

NEVER MIND THE BOTOX

Media coverage

Index

REGIONAL

Daily Record (Scotland)

Petersfield Post

Life in Petersfield

Doncaster Today

Harpenden Advertiser

Oxford Journal

Oxford Guardian

Yorkshire Post

Cheshire Life

In Cheshire Magazine

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Girls' night in

Get your mates round for an evening of film, music or just fun

ChickLit

Never Mind The Boxtox, Penny Avis and Joanna Berry, Matador, £6.99

FOUR professional women are working on the sale of high-profile cosmetic surgery business the Beau Street Group. Each reveal how they cope with one of the most challenging deals of their careers and its dramatic impact on their personal lives.

The Midwife's Confession, Diane Chamberlain, Mira Books, £7.99

"I DON'T know how to tell you what I did." The unfinished letter is the only clue Tara and Emerson have to the reason behind Noelle's suicide. Everything they knew about Noelle – her calling as a midwife, her passion for causes, her love for her family – described a woman who embraced life. But they didn't know everything.



Liss News

Newsinbrief

Holistic health care meeting at Triangle centre

THE next meeting of the Holistic Healthcare Network will take place at the Triangle centre in Liss on Tuesday, July 12 at 7.30pm.

Guest speaker Olly Herman-Taylor will give a talk entitled "Space Travel is Bad for Your Heart - a Brief Introduction to Heart Rate Variability Analysis."

The talk is recommended to anyone interested in the effects of stress on health, and what can be done about it.

Admission is £2, and new members and guests are always welcome. The HHN, which meets monthly, is a not for profit group open to anyone interested in alternative and complementary medicine.

Summer show forms available

SCHEDULES and entry forms for Liss Horticultural Society's summer show are now available from George Frost on 01730 893877 or Sue Jordan on 01730 893454.

The show will be at the Triangle centre on Saturday, August 13 and the closing date for entries is August 10.

There will be categories for flowers, vegetables, flower arranging, needlecraft, cookery, photography and children's crafts.

'Never Mind the Botox' author to sign copies

by **Graham Langton**
graham.langton@thepost.co.uk

THE PROSPECT of writing a 90,000 word novel then following it up with three more books featuring the same story told from the viewpoint of different characters sounds like a daunting prospect for the most prolific of authors.

But not Penny Avis.

For a start, she's not alone - she is writing the quartet of novels with her best friend, Joanna Berry.

That means that when she sits down at the word processor at her home near Liss, she knows that support will be readily available if ever inspiration fails.

Both friends have drawn on their experience as highly successful career women to create the characters in their novels, which are being published under the collective title of 'Never Mind the Botox'.

Penny describes it as "a bit like 'Sex in the City' in the boardroom."

Joanna spent several years as a high flying solicitor specialising in media and entertainment law and at the age of 31 became one of the



Penny Avis

youngest partners in her legal firm. Among the highlights of Penny's career as an accountant with top city firm Deloitte were being appointed to the UK board of the firm and being named as one of one of the UK's top ten accountants under the age of 35.

Penny and her husband have had a house near Liss for almost six years, and that is where she does most of her writing.

With two young sons aged seven and 11, having a quiet bolt hole is a must when working out the complexities of a story told from the point of view of four female characters - a doctor, a cosmetic surgeon, a corporate financier and an investment banker.

The four are all key players in the tale of a high profile cosmetic surgery business - and 'Never Mind the Botox' examines how they juggle their personal and professional lives.

The first book in the quartet tells the story from the point of view of Alex Fisher, a lawyer who combines her career with planning her perfect wedding to her musician boyfriend.

'Alex' has just been published and will be followed by 'Rachel' in November this year, 'Stella' in summer next year and 'Mereditth' in autumn 2012.

Penny and Joanna began planning the quartet in 2009, and took advice from a professional editor before settling down to write.

Penny said the writing partnership had been rigorously planned. "Both Joanna and I have the discipline of reading and writing really, really carefully.

"Writing a book of 90,000 words

is a big task. But so is working on a 500-page document for a company which wants to float on the Stock Exchange. Both our careers helped us keep the discipline of really getting on with something.

"To begin with, we analysed each other's work very factually.

"When we disagree we try to step back and see things from the other's viewpoint rather than criticise each other. We have had a lot of very active debates, but we have never reached a point where we fell out with each other - and we have also laughed and laughed all the way through."

'Alex' has already been praised by one reviewer, former newspaper editor Eve Pollard, as "a tale of passion, intrigue and business skulduggery, intelligently observed and hugely entertaining."

It has also been well received by Penny's husband. "It's not the sort of thing I'd expect him to like - he's usually more likely to be reading a biography of Churchill - but he absolutely loved it."

