

PARENTS NEWS

March 2012 No.166

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PARENTS NEWS

Next Issue April 2012
 Editorial Deadline: 9 March
 Advertiser Deadline: 15 March
 Distributed 26 March
 ISSN 1362-5551
 Publishers & Editors: **Fergus & Penny McCarthy** Distribution
 Norton 60,000 South West
 London & Surrey; 78,000
 Kent; 54,000 London South
 East-Surrey & West Kent.
 Distributed through schools,
 nurseries, libraries, leisure
 centres, restaurants, advertisers,
 play schemes and events.
 Subscription by post £15 year.

For Advertising:

Contact: **fergus@parents-
 news.co.uk**

020 8337 6337

PARENTS NEWS UK

ISSN 1362-5551

10 The Manor Drive, Worcester

Park, Surrey, KT4 7LG.

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PARENTS NEWS believes that society's best asset is its young people! We shall accept no advertising in the opinion of the Publisher, is considered denigrating to children.

We intend to encourage environmental, health, and non-violent issues, but not to preach or claim to always be right. Different opinions published are the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of **PARENTS NEWS**. We hope mums and dads enjoy the articles, be interested by Calendar (finding it useful), and use the advertisers. Any endorsement by **PARENTS NEWS** is explicitly stated.

Family Holidays

Easter Family Package

The latest snowfalls in Austria just cry for some more skiing this season. Enjoy some Easter family skiing in the **Großarl-Dorfgastein** ski area, part of Ski amadé. With cosy suites, gourmet cuisine, outstanding childcare, amazing location and a working bio-farm, the **Moos-Gut** is a great family destination.

7 nights from **7th to 14th April** for two adults and two children (up to 12 years) starting from EUR 2,400— (GBP 2,040—) all inclusive.

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Events and festivals to dazzle Tenerife in 2012!

The largest island in the Canaries, the *Isle of Contrasts*, lives up to its nickname perfectly with a whole host of colourful events and festivals running throughout the year. In 2012, **Tenerife** has something to suit every visitor – cultural events, religious festivals, concerts and one of the largest carnivals in the world! **28th-29nd April 2012**

Marking the start of Tenerife's religious festival period, the *Festival of Tequesta* sees thousands of people dress in traditional costume to honour of Saint Mark the Evangelist. During the event, dozens of colourfully-decorated floats parade down the streets of the village accompanied by singing and dancing groups, while local people hand out potatoes, gofio, meat, eggs and wine from the area in order to symbolise friendship. The following morning (**29th April**), visitors and locals celebrate the "Day of the Float" as a procession of beautifully-decorated floats wow spectators.

Rock Coast Festival, Santa Cruz
24th-26th May 2012
 This year, the island's cosmopolitan capital, **Santa Cruz**, is set to welcome some of the world's greatest pop groups, rock stars and

electronic musicians at the **Rock Coast Festival**. With big names due to be announced, the artists expected to perform boast a combined total of more than 270 million records sold between them – prompting the musical extravaganza to be dubbed "the most important music event to be held in the *Canary Islands*" by **José Manuel Bermúdez**, mayor of the capital's City Hall. Benefiting from a €5 million investment, visitors will be able to enjoy 15 hours of music each day and daily entertainment, such as a Formula 1 simulator, a ski slope and wind tunnel allowing visitors to feel the force of freefall.

Corpus Christi Carpets, La Orotava
14th June 2012
Corpus Christi is arguably the most famous and inspiring of **Tenerife's** religious festivals, centred around vast intricate and coloured carpets – superbly created from flower petals and volcanic sands – which are laid out in the streets for all to admire. The highlight of the festival is a tapestry of 800 square metres covering the centre square in front of **La Orotava's** Town Hall. Petals and sand from the protected **Teide National Park**, which can only be used for this event, are used to create this gigantic

piece of art, which only lasts a few hours until the *Procession of Christ* takes place across the square.

Festival of Virgen del Carmen, Puerto de la Cruz
10th or 17th July 2012 (date to be confirmed)
 Each year, the fishing port of **Puerto de la Cruz** comes alive to honour Virgen del Carmen, the patron saint of fishermen. During the tradition, devoted locals carry a statue of the Virgin Mary to a small boat, preceded by dancers with coloured ribbons, before dozens of fishing boats sound their horns and accompany the Virgin as they sail along the coast. Back on land, the fiesta continues with an amazing fireworks display and then transfers to the streets of the town before the statues are returned to their sanctuaries.

Perseld Meteor Shower, Teide National Park
12th August 2012
 The **Perseld Meteor Shower** is undeniably one of the greatest natural wonders in the universe. The annual spectacle brings a dazzling light show with more than 60 shooting stars zipping across the sky every hour, caused by tiny particles of debris from a comet burning up when entering the Earth's atmosphere at 135,000mph.

March 2012

Egg-Citing Easter at Chesil Vista

Chesil Vista Holiday Park in Weymouth, Dorset has an egg-stra special entertainment schedule planned for the forthcoming Easter holidays, which begins on **Saturday 31 March** and continues until **Saturday 14 April**. In addition to the park's usual entertainment programme of quality live cabaret acts, the family-friendly holiday park will also be putting on an action-packed Easter programme which is sure to leave all **Chesil Vista** kids egg-streemly egg-saused! Seven night Easter holidays at **Chesil Vista** start from £335.00. Special Easter holiday offers are also available including:

'Easter Treat' – nine nights for the price of seven **Thurs 29 March to Sat 7 April** or **Sat 7 April to Mon 16 April** – prices from £335.00.
'Pre-Easter' (Sat 31 March to **Thurs 5 April**) and **'Post-Easter'** (Tues10th to Sat 14 April) breaks from £255.00
'Easter Mini Break' (Thurs 5 April – Tuesday 10 April) priced from £295.00.
 For more information **www.chesilholidays.co.uk**
01305 773 233
 Can be booked with just a £60 deposit.

