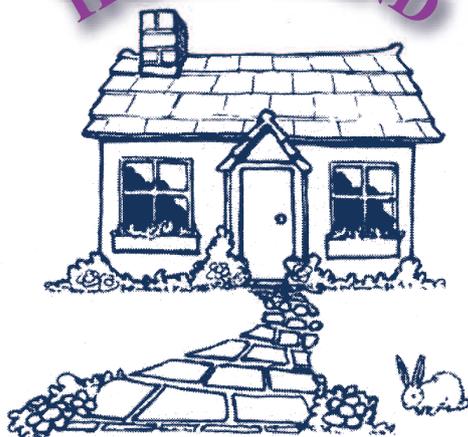
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Back to school ... new beginnings ...

by Oriel Camp, life and career coach and founder of Oriel Coaching

... And breathe. As the summer holidays draw to a close and the gates re-open how are you feeling? Busy settling into new school routines and juggling commitments, don't forget about you! Perhaps this is the first time you are nervously waving your little one off to nursery or school and you have a brand new window of time and of opportunity you haven't experienced for a long time. Or maybe routine resumes, albeit with your children moving up a year, and with it can come some carefully crafted space. It might just feel like New Year where you experience a sense of change ... of new beginnings ...

After reflecting on the highlights and lowlights of your holiday, it's a great time to focus on the bigger picture. **Evaluate where you are in life:** Do you feel happy with the direction your life is heading in or do you feel stuck in a rut? How are your values (what is important to you) being met?



Your Life. Your Success

If you want help finding your direction and coming up with a plan for 2017/18 so you can move forward confidently, please visit www.orielcoaching.co.uk, email oriel@orielcoaching.co.uk or call 07960 855646.

Looking forward ... what do you want for 2017/18?

Our kids are working towards specific goals and targets within school this year. Have you stopped to think about what you want to achieve? You may want to be healthier (physically or spiritually), boost your confidence or better juggle work and motherhood.

Perhaps you want to return to work with confidence after maternity or a career break, discover a new career path to better reflect your changing priorities, move up the career ladder or set up and grow your own business.

Make sure you are clear on how you will benefit from your goals, when you want to achieve them by and how you will know when you have reached that defining moment - when you can shout 'yippee!'

'A goal without a plan is just a wish': Having someone really listen to you without judgement can help you move forward. You are the sole topic of conversation and you are accountable for progressing your own plan. Coaching is very different to talking over a brew with a friend.



Oriel is a qualified life and career coach specialising in helping mums to get more out of life. Delivering 1:1 coaching she supports and challenges her clients to focus on the right things, to break through limiting beliefs and to make positive change. If you're new to coaching, Oriel Coaching offers Fizz & Fun Parties and group coaching taster sessions.

30 hours free childcare *A parent's guide to the new government scheme*

Explained by Melanie Hallam, owner of Alderley Day Nursery

What's it all about?

Currently, all 3 & 4 year olds in England are entitled to receive 570 hours of free early years education each year - this is known as the 15 hour, 38 week 'universal' offer. The entitlement usually kicks in at the beginning of the school term after a child reaches their third birthday. From September 2017, this entitlement is doubled to 1,140 free hours annually for some working families. This new offer is known as the 30 hours free childcare scheme.

Although the Government insists on talking in free hours, rather than pounds sterling, this basically equates to about £2,000+ a year, per child, in extra help towards childcare costs.



Who will be eligible?

To qualify for the full 30 hours of free childcare, each parent (or the sole parent in a single parent family) will need to earn, on average, the equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum or living wage per week, and no more than £100,000 per year. A family with an annual household income of £199,998 would be eligible if each parent earns just under £100,000. Self-employed parents and parents on zero-hours contracts will be eligible if they meet the average earnings threshold. Families may also be eligible if one parent is working and the other is temporarily away from the workplace on maternity for example, or if the other parent has substantial caring responsibilities or if one parent is disabled (based on receipt of specific benefits). The easiest way to find out whether you're eligible is via Childcare Choices at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

How does this affect my nursery?