'Never Mind the Botox - Alex' is published by Matador at £5.99. Penny will be signing copies at Waterstone's in Petersfield, on Saturday, July 16 from 11am to 2pm.



◀ back ◀ more from the archives...

New novel by Penny Avis from Liss

05/04/2011

Leading London businesswoman Penny Avis, from Liss, has turned her talents to co-authoring a new novel published in June.

Penny has made a successful career in the financial world. Having trained as an accountant, she is now a partner at Deloitte, after surviving the collapse of Arthur Anderson during the Enron crisis. She also has a balanced home life, complete with marriage and children.

Her book, the first of four about professional women at a cosmetic surgery business, is called *Never Mind the Botox: Alex*. The plot follows Alex Fisher, a high-flying lawyer through her struggles; planning her engagement, dealing with threats to expose dodgy surgery and trying not to flirt with the hot junior lawyer.

Her fellow author is Joanna Berry, an Oxford Graduate who qualified as a solicitor and became a partner at Eversheds.



You can buy the book (published in paperback by Matador, price £6.99) at: WHSmith - <http://www.whsmith.co.uk/>

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Race for Life sponsor money

DONCASTER women turned out in their thousands to take part in Cancer Research UK's Race for Life and now organisers are encouraging people to return sponsor money as soon as possible.

Olivia Mollitor, Doncaster event manager said: "We are so grateful to everyone who took part and now we are asking our supporters to take one last step by returning the money."

Return money at www.raceforlife.org on 0871 641 1111 or send a cheque, to Cancer Research UK, to Race for Life, PO Box 442, Northampton, NN3 6UU.

MP supports a family charity

A DONCASTER MP celebrated Volunteers' Week by being made patron of a family support charity.

Rosie Winteron, Doncaster Central MP, took up the role at a meeting to highlight the work done by Home-Start.

The charity recruits and trains volunteers to offer emotional and practical support to families struggling to cope with isolation, multiple births, lone parenting, illness or disability.

Miss Winteron said anyone interested in volunteering should contact Home-Start Doncaster on 01302 348856.

Authors host book signing

THE authors of a series of books about professional women working in the cosmetic surgery industry are coming to Doncaster for a signing.

Never Mind the Botox is a four book series, of which Alex is the first, about four professional women all working on the sale of high profile cosmetic surgery business the Beau Street Group.

Co-authors Penny Avls and Joanna Berry will be signing copies of the book at Waterstone's in the Frenchgate Centre on Saturday, July 16, between 11am and 2pm.



PARTY TIME: Ridgewood School's year 11 prom at Castle Park rugby ground (l-r) are Annabelle Westney, Nick Gaughan, Abi Taylor, Dom Ryall, Gemma Roper, all 16, Joe Yorke, 15, Danielle Taylor, and Kieran Greening, both 16. Picture: Liz Mockler D9421LM

A fairytale ending for threatened prom

IT was a case of Cinderella shall go the ball thanks to parents who stepped in to salvage their children's leaving party after strike action threatened it.

Dressed in their finest pupils at Ridgewood School partied the night away after determined parents and governors rallied

round to make sure the event went ahead for 250 year 11 pupils.

The excited party goers had initially been told that strike action would mean their leavers' day would have to be cancelled after many had already spent hundreds of pounds on outfits.

The Free Press will be running supplements in the July 14 and 21 editions of photographs from school proms from across the area. You can also submit your own proms pictures by emailing photographs to synphotographic@doncastertoday.co.uk with full names, ages and name of school.

OAP is pinned down and robbed in her own home

Police warn residents to be vigilant after four raids in town

A 90-YEAR-OLD woman was injured after a man posing as a water board representative stole cash from her home during a robbery.

by **Kate Mason**
editorial@doncasterfreepress.co.uk
board worker.

The pensioner answered the door but refused entry to the man who then grabbed the

stifle and are appealing to the local community for information.

"If anyone can remember seeing anything suspicious, or any men acting suspiciously in the area or if they also

An 89-year-old man also had cash stolen from his home in Nutwell Lane, Old Cantley, on June 15, after a conman posed as a gardener.

The other two incidents that happened at the begin-

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Missing boy turns up safe



ST ALBANS: A 13 year old boy who had been missing for more than a month has been found safe and well.

Callum Whish was reported missing on December 3 but was found in the St Albans area on Friday evening.

Herts police have thanked members of the public and the media for their support.

Hunt for church burglary suspect

ST ALBANS: Police are hunting a man wanted in connection with a burglary at a church in Bricket Wood.