March 2012

The AA winners of the Campsite of the Year for Britain and Ireland

The AA has announced the winners of the **Campsite of the Year Awards for Britain and Ireland** to coincide with the launch of the **AA Caravan and Camping Britain and Ireland Guide 2012**. **AA Best Campsite of the Year** England and Overall Winner – **Ross Park**, Newton Abbot, Devon

Details of all the award-winning sites can be found in the new **AA Caravan and Camping Britain and Ireland Guide 2012**. The guide features over 900 annually inspected and rated sites giving details of location, **AA Pennant rating****, contact details, prices, opening times and a description as well as local information.

David Hanecek, editor of the guide, commented, "I wish to congratulate all our winners who have been awarded in recognition of exceptional quality and attention to detail across their parks and who are included in a feature in the **AA Caravan & Camping Britain and Ireland Guide 2012**. The guide also lists local attractions under each location, nearby pubs and restaurants under each site entry. 'Best For' lists to help campers find stunning

views or the best parks to go Glamping, the name for posh camping, as well as colourful, fully updated introductions to key destination counties, and a section containing 20 new walks and cycle rides."

The guide also carries a selection of interesting and informative features on subjects ranging from a weekend in a classic VV Camper Van', 'A look at camping technology' and 'A day in the life of a campsite inspector'.

The **AA** also offers the **AA Camping Card Scheme** for 2012. With the **AA Camping Card**, users will qualify for reduced rates at participating sites. Card holders will simply need to state that they are using an **AA Camping Card** when they phone to book a site and show the card on arrival. The types of discounts vary from site to site, details of which will be given when contacting the site. An **AA Camping Card** is included in every **AA Caravan and Camping Britain and Ireland Guide 2012**.

AA Caravan and Camping Britain and Ireland Guide 2012 is available from **theAA.com/shop** for £9.99.

Ahhh ...The Easter holidays are coming at last!

What could be better than heading for the coast for a well earned break?

Haven Parks, dotted all around the coastline, have just opened and are all set to welcome families for some Easter Fun. All the family can join the **Wildlife Detectives** on a Spring walk with a difference, as they go in search of the **Easter Bunny**.

In the kids clubs they will make Easter bonnets and later join the characters in the parade. **Jamie Thomson** from **Haven's** entertainment team says "we know everyone loves all the traditional aspects of Easter, it's expected, but we also like to offer something a little different at **Haven**. This year we're showcasing **Streetball Extreme**, the best of urban talent in the UK including breakdancers, street dancers and free style tricksters – you can see them on mid week breaks at all parks."

The very first **Haven's Talented Seaside** competition will take place during the Easter holidays too. So members of families can come along and sing a song, dance their socks off or captivate fellow guests with magician's skills. The favourite acts will be entered into the fantastic

prize draw to win a VIP weekend for the family in London or £1000 cash prize so make sure they take time along their props, costume or instrument!

Evening entertainment includes performances from **Same Difference**, **Ray Lewis** from **The Drifters**, **Sonya, Stavros** and **Bucks Fizz** featuring **Bobby G**.

At **Haven** they know that every family is different, some like to explore the local area, some build sandcastles, some are sporty and like to try out new things. Whatever They have it.

Easter Breaks start from just £149 for a 3 night break in standard accommodation sleeping up to six people at selected **Haven Parks** during the Easter holidays. The price also includes the entertainment, use of heated indoor pools (many with slides and flumes), sports activities and kids clubs.

Click on **www.haven.com/easter** or call **0871 230 1900**
 23 parks have touring and camping areas.
www.haventouring.com
 or call **0871 230 1933**

Family Holidays Fun for all the Family

Canvas Holidays FamilyExtra activities have been added to the phenomenal activity programme for **Canvas**.

Swimming and sunbathing are typically things you associate with going on holiday. This year **Canvas**, alongside specialist outdoor activities company, **In2Action**, introduce new activities, including **Bodyzorb**, **Balanceability** and **Mini Fence** to the **FamilyExtra** programme to a selection of sites across Europe.

Body Zorbing
 Have a go at one of the latest extreme sports! If you've ever fancied stepping into a gigantic plastic ball and rolling around at high speed then **Body Zorbing** is the one for you. Kids can play a variety of games from inside the bodyzorb, including **Bodyzorb Football**, **Bodyzorb Rugby** and **Bodyzorb Battle**.

Mini-Fence
 Capture the children's imaginations with fencing. Teaching them discipline, control and hand eye coordination, the fencing system has been developed with the assistance of the **British Fencing Association (BFA)**, making it accessible for young children. Brightly coloured weapons and masks

will charm the children and the session offers a practical exercise solution, as well as a springboard to get involved with this fantastic sport.

Cool Detectives / CSI
 These spy-themed sessions can fit any age group. Bring out the detective in the kids by letting them learn how to solve a crime using available evidence. The children will be told about a 'crime' that has taken place within the camp and will then be able to follow a trail of clues around the holiday village, which will include footprints and clothing items.

Handball
 Sessions available on all **FamilyExtra** and **Hoopi's Club** (the **Canvas Holidays** children's club) camps. The whole family can get involved in sport which will feature in this year's **London Olympics**.

Balanceability
 A learn to cycle programme for children aged 2 ½ to 6 years old. These sessions help develop confidence, spatial awareness, dynamic balance and the skills to ride a bike without stabilisers. Check campsites for activity availability and age groups. For more information on **Canvas Holidays** see **www.canvasholidays.co.uk** or call **0845 268 0857**

Blowing the Whistle on the General Dental Council.

Traditional train tracks create flat faces, big noses and tired looking eyes: if you doubt this, just look at those who have been treated in the past. They also routinely damage the enamel and roots of the teeth and worse still the teeth go crooked again unless the patient wears a brace for the rest of their life. Extractions of sound teeth are almost always required although patients may not be told about this until near the end of treatment. Newer treatments can achieve better and more permanent results without extractions but orthodontists avoid comparative research as they don't want the damage they do to faces to be exposed.

