

mum about town

Guiding you through the parenting maze: dailyecho.co.uk

Helpful hints, things to do, expert advice and personal experience... with **Sian Davies**

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MAKE DAD'S DAY

Gift ideas for June 20

SPEND

■ Perfect grooming starts with an essential skincare regime ... why not give him the gift of the smoothest shave or a moisturiser with sunblock to shield and protect. American skin and beauty brand, Mary Kay's MKMen range has an excellent line of products to cleanse, tone and hydrate. Shave foam, £10, aftershave gel, £13.50, face bar, £11.50, moisturiser sunscreen SPF 25 (pictured), £19.50 and body spray, £10, all from Mary Kay, stockists marykay.co.uk.



£45, 750g, from Hotel Chocolat, stockists hotel-chocolat.com.

■ Fashion designer Tom Ford wowed the critics with his directing debut in *A Single Man*, and his classic fragrance, Grey Vetiver, still hits all the right scented notes. Rich with earthy vetiver, citrus, spice and warm woods for balance, it's the ultimate gentleman's splash for those red carpet moments. Grey Vetiver Eau de Parfum spray 50ml, £50, all good department stores nationwide, stockists 08700 342 566.



with a free flight simulator (CD and lead); coaxial, counter-rotating blade rotor design and high power battery pack for flights of 10-15 minutes per charge. For free flight simulator before he loops the loop, go to heliguy.com/nexus/fms.html. ESKY Lama V4 (suitable for grown-ups of any age), £54.99, from Heliguy, stockists 08456 436 257 or heliguy.com.

■ With umpteen pockets for keys,



mobile, pens, business cards, eye-wear and a padded compartment for a laptop, this exceptionally strong but lightweight messenger bag in 100 per cent Tier 1 recycled nylon will carry all his personal and work essentials. With an adjustable shoulder strap and hidden, padded grab handle, it's the



SPLURGE

■ Amateur photographers will instantly fall for the stylish good looks of the Leica C-Lux 3. ... tiny, slim and easy to use, this digital camera has a powerful 5x optical Leica lens, intelligent automatic mode, auto scene recognition feature to capture the perfect shot, and movie mode for action takes. Leica C-Lux 3 with black matt leather carry case, £335, stockists leica-storemayfair.co.uk.

■ Boys with toys ... your gadget loving action man will have hours of fun with the ESKY Lama V4 remote control helicopter. Ideal for beginners, it comes



Chocolatier's Table,



Tutor Kate Day with her pupils.

Kate did young authors proud

BUDDING authors are being given the chance to pen their own books and even have them published.

Children are being offered the chance to take part in the creative workshops that are aimed at stimulating the youngster's imagination and encourage them to write and illustrate their own story.

The course culminates with the children's very own book signing event. The workshops are run by Chocolate Muffin Publishing, the brainchild of author and illustrator Kate Day.

She said: "When I was looking into creating books for children it struck me there wasn't anything like this around where the youngsters would actually be able to produce a book at the end of it."

"Creating something and having a physical book at the end of it gives the children such a confidence boost and the whole process really sparks their imagination."

"It does wonders for their self esteem particularly of the child isn't a very confident writer. We can give them the help they need to produce their own work."

Currently the courses are run within a

number of schools in the Southampton area for an hour a week after class.

Aimed primarily at children aged from around 8 to 11 there are plans to expand to it to other age groups. Workshops also run at weekends and during school holidays, open to any youngster who wants to sign up. At the start of the course the children are given a creative writing pack that includes everything they need to create their own masterpiece. The sessions then guide the children through the process of creating and telling a story using their own ideas and themes. Once completed their work is then be produced as a book, available for friends and family and the public to buy.

Kate said: "The children invite all their friends and family and they are just so proud to see what they have produced."

The course costs £45 to £55 which includes the tuition, all materials and the printing, binding and publishing costs. The book is then available to buy on the Chocolate Muffin website and Amazon.

■ To find out more about the course or to book a place log on to chocolate-muffin.com or call 07791 497991.

TRAINING TO BECOME AN ARTBREAKER

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EDF ENERGY LONDON AND THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND MEDIA AWARDS 2009
COLUMNIST OF THE YEAR



"French impressionism...I thought that meant there would be a mime."

It is comments like these I would have to choke down if I was going to trick women into thinking I was an art-lover.

When I was younger few words struck fear into my heart more than "art gallery".

"Museum", "exhibition" and "library" are the only ones that may have pipped it. That is not to say I am a complete philistine, but from a young age I always feared there was a lot of unwarranted smug posing and intellectual muscle-flexing in the art community.

My slight aversion was not improved by years of squabbling with

housemates who refused to let me put up my favoured pieces of art, which include kittens in socks or small children being taught to fly a kite in a meadow.

However, showing an interest might bolster my reputation as a cultured, artistic type; even better, this is sometimes mistaken for intelligence.

I have always dreamed of being referred to as a buff in some area – why not an art buff?

The main benefits seem to be you are qualified to read and understand poetry, wear tweed and might become extremely important about a hundred years after you starve to death.

Also, if you ever feel threatened by someone with a useful job you can shout, "Do you actually know anything about Picasso, little man?"

If my degree in literature has qualified me for nothing else – and it hasn't – it is to fraudulently pass myself off among the intelligentsia.

Therefore, armed with a beginner's guide to art, I enrolled myself on a tour of the famous galleries of northern

France. I have to admit many of the paintings I saw during my tour of Normandy were breathtaking and I didn't get the anger nose bleed that often accompanies a visit to the Tate Modern.

On this trip, I got the chance to stand in the exact position where master pieces like Monet's *Water Lilies* were painted.

By insisting on having my photo taken here and manipulating the conversation somewhat, I did get the slight thrill of hearing a sexy American repeatedly refer to the Monet shot I had requested. With her hair cut short, she was like a less crazy, more spankable Winona Ryder.

The most troubling art display I have ever seen was a Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition featuring frontal nudity – male nudity: wrong nudity.

I think I felt awkward because I wasn't sure if it was acceptable to blush like a schoolgirl or try to convince my foxy companion that dimensions were greatly exaggerated with mirrors and trick photography.

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