Officers would like to speak to 34-year-old Gary Gibson, from Marshall Avenue, St Albans, in relation to the burglary at St Luke's Church, South Riding.

Two safes were taken from the church and later recovered in woodland around Black Boy Wood between 7pm last Thursday, January 5, and 7.55am the following days.

Anyone who believes they have seen Gary, or knows of his whereabouts, is asked to contact Herts Police via the non-emergency number 101. Alternatively, call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



Paralympic hopeful gives inspirational lesson to students



PARALYMPIC hopeful Emma Wiggs outlined and demonstrated the skills and rules of sitting volleyball when she spoke to students of three Harpenden secondary schools.

Emma, who was an able-bodied county hockey player with a passion for sport before contracting a virus which affected her neurological system, spoke about her long battle to come out the other side as a disabled performer.

Talking to an invited audience of Gifted and Talented students from Roundwood Park, Sir John Lawes and St George's School, she also spoke about the sacrifices she had made in order to pursue her Paralympic dream.

Emma works as a PE teacher at a school in Bognor Regis and has dedicated her time to training in preparation for the 2012 Paralympics.

The visit was funded by the Roundwood Park School Sports Partnership and school games manager, Dan Klinger, said: "I am delighted to have been able to provide the opportunity for many local students to participate in a Paralympic sport and in many cases try something new."

Mr Klinger added: "Emma is a true inspiration and we wish her every success in the run up to the Paralympic games."

St Nicholas Rector is set to take new post

Madeleine Burton

mburton@hertsad.co.uk

ELEVEN years after being appointed Rector of St Nicholas Church, Harpenden, the Rev Christopher Futcher is leaving to become Archdeacon of Exeter.

His new appointment has been welcomed by, among others, the Bishop of St Albans, The Rt Rev Alan Smith, who, described him as a fine parish priest who cared deeply for his flock.

Christopher first heard a call to ordination when he was 16 and read theology at Edinburgh University before ministerial training at Westcott House in Cambridge.

He was ordained in the St Albans diocese in 1982 and has spent his whole ministry to date in the diocese.

He has been particularly involved in work supporting and training clergy and has also served in an ecumenical parish and as a diocesan ecumenical officer.

Christopher is married to Anne, who is licensed as a Reader, and the couple have two grown-up children.

The Bishop said the diocese was



The Rev Christopher Futcher and his wife Anne

sorry to be losing Anne as well but wished them both many blessings in their life in Exeter.

He added: "His ministry will long be remembered here by the people of Harpenden and beyond."

Linzi James, former churchwarden of St Nicholas who has known Christopher throughout his ministry, said: "He has nurtured the people of St Nicholas

to achieve many things in his 11 years 'at the helm'.

"While I am extremely sorry to lose his ministry here in Harpenden I am very happy for the people of Exeter Diocese who will benefit from his wisdom and experience."

Christopher will take up his new post as Archdeacon of Exeter after Easter.

Full steam ahead for Olympics

A POPULAR model railway exhibition will have an Olympic theme running through it when it opens later this month.

The Brambleton Model Railway Club Exhibition will pay tribute to London 2012 with layouts representing Team GB and others showcasing the countries of Switzerland, Japan, Slovenia, Germany and Ireland as well as many more.

The event on Saturday, January 21, at Harpenden Public Halls will feature 14 model railway layouts, belonging to individuals or model railway clubs from all over the region. A number of retail outlets will offer support, providing ready-to-run trains, spares and other items of interest to enthusiasts.

The club began back in 1947 as an unofficial boys club, before becoming the model railway club in 1956.

For many years the core membership was made up of youngsters between 10 and 18. Today it still has younger members and actively encourages any young people who want to get involved.

Brambleton and the 16mm Group based in West Herts will be looking to invite new members to join them during this year's show.

To find out more about the show which runs from at 10.30am-5.30pm and costs £3.50 for adults and £2.50 for children and senior citizens, visit www.brambleton.co.uk or call Harvey Foster on 01763 261250.

Harpenden author publishes sequel

FORMER Harpenden school pupil Penny Avis is publishing her second book this month, part of a fictional series based on professional women working on the sale of a high profile cosmetic surgery business.

Never Mind the Botox: Rachel, co-authored with lawyer Joanna Berry, is based on Penny's own experience of working as an accountant at Deloitte.

Rachel is the second of the four-book *Never Mind the Botox* series, and will be released by publisher Matador on January 16.

The writers have recently signed

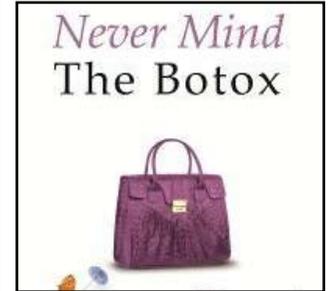


Authors Joanne Berry and Penny Avis

a joint venture agreement with international film and TV production company Future Films, which hopes to develop *Sex and the City*-style television programmes about the cosmetic surgery industry based on the series.