Worst of all the General Dental Council allows orthodontists to withhold information about some newer methods. This leaves many patients accepting extractions and even major surgery unaware that improved techniques can render them unnecessary. If you have suffered you are entitled to compensation.

There is another way.

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Penshurst Place & Gardens to become a Seven Wonder of the Weald

The Seven Wonders of the Weald are delighted to announce that **Penshurst Place & Gardens** has accepted an invitation to join the **Seven Wonders of the Weald** tourism partnership.

Ben Thomas, General Manager of **Penshurst Place Estate** said "We are really pleased to be joining this unique partnership. It is a good fit for **Penshurst Place** and a clever brand presence for this stunning area of the country and we look forward to working with our new partners."

Peter D'Aguilar of Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest, a member of the **Seven Wonders** partnership for 7 years said, "It is really good to have **Penshurst Place & Gardens** in the **Seven Wonders of the Weald Partnership**. They will fit well with our offer to visitors in the area and to those we are trying to attract in."

Penshurst Place & Gardens joins other Kent and Sussex attractions in the group: **Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest**, **Marle Place Gardens & Gallery**, **Biddenden Vineyards**, **Merriments Gardens**, **West Sussex Railway**, **Chiddingstone Castle & Gardens**.

Penshurst Place & Gardens will be



part of the new 2012 attraction pass offer which gives one free entry to all the attractions for just £25. (a saving of £25 on admission after purchasing a pass). The 2012 attraction pass is available to purchase online via the **Seven Wonders website** www.sevenwonders.or.uk and also from **Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest**, **Merriments Gardens**, **Biddenden Vineyards and from the Maidstone, Ashford and Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centres**.

A new 2012 brochure with information about all the **Seven Wonders** has been produced and will be available to pick up at various tourist points. For an early copy visit any of the **Seven Wonders of the Weald** attractions or visit the **Tourist Information Centres** at **Tunbridge Wells** or **Maidstone**.

Penshurst Place & Gardens is set in the beautiful **Weald of Kent** and has stood on the banks of the river **Medway**

since the 14th century, when the awe-inspiring medieval **Baron's Hall** was built as a country retreat for the four times **Lord Mayor of London**, **Sir John de Putney**. The property was owned by many **Dukes and Nobles** with **Royal blood** in their veins, until **King Henry VIII** forfeited it from the previous owner, the **Duke of Buckingham** in 1521. It was then used by **Henry** and his friends as a hunting lodge.

In 1552 the property was gifted by **Edward VI** to a member of the noble **courier family**, the **Sidneys**, in whose family's hands it has been ever since – and is currently owned by **Philip Sidney, 2nd Viscount De L'Isle MBE**, Her Majesty's **Lord Lieutenant of Kent**. **Penshurst Place** has a unique place in history

To find out more about all the **Seven Wonders of the Weald** and their tourism partners visit www.sevenwonders.org.uk

Visit Kent

Dickens World, Chatham www.dickensworld.co.uk

Leeds Castle, www.leedscastle.com

Hever Castle, www.hevercastle.co.uk
The Hop Farm, Tonbridge www.thehopfarm.co.uk

The Historic Dockyard, Chatham www.thedockyard.co.uk

Kent Life, Maidstone www.kentlife.org.uk

Winter Gardens Margate, www.gsek2012.co.uk

Dover Castle, www.english-heritage.org.uk
Powell Cotton Museum, Quex Park, Birchington www.raexmuseum.org

Canterbury Westgate Towers and City Gaol, www.canterburywestgatetowers.com

Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest, Goudhurst (all year around) www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

Rare Breeds Centre, Woodchurch www.rarebreeds.org.uk

Mulberry Cottages, www.mulberrycottages.com

Chartwell, Westerham www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst www.nationaltrust.org.uk

For further information on events in Kent go to www.visitkent.co.uk

Full steam ahead for Train Walk

This summer, **The National Autistic Society (NAS)** is welcoming you aboard the **'Train Walk'**, the family-friendly **Thomas & Friends™** themed sponsored walks in aid of autism. **Train Walk 2012** is a chance for friends, family, neighbours and kids to make a train-like formation as they embark on sponsored walks all across the UK. Together, the train walkers will be celebrating half a century of progress towards a better life for people with autism, as the **NAS** turns 50 this year!

Train Walks are a great day out and you can organise your very own walk to cover any distance you choose and to suit the ages and abilities of those taking part. They have lots of fun ideas and materials to help give your walk a real **Thomas & Friends** feel too.

Rebecca Bohling, Head of Supporter Fundraising at the **NAS**, said: "Train Walks are a fun way to rally together friends and neighbours, while raising vital funds for people affected by autism. Over the past three years, hundreds of people have made a difference by jumping on board **Train Walks** in their local parks, villages and other sites across the UK. As the UK's leading charity for people affected by autism, **The National Autistic Society** wants a world where all people living with autism get to lead the life they choose. By taking part in **Train Walk 2012**, you can help us celebrate 50 years

of progress and join us on the road to making that vision a reality."

Thomas & Friends has long held a special meaning for children with autism and their families and **HIT Entertainment**, which owns **Thomas & Friends**, has been supporting the **NAS** since 2001. Since the **Thomas & Friends Train Walks** began in 2009, and has raised nearly £100,000 for people with autism and their families.

The **NAS** is the UK's leading charity for people affected by autism and, over the past 50 years, has developed an enormous range of education, support, care, respite, information and advice services for people affected by autism. They rely on donations and fundraising to continue to provide support that the half a million people in the UK affected by autism and their families need.

Organising a **Thomas & Friends Train Walk** couldn't be easier. Simply register online at www.trainwalk.org.uk and the **NAS** will be on-hand with tips, information and goodies to make your walk memorable. If you are keen to get involved but would rather not organise your own walk, you can find out about any events taking place near you www.visitkent.co.uk.