Alderley Day Nursery is committed to offering the 30 hours free childcare. But not all nurseries will be. Childcare providers do not have to offer the funded hours and many are worried that if they offer the 30 hours, they will make huge financial losses as the money the Government gives to providers to pay for this free childcare often doesn't cover the cost of delivering it. To make it work, childcare providers need to consider ways to fill the funding gap and this might be by raising fees, or charging more for additional services, to ensure they can still provide a quality service.

What can I do now?

The first thing is to check your eligibility. Secondly, speak to your childcare provider to determine whether they will be offering the 30 hours. The Government estimates that around 390,000 children are eligible for the full 30 hours so demand for nursery places will be high, and you know what they say about the early bird ...

'All together now'

by Lucy Burt, Nest Interior Design

September tends to be an emotional month in many family homes. It is the month of 'Back to ...' whether that be school, work, nursery or just 'back to reality' after a lovely summer holiday or break for those fortunate enough to have had some time off. It is also often a month of new beginnings, younger children starting reception, older children starting high school and also the start of Autumn.

All these new starts and changes invariably mean one thing - chaos! Mornings are spent scrambling around for mislaid items, grabbing breakfast on the go and often having a minor dispute with another family member. Evenings and weekends are spent getting used to new homework schedules for children and fitting in work not quite achieved during the day for parents. This is all before anyone even mentions the scheduling of sports, activities, parties and catching up with friends and family.

In short, family life is manic and at no time more than the start of a new school year. Here at nest we believe that the space around you really has an impact on how you feel. The colours and textures you surround yourself with, the way that light enters a room, acoustics and furnishings all combine to influence our mood. We're increasingly asked by clients to create a space where all the family can escape the frantic pace of life for a few hours. Often referred to as 'The Den', this room could be for watching films, reading, listening to music, playing instruments or board games. Most importantly, it is for relaxing and being together.

Often, we will create a cocooning feel in these rooms, dark or rich colours work brilliantly to help you to unwind, soft and velvety textures along with squashy sofas and cushions encourage you to sink back. Low-level lighting enhances a cosy and tranquil feel. Included are a few examples of family snugs we have worked on previously but if the idea of an inviting refuge appeals to you as the nights draw in then we can help you create the perfect space for this.



At nest we work on a variety of projects and we charge by the hour so you can enjoy exactly the required amount of input from us. We can both recommend all relevant contractors and work collaboratively with you to ensure your new space is tailored to your requirements. Just get in touch for an initial chat and quote **M&D Autumn** for 10% off initial consultation fees.

nest interior design
Design & decoration

Full details of our company can be found on our website at www.nestinteriordesign.co.uk

We can be reached by telephone on **0161 414 0032** or email enquiries@nestinteriordesign.co.uk

Foxes, dinos and other furry friends

This year, the Winter and Autumn collection from JoJo Maman Bébé is all about getting out and exploring the great outdoors - come rain or shine. Woodland themes run through the range, with mice, badgers and many more furry friends featuring on practical yet stylish pieces.



The ever-popular JoJo Fisherman's Jacket has been given a fabulous fox update, available in an autumn-ready orange hue that's perfect for boys and girls. It comes with an adorable fox face hood complete with 3D ears, bringing a little dress-up fun to their daily routine.



At JoJo, dinosaurs aren't just for boys. You'll find delightful dinos on girls' dresses, tops and leggings that are so much fun for little ones to wear. Look out for the Dinosaur Appliqué Tunic, perfect for dinosaur fans who love pink too. Gorgeous details such as delicately embroidered flowers and a frilly hem ensure the look is extra pretty.



Woodland themes from the Autumn and Winter collection can be seen in the baby range too. Don't miss the Fox Applique Baby Sleepsuit which is impossible to resist - it even features paw detail on the feet for extra cuteness. There's a matching hat too which completes the look, creating the perfect outfit for chilly days.

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Family Mediation

'It is possible to reach a resolution without going down the route of court proceedings.'