Little Tikes Gives Toddlers Their Very Own First Slide! The **Little Tikes First Slide** provides toddlers with a chance to get active and adventurous all year round, while for parents, this quality piece of play equipment is fantastic value for money at just £29.99! Ideal for both indoor and outdoor play, the **First Slide** guarantees giggles and endless fun. Designed especially for little ones aged 18 months plus, the slide is extra stable and has high hand rails, so 'beginners' will find it easy and comfortable to navigate, becoming slide aficionados in no time! Minimal assembly is needed and the slide can be stored easily. Parents can choose from two fun colourways – pink/purple or blue/green.

For stockist details, call **Little Tikes** on **01908 268480** www.littletikes.co.uk



Merlin's Dragon' spreads its wings at Spotlites at Kings Theatre!

'**Merlin's Dragon**' is spearheading **Spotlites** at **Kings Theatre's** 2012 Spring season, which brings interactive fun for all the family to enjoy. This February tour brings an array of **Spotlites'** unique interactive plays and drama workshops, including **'Peter Pan on Dinosaur Island'**, **'Rapunzel – May the Force be with you!'**, **'Magic Porridge Pot'** and **'The Enormous Turnip'**. Running until April, **'Merlin's Dragon'** tells the story of Merlin's quest to defeat the evil Sorceress, Nimue, the Lady of the Lake. On his journey, he is aided by an ancient and wise Dragon, a no-nonsense Princess and the White Knight, Sir Lancelot. Can they overcome the Lady of the Lake before she floods Avalon forever? Children join in throughout this interactive production for 5-12 year olds! Shoot fireballs with the Dragon! Joust with Sir Lancelot, the White Knight! Vanquish evil knights with real battles! Kids come onstage throughout in these acclaimed productions and can: hunt Pirates with the T-Rex! Defend Rapunzel's tower with a real lightsabre! Ambush Pirates with real swords! There is something for the

little 'uns as well in the form of **Spotlites'** two sell-out interactive hits for 2-5 year olds: **'Magic Porridge Pot'** and **'The Enormous Turnip'**. In an intimate venue played in the round, families are invited on an enchanting adventure, tailor made for toddlers and small children. The little 'uns come onstage and join in throughout both these plays! 'A great introduction to theatre' *Herald on 'Magic Porridge Pot'* 'So perfect' *ThreeWeeks on 'The Enormous Turnip'* Also, don't miss **'Spotlites'** Drama Workshops for 5-12s! You drop your children off and they do the workshop on their own. Each workshop costs £5. 'Wow-tastic' *Theatre Therapy Guide* They have workshops on these themes: lightsabres ready in **'Star Wars: Jedi Knight Academy'**; save **Far Far Away** from **Prince Charming** in **'Shrek'**; **Sonic Screwdrivers** at the ready in **'Doctor Who'**; outwit **Miss Trunchbull** and escape **Bonecrusher** in **'Road Dahl's Matilda & BFG'** and face **Wizards and Werewolves** in **'Wizards of Waverly Place'**

Book online at www.spotlites.co.uk **01634 829468**

Hundreds expected for Maidstone's Sport Relief Mile

Runners of all abilities are expected to turn out at the event in Mote Park on **Sunday, March 25**. The last event, held in 2010, saw more than 850 people take part raising more than £28,500 for the cause. This year, the run, organised by **Maidstone Borough Council**, is expecting to see in excess of 1,000 runners come along and take part in one of three distances. For fun runners or professionals, adults and children there is a six mile, three mile or one mile offering. The six mile starts at 10.30am, three mile at 10.45am and the one mile kicks off at 12.30pm. All races are starting from the lake area. To enter visit the Sport Relief website at <http://my.sportrelief.com/search/event/result?id=878&location=maidstone> Throughout the day there will also be a family area with face painters and a bouncy castle. Join the **Health Passport scheme**. Benefit from tips, help and motivation to be healthier. So sign up today to get top tips and support to keep you on track with your new year's resolution - www.healthyclub.nhs.uk

Swallows And Amazons Brings Easter Fun To The Marlowe Theatre

The brand-new **Marlowe Theatre** in Canterbury will be entertaining young audiences over the Easter holidays with a brilliantly entertaining new musical version of the classic children's book **Swallows And Amazons**. **Swallows and Amazons** tells the story of four children who set off on a boat for a very special adventure to the magical **Wildcat Island** – meeting some dastardly pirates along the way!

Running between **Tuesday 3 and Saturday 7 April**, this action packed musical adventure has been created by the director of the smash-hit play **War Horse**. The perfect Easter treat for those aged 6yrs and above, tickets are available from only £10 and under 16yrs go half price.

Tickets can be booked on **01227 787787** or via www.marlowetheatre.com



Square Mile Community Gospel Choir

Community Gospel Choir at **The Salvation Army**, 74-80 Union Street, Maidstone ME14 1ED. Rehearsals are held fortnightly on Sunday afternoons.

The rehearsal dates for are: **4 March, 18 March 01 April, 15 April & 29 April**, from 4-5pm. The choir is open to anyone – all ages over 8. This is a great opportunity for whole families to come and enjoy singing together and to meet new people. Tea/coffee will be provided at the end of each rehearsal. For further details, please phone the Church Office on **01622 681808**

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Dover Larkfield Leisure Centre Aylesford 01622 713225 Soft play zone with 3 storeys of interactive play equipment for under 10's with wavy waterfall slide, ball cannons, New Kickstart all inclusive membership with unlimited access which offers a wide range of activities for under 10's with swimming, soft play, junior dance mat & target wall sessions, selected holiday programme activities, Saturday Fun Club plus pre-school bounce and adventure time sessions for 0-5yrs.

Daily Fishbourne Roman Palace Chichester 01243 789829 Guided tours, plus café & picnic area.

Ongoing Dover Leisure Centre 01304 201145 Full range of exercise classes with a modern fitness suite, 2 swimming pools, squash courts & sports hall.

Ongoing Natural History Museum Ice Rink 020 7942 5000 Attracting beginners & advanced skaters alike plus a café bar serving food plus hot & cold drinks. Also on offer a children's rink & a fairground carousel & lots more.

Every Mon Tunbridge Wells Library 01892 522252 Storytime, 11-11.30am, **FREE**. **Every Wed Heaven at Nutfield** 19 High Street www.nutfield.com. Smiley Faces music group for babies & toddlers for up to 2yrs & 2-4yrs, there is also a playroom for under 5's, a café & a crèche.

Every Thurs White Oak Leisure Centre Swanley 01322 662188 Under 16's Roller Disco.

Every Sat Meadow Little Theatre Rochester 07939 921041 Youth Company for 12-18yrs & children's workshop, 7-12yrs.

Every Sat Blue Elephant Theatre Camberwell 020 7701 0100 Young People's Theatre workshops, various age groups 7-18yrs, **FREE** to join.

Every weekend Rich Mix Bethnal Green 020 7613 7498 Kids' Cine Time a collection of films suitable for all the family

Every weekend Temple Station 020 7222 1234 Harry Potter Locations Tour, 2 ½ hrs.

Every weekend Greenwich ClocktowerMarket Greenwich High Road Quirky weekend market has 50 stalls specialising in vintage, retro & antiques with a few contemporary craft stalls, **FREE** entry, www.clocktowermarket.co.uk

Until 2 Mar Great Ormond Street Hospital Peter Pan Week, throughout the week schools are encouraged to transform their classrooms into Neverland & get pupils involved in all kinds of exciting Peter Pan themed activities such as dressing up as their favourite character from the story. The charity hopes to raise £62,235 from the week to fund patients at Great Ormond St hospital which enables a parent to sleep next to their child or stay nearby. To register www.peterpanweek.co.uk.

Until 4 Mar Design Museum Shad Thames London 0870 833 9955 Terence Conran The Way We Live Now exhibition, 9-18 Mar Product Fitness 80 pop up exhibition & talk.

Until 4 Mar Museum of Childhood Bethnal Green 020 8983 5200 Magic Worlds exhibition, **FREE**. 31 Mar-9 Sept Beautiful Games New Exhibition, **FREE**. Daily Family Backpacks for under 5's containing a train map, storybooks, play mats & question sheets, **FREE**.

Until 10 Apr Science Museum Exhibition Rd London 0870 870 4868 Me in 3D visitors can have their photograph taken in 3D & explore what they look like in another dimension. Every weekend Up, Up and Away interactive storytelling for under 7's, **FREE**. Daily Launchpad Science Shows interactive gallery which will allow visitors to launch a rocket, turn their head into a sound box & control a magnetic cloud for families, **FREE**. Daily Family Tours, families 13+yrs, **FREE**. Ongoing Flyzone take control in 360 degrees flight simulators or fly with the Red Arrows in their sensational 3D motion effects theatre. Every weekend Icy Cool Adventure families, under 7's, **FREE**. Every Weekend Spaced Out, families, 5+yrs, **FREE**. Every weekend A Cockroach Tour, **FREE**.

Until 15 July Tate Britain Millbank London 020 7887 8888 Picasso & Modern British Art exhibition. Every weekend Art Trolley sessions encourages children to imagine & create collages & lots more, **FREE**. Daily Family Resources provides questions & activities which encourage children & families to explore art works, **FREE**. Daily Family Trails, under 5's, **FREE**.

Until 31 Mar Write a Story for Children Competition Entries may either be short stories of up to 2000 words or the opening 2000 words of a longer story or a novel, entry form plus details from www.childrens-writers.co.uk or from Write a Story for Children Competition, Academy of Children's Writers, PO Box 95, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 5RL on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. 1st prize will be a cheque for £2,000 with 2nd

& 3rd prizes of £300 & £200 respectively.

Until end of Mar London Imax Cinema South Bank Waterloo 020 7928 3535 Dickens on Screen will explore how the work of one of Britain's best loved storytellers has been adapted & interpreted for the big & small screens. **Until June 12 The River & Rowing Museum** Mills Meadows Henley on Thames 01491 415600 Rocking the Boat – the story of Women's Rowing.

1 Mar Orchard Theatre Dartford 01322 220000 Celtic Feet. 13 Mar Back to Broadway musical. 13 Mar That'll Be The Day. 23-24 Mar Swan Lake performed by the English Youth Ballet. 25 Mar La Traviata. 1-3 Mar Natural History Museum Cromwell Road London 020 7942 5000 The Ring of Fire talk on earthquakes, volcanoes & tsunamis & why they happen, families, 7+yrs, **FREE**. 3-24 Mar Cutting Edge workshop for families marine invertebrates, handle real specimens, take part in fun group activities & lots more. 3 Mar Ring of Fire talk on earthquakes, volcanoes & tsunamis & why they happen, families, 7+yrs, 3.11.31 Mar Meet Charles Darwin with his collection of beetles & hear about his famous theory for the evolution of all living things for families, all ages, **FREE**. 4.11.18.25 Mar The Bird Table for families activities to help develop your knowledge & understanding of Antarctica's penguins, adaptations & habitats, **FREE**. 4.10 Mar Meet the historical character Mary Anning & find out more about her life & her collection of interesting fossils for all ages. 10.17.31 Mar Animal Vision Show featuring live animals shows there is a world only visible to certain reptiles & invertebrates, families, all ages, **FREE**. 17 Mar Meet the historical character Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist & see his specimens on the 1st floor. 17 Mar Killer Bugs discovery talk for families, all ages. 18 Mar Meet Dorothea Bate gallery character who knows a lot about mammals & birds that lived millions of years

ago, families, all ages, **FREE**. 18 Mar Meet an Antarctic Base Commander, families, all ages, **FREE**. 24 Mar Name Game Talk, pit your wits against a panel of scientists in a special games show & decide who is telling the truth & who is bluffing, families, all ages. 25 Mar Puppets, Gingerbread Man Show interactive show using puppets & storytelling, learn more about natural history & science in a fun way. **Until 31 July** Images of Nature Dinosaur Way exhibition, all ages. Every weekend & school hols Hands on Nature Dinosaurs, visit the handling station & explore interesting specimens with the help of the museums science educators, **FREE** & Up, Up and Away interactive storytelling for under 7's, **FREE**. Daily Family Earth Lab explore the wonder of fossils, rocks & minerals, families, 6+yrs, **FREE**. Explorer backpacks, families under 7's. Dippy Floor puzzle under 7's, **FREE**. Bookasaurus, families under 5's. Jurassic Ark family activity pack includes code breaking activities. Daily Learning Activators encourage visitors of all ages to discover more about the natural world, **FREE**. Daily Focus Points handling trolleys explore real specimens with the help of volunteers, using different natural history themed activities, all ages, **FREE**.