If you and your partner have decided to separate or divorce, resolving matters can often seem like a daunting and complex process. When there are children involved, separation can be especially unsettling for the whole family.

However, it is possible to reach a resolution without going down the more contentious and often acrimonious route of court proceedings. Family mediation is one way to resolve any disputes privately without going through the courts and it allows you and your partner or spouse to work together to decide how life will work out in the future for you and your children.

Professional, impartial mediators will make every effort to help to ensure that your children are put at the heart of all legal arrangements.

Kim Aucott is a Consultant Solicitor and mediator at Manchester and Cheshire law firm Slater Heelis LLP. Here she explains more about the benefits of mediation.



What is mediation?

You and your partner will meet with a specially trained mediator who will work with you and assist you in coming to an agreement. The mediator will facilitate discussions that help you find a solution which is right for both you and your children. You can work out issues such as arrangements for the children, finances or the practicalities of life in the future as a separated couple.

Mediation means that you and your partner can come to an agreement that you are both happy with, rather than having a decision imposed on you by a judge. It can also have the added benefit of improving communication between you and your partner so that you remain on better terms in the future - which is particularly beneficial for the children.

How does it work?

A qualified mediator will work with you and your partner to answer any questions you might have and ensure mediation is the best approach for you. They will then meet with you both individually before beginning the joint mediation sessions. During the joint sessions with your partner the mediator will facilitate your discussions and help you to make your own decisions in a managed, secure and safe environment.

Family mediators at Slater Heelis are also qualified family lawyers meaning that they have a thorough understanding of the legal issues which are likely to arise. It is not the role of a mediator to provide legal advice so you and your partner are encouraged to take advice from solicitors during the mediation process.

Most mediations take between three and five sessions with each one lasting between one and two hours depending on your circumstances. In comparison to traditional court proceedings, the mediation process is often much quicker, more cost effective and, in most cases, more likely to result in an outcome that both you and your partner are happy with.

Child focused

The wishes and feelings of children are often at the forefront of parents' minds when separating. Mediation can help you and your partner focus on making arrangements which are in your children's best interests.

The mediator is there to help you and your former partner to agree living arrangements for your children and to work out suitable financial arrangements to provide for your children after a divorce or separation. They are focused on the most pragmatic and child-friendly solutions.

What happens afterwards?

Once an agreement has been reached in mediation, the mediator will prepare a number of documents which record the agreement. This is a record for you and your partner and also enables your solicitor to complete the necessary legal formalities so that the agreed arrangements become legally binding.

To speak to Kim Aucott, confidentially, about your situation call **0161 672 1523** or email kim.aucott@slaterheelis.co.uk Visit www.slaterheelis.co.uk for more information.



Reflecting on your marriage and don't know what to do?

Slater Heelis has provided expert advice to families for over 240 years.

Our team of Resolution family specialists are here to support you with first-class legal advice to provide the direction you need during separation. The team has expertise in divorce, separation, civil partnerships, finances and children arrangements. When it's appropriate for you, we are also able to offer collaborative law and mediation services.

Our family team all live in the South Manchester and Cheshire area. Living within the same community provides us with unique insight into what affects your daily lives. You are just a ride away from one of our offices in Sale, Timperley or Manchester. We have additional meeting facilities in Warrington.



"Having lived in the North West for the majority of my life, I am very proud to now raise my young family in Trafford. It has so much to offer, excellent schools, fabulous restaurants and beautiful places to visit. I couldn't think of anywhere better to live with my family."

Patricia Robinson | Family Solicitor

Get in touch with our family team

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During separation,
your children
are your number
one priority.

They're mine too.

Let Chris Fairhurst put your children first.

Chris Fairhurst is part of the award-winning Family Law Team at Slater and Gordon. For 20 years he has expertly represented parents going through disputes over their children.

A member of the Advanced Children Law Panel, and a father of four himself, he works tirelessly to find a solution that is fair and helps to provide protection and stability for your children.

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