1-3 Mar Theatre Royal Margate 0845 130 1786 How to be a Monster a light hearted examination of teenage angst, a look at fears, friendships, parents, pranks, puppy fat & school. 1 Mar-18 Nov Hever Castle Kent 01732 865224 'A Royal Romance' new exhibition of Anne Boleyn includes a replica of her coronation gown. 2 Mar The Queen's Gallery Buckingham Palace London 020 7766 7301 Antarctic inspiration special event. Daily become an explorer & discover the exhibition with activity bags for families. Using the bags find out which animals the adventurers shared the Antarctic with and what early explorers wore to protect themselves from the cold. 3 Mar Spotlites Kings Theatre 338 High Street Chatham

01634 829468 Open Talent Competition for anyone aged 5-90yrs, it is split into two age groups 5-13s & 14-90's. It is judged by the audience, whoever gets the loudest applause & acts should be under 3mins. 4 Mar Merlin's Dragon, 4 Mar Merlin's Dragon, 29 Mar The Enormous Turnip. 3 Mar Elms Vale 01304 241806 Guided Walk from Elms Vale to West Hougham, 4.5 miles, (2.5hrs) children 7+yrs, dogs on leads welcome. 3 Mar Maidstone Leisure Centre 0845 1552277 The Rat Pack Vegas Spectacular all totally live & every song is an absolute classic. Daily Various times Junior Fitness, 12-15yrs learn how the body works, the benefits of a healthy lifestyle & participate in structured fitness sessions with a qualified fitness instructor. Selected Sats Wave Rave Pool Party sessions with inflatables, floats, games & the latest music. Available Birthday Parties for children leave all the planning & tidying up to the Centre. 3 Mar The Foundling Museum 40 Brunswick Square 020 7841 3600 Explore the exhibition Quentin Blake, as large as life in session aimed at 3-12yrs.

3 Mar Earls Court Exhibition Centre Warwick Road London www.tnttravelshow.com TNT Travel Show extravaganza offers people the chance to source information, tips & advice from a wide range of exhibitors offering everything from day trips & city breaks to extended tours across Africa, Europe, the UK, Asia, USA & beyond for all ages. Admission **FREE** by pre-registration www.tnttravelshow.com. 3 Mar Somerset House Strand 020 7845 4600 Family workshops & for under 5's story, drama & crafting sessions. Marbling Marvels, learn the craft of paper marbling, **FREE**. 10 Mar Parallel Lines, **FREE**. 17 Mar Being Green an exploration & celebration of the colour green, **FREE**. 24 Mar Flower Power, **FREE**. 31 Mar Dreamtime Treasures. Mini Make Believe workshops. 4 Mar Mad March Hares with songs, stories and bouncy hats, 2-5yrs, **FREE**. 3 Mar Museum of London

Docklands No 1 Warehouse West India Quay Hertsmere Road London 020 7001 9844 A whale's tale create a short story book about these mysterious creatures, 5+yrs, **FREE**. 3-4 Mar Margate Beach Cross With two days of racing & spectators are able to watch **FREE** from the Margate promenade. The event also doubles up as the first two rounds of the ATE MCF British Beach Cross.

3-4 Mar Knole Park House & Gardens Sevenoaks 01732 462100 Designs for the Garden students from the University of Greenwich present their conservation plans for the private garden. 16 Mar Meet the Conservation Team with talks & demonstrations. 24 Mar Walk from Knole to Emmetts Garden & back, approx 14miles. 3.10.11.17.18.24.25.31 Mar The Royal Observatory Greenwich 020 8858 4422 Daytime Sky Watch: Venus take a look through the Observatory's enormous 28 inch telescope at the planet Venus as it approaches its greatest apparent distance from the Sun on 30 March, 7+yrs. 31 Mar Saturday Space Explorers drop in family workshops offering something new to make & take away each month to help you learn more about astronomy including star charts, planet finders & much more, 3+yrs, **FREE**. 4.11.18.25 Mar Discover Sundays explore your personal connections to the sea, all ages, **FREE**. 6.13.20.27 Mar Play Tuesdays young children can have fun with their families as they explore the museum

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Learning Together

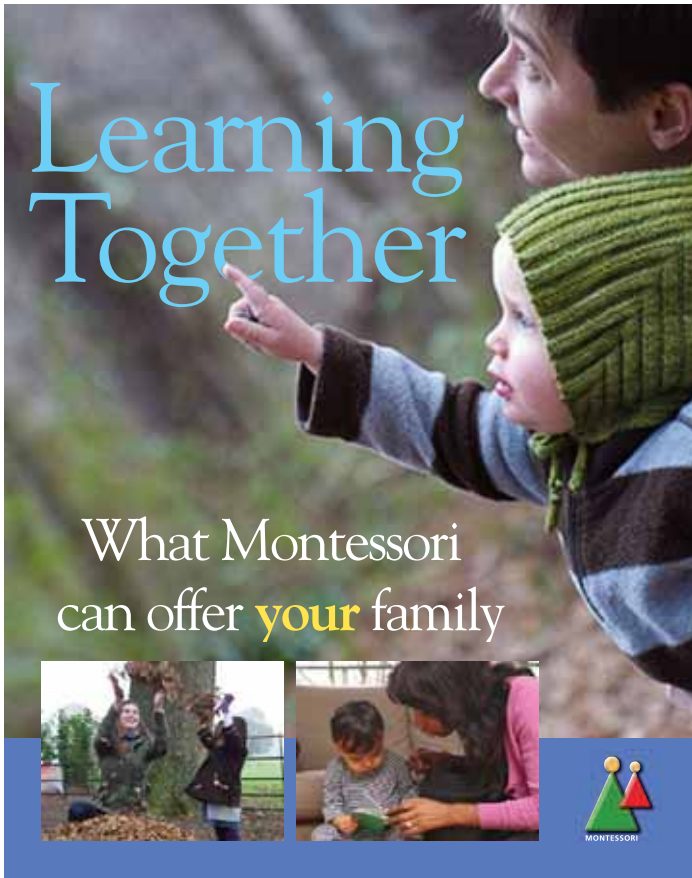
New book available **March 12** *Montessori St Nicholas*, the UK's largest Montessori charity announces the publication of a new parenting book: **Building Strong Foundations: What Montessori can offer your family**. The book takes a fresh look at family life to help parents put the child at the heart of the home and unlock their amazing potential. Packed with ideas and advice, it is relevant to parents of young children from birth onwards.

Better parenting starts from birth and is central to the life chances of every child. The book starts out exploring the heart of a baby's life as a time of extraordinary growth and development. It stresses the key roles played by attachment, movement and communication.

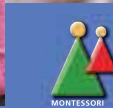
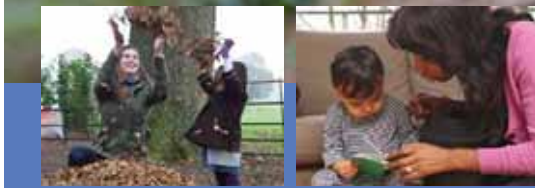
It explains what the *Montessori* philosophy of "follow the child" means and discusses key elements of the approach which embraces child-led, natural and favorable home environments.

For further information or to pre-order your book, RRP £6.99

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March 2012

Calendar continued from Centre Pages

tips on making your garden more wildlife friendly with simple ideas & guidance. **25 Mar** Bushcraft Experience Day learn essential skills including animal tracking, field signs and animal preparation for cooking, 12+ yrs. **27 Mar** Photography Day with tuition from resident photographer & get exclusive access & special animal feeds to help you get close up shots, 18+ yrs.

11 Mar Kent County Showground Maidstone 01622 630975 Event with loads of stallholders selling all manner of boating, fishing and watersports equipment at bargain prices with stalls inside & out. **FREE** entrance for children.

11 Mar Victoria & Albert Museum - Cromwell Road London 020 7942 2000 Great Exhibition: Dickens & Calypso: a celebration of the bicentenary of Charles Dickens' birth. **16 Mar** Mary Quant: The Best of British Design, special talk. **Daily** Back Packs families can pick up an activity pack filled with jigsaws, stories & games to explore the collection, 4-11 yrs. Activity Cart hands on a Samurai helmet, a silver goblet or an elephant mask to take home, **FREE**, drop in plus Agent Animal bag a sensory activity bag that has been developed for under 5's containing an audio map & fabric cubes, **FREE**.

11 Mar Museum of London 150 London Wall London 020 7001 9844 Edible history, choose your picture, make it your own by adding a personal touch & then turn it into a delicious cupcake, 5+ yrs, **FREE**. **Until 15 Apr** Streets of God exhibition. **Until 10 June** dickens & London exhibition.

13,17 Mar Gulbenkian Theatre Canterbury 01227 769075 Kent Dance Annual Show with tap, jazz, ballet, hip hop, Bollywood, Irish, street dancing & lots more performed by University of Kent dance society students. **17 Mar** Chantabek Comedy Club's Kids' Hour a stand up show especially for kids.

14 Mar Leas Cliff Hall The Leas Folkestone 01303 244706 McFly. **15-17 Mar Playhouse Theatre Whitstable** 01227 272042 Into The Woods musical theatre. **17 Mar Dover Museum** Market Square 01304 201066 Family Day, Board Games as part of their 'Our Childhood Past' exhibition adults & children alike can design & make their own board game, drop in 10-4pm, **FREE**.

17 Mar Cuxton Community Junior School Rochester 01634 718532 Alternate Shadows, pantomime The Beauty Sleeping. **17 Mar St Peter's Village Tour** Margate 0754 6514948 English Tourism Week an indoor

preview & a 1hr sample of the tours, **FREE**, booking essential www.villagegarden.co.uk.

17 Mar Kingsdown to Walmer Castle and Back 01304 241806 A pleasant walk along part of the Saxon Shore Way to Walmer Castle returning via Hawkslin Down to Kingsdown, 4 miles, 2hrs, suitable 7+ yrs.

18 Mar Greenwich Park March for Mothers to raise awareness of 340,000 women who die each year in pregnancy & childbirth while also raising funds to help save the lives of mums & babies in some of the world's poorest countries. The march is for everyone & the route is over easy ground ideal for mums with pushchairs & mums-to-be. The 5K walk is suitable for all ages, **Tel: 020 7840 3743**.

17,18 Mar Sea Searcher Boat Trips at Ransgate 07837 562076 Kent Big Day Out, sightseeing trips from 12pm (weather permitting). **24,25,31 Mar** Sea angling 3hr taster trips, rod hire & bait included in the price.

17-18 Mar Churchill War Rooms Clive Steps King Charles Street 020 7930 6961 Britons at War 1938 drop in informal session as visitors are encouraged to consider the fear felt by Britons before war even broke out. As well as discussing the topic with experts, visitors will have the chance to examine genuine objects relating to the topic, suitable all ages.

Ongoing Undercover Life in Churchill's Bunker learn what life & conditions were like underground. **18 Mar Goodnestone Park Gardens** Wingham Nr Canterbury 01304 840107 Open Garden 10-12 acres with good trees, woodland garden, snowdrops, spring bulbs & walled garden with old fashioned roses. Picnics allowed.

18 Mar Folkestone Warren 01303 274806 White Cliffs Walk an afternoon walk to discover the wildlife & history of the dramatic landscape beneath the White Cliffs, distance 4 miles (3hrs), dogs on leads welcome. **18 Mar Canterbury Cathedral** 01227 762862 Come & Sing Event performed by singers from all over Kent, directed by Dr David Flood.

17 Mar Charlton Park Canterbury 01227 831355 Open House & Grounds open a walk in the grounds followed by afternoon tea in the ballroom.

18 Mar Old Royal Naval College Foundation House 2 Cutty Sark Gardens Greenwich 0870 169 0101 Mother's Day Cream tea, the afternoon tea will include a glass of prosecco on arrival, a selection of sandwiches, cakes, tarts, homemade scones with cream & jam, a variety of teas plus an activity pack for children.

March 2012

18 Mar Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park 020 8293 1904 The Trust for Urban Ecology is hosting its 10th National Frog Day with **FREE**, fun, froggy themed activities. These will include pond dipping, storytelling, treasure trails, froggy art, a garden pond workshop & 'Meet the News' sessions. There will also be a bbq, refreshments, book & gift stalls plus raffle, 11-3pm, www.urbanecology.org.uk.

18 Mar St Patrick's Day Parade & Festival www.london.gov.uk/spartrickday/. The parade begins at Piccadilly at 12pm & travels along Piccadilly, Lower Regent Street, Pall Mall East, Trafalgar Sq & Whitehall. There will be the best of Irish music, dance & culture in Trafalgar Sq. There will also be throughout the day **FREE** entertainment to include cello dancing, traditional Irish music, celebrity MCs & Irish speakers to teach you a few Irish phrases. **FREE** family day out.

18 Mar The Drayton Court Function Room Ealing Dusty Does Disco for children & their families. A real disco packed full of entertainment with live DJ, full disco lighting, bubbles, disco tuition plus games. Child friendly venue with baby changing, buggy park, microwave & food available, 3-5pm, tickets www.dustydosedisco.co.uk.

20 Mar The Secret Gardens of Sandwich at the Salutation 01304 619919 3 1/2 acres of ornamental & formal gardens with lake, white, yellow, spring woodland, rose, kitchen, vegetable & herbaceous gardens designed to provide year round colour.

21 Mar Royal National Theatre Upper Ground, South Bank 020-7452 3234 NR Revealed on stage activities exploring design & technical skills & careers. Stage Design & Costume, hair & make up.

24 Mar Old Town Hall Chatham Monica's Vintage Fair selling vintage & retro clothing & accessories plus live music from the 1940's, swing & wartime throughout the day. Refreshments available, **FREE** Miles, a 1,3 & 6 mile run, **Tel: 01622 602718**.

25 Mar Pilgrims Hospice Canterbury 01843 233934 Spring Fair with home made produce, plants, gifts & homeware from local artisans, refreshments, music & an Easter Egg hunt for the children, 12-3pm, **FREE** entry.

24 Mar St Margaret's at Troy Town Rochester 01634 843843 Alternate Shadows, pantomime The Beauty Sleeping. **25 Mar Tisbury Art & Craft Fair** Craft Fair, 11-3pm. **25 Mar Stonewall Park** Open Garden a romantic woodland garden in historic setting featuring species rhododendrons, magnolias, azaleas, a range of interesting trees & shrubs wandering paths & lakes. There is a historic parkland with cypress

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ground, Victorian walled garden with herbaceous borders & vegetable garden, www.nes.org.uk/. **25 Mar New Ash Green Village Hall** Kent Baby & Childrens Market with over 20 stalls offering nearly new & craft goods for babies & children with toys, books, nursery items & much more, doors open 10.30am, entrance **FREE** for children.

27 Mar Canterbury Library 01227 712111 01227 712111 Canterbury Read-a-loud, monthly David Copperfield chat sessions & discover Canterbury connections.

27 Mar The Broadway Theatre Catford 020 8690 0002 All Our Yesterdays a show from the producers of 'Memory Lane', 'Rolling Back the Years' & 'A Timeless Collection'. **28-31 Mar The Brook Theatre** Old Town Hall Chatham 01634 338319 Annie the musical for all ages.

30 Mar-1 Apr Chocolate Festival at Southbank Centre 0844 847 9910 The centre will be transformed into a chocoholic's paradise with over 30 different stalls selling & sampling chocolate in all its forms, from warming hot chocolate to artisan truffles - & even chocolate chilli. A series of **FREE** tutored tastings, talks & demonstrations will be available in the Chocolate Cookery Theatre.

31 Mar White Cliffs, Country Trail 07801 508958 Country Walk through Finglesham & returning via Betteshanger, suitable 7+ yrs, distance 5.25 miles (3hrs).

31 Mar Canterbury Heritage Museum Stour Street 01227 475202 Easter Fun Day, decorate eggs & take part in fun & unusual customs from Britain, Poland & around the world, complete a treasure hunt around the galleries to win a small prize.

31 Mar Thanet Coast Plumming Beach Clean 01843 577672 Beach Clean, starts at the very western end of Minnis Bay going along the 'northern sea wall' beaches. Come & help maintain the beautiful coastline, gloves, sticks & bags provided, 2pm.

31 Mar Pegwell Bay 01843 577672 Beach Clean, meet on beach below hoverport access road near the Viking Ship Picnic Green, gloves, sticks & bags provided, 10-12.30pm. **31 Mar-15 Apr Bembridge Windmill** 01983 873945 Spring Nature Trail. **31 Mar-15 Apr Canterbury Roman Museum** Butchery Lane 01227 785575 Make a Roman writing tablet & stylus to take home, then use it to write your name, date & some Roman compliments & curses in Latin, 3+ yrs.

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