The main character in their latest book is Rachel Altman, a corporate accountant who is constantly led astray by her lazy bar-diving sports hack boyfriend.

Penny, who is a former pupil of Roundwood Park School, lives in London with her two young children and is currently working on the next book in the series with Joanna.



Flood warning service for village

A NEW flood warning service has been launched, which could give villagers a week's notice if ground-water flooding is likely to occur.

The Environment Agency is inviting people who live in and around Kimpton to speak to its experts on how the new system works.

The event is being held between 11.30am and 4.30pm next Wednesday, January 18, at Kimpton Village Hall, Hall Lane.

A spokesman explained that residents could sign up for the service, which alerts them via text messages about possible flooding.

Kimpton homes and businesses were hit by severe flooding 11

years ago when the River Kym resurfaced from the ground after an unprecedented amount of rainfall.

Water surfaced and rejoined the natural historical route of the river and had to be pumped away. There has been flooding since then.

A flood incident management specialist for the agency, Mandy Sullivan, said: "This type of flooding can really catch people unawares so we are very pleased we can now send messages directly to people to warn them of the risk."

He added: "That notice will give people time to prepare themselves and their properties in order to minimise the effect of the flood waters."

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YOU ARE HERE [THE JOURNAL MEETS...](#) > [THE JOURNAL MEETS... NEVER MIND THE BOTOX: RACHEL AUTHOR JOANNA BERRY](#)

The Journal Meets... Never Mind The Botox: Rachel author Joanna Berry

THURSDAY, 12 JANUARY 2012 13:29 ZOE EFSTATHIOU

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Oxford law graduate Joanna Berry has used all the inside knowledge from her career as an in-demand city lawyer in her second novel, about the personal and professional dilemmas of her fellow high-flyers.

Joanna left St Hilda's College in 1989 and quickly moved up the corporate ladder until she became one of the youngest partners at her firm, aged just 31. But four years ago she decided to take a career break after having her third child and together with co-writer Penny Avis, an accountant also on a career break, decided to throw herself into writing.

Over the next six months the pair wrote enough material for a series of novels, looking at a female professional involved in the sale of a high profile cosmetic surgery business. *Never Mind the Botox: Rachel*, available from Troubador Publishing, goes on general sale on January 16.

"What we are trying to do is slightly different to what most people think of as chick lit, which is generally about shoes, shopping and finding a man," Joanna said. "A lot of chick lit books might mention what these women do at work and what their careers are but they don't really go into it, even though work takes up 60 to 70 per cent of the character's lives.

"What we wanted to do was to write about these women and their working environment. Readers are intelligent and often want to know what people do and have an interest in people's careers. "We wanted the books to give a bit of an insight into what city girls actually do, the interesting, intriguing, gritty aspects of their jobs and the ethical and moral dilemmas they have to face. We wanted to focus on intelligent women having a normal life and juggling their own personal lives with a career.

"I had always had this idea working in the city as a lawyer, you meet so many weird and wonderful people, and I thought if people saw this in a book it would be so bizarre, people wouldn't believe this."

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The Botox*



PENNY AVIS & JOANNA BERRY

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City life under the microscope as chick lit gets serious

OXFORD law graduate Joanna Berry has used all the inside knowledge from her career as an in-demand city lawyer in her second novel, about the personal and professional dilemmas of her fellow high-flyers.

Joanna left St Hilda's College in 1989 and quickly moved up the corporate ladder until she became one of the youngest partners at her firm, aged just 31.

But four years ago she decided

THE OXFORDSHIRE GUARDIAN MEETS... NEVER MIND THE BOTOX: RACHEL AUTHOR JOANNA BERRY
by **Zoe Efstathiou**

to take a career break after having her third child and together with co-writer Penny Avis, an accountant also on a career break, decided to throw herself into writing.

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• Joanna Berry

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dilemmas they have to face. We wanted to focus on intelligent women having a normal life and juggling their own personal lives with a career.

"I had always had this idea working in the city as a lawyer, you meet so many weird and wonderful people, and I thought if people saw this in a book it would be so bizarre, people wouldn't believe this."

Video saved the radio star

IT SEEMS that Oxford bands and musicians are embracing video with increasing fervour. Over the past few months artists like Spring Offensive (springoffensive.co.uk), Black Hats (blackhatmusic.co.uk), Shattered Dreams (myspace.com/shattered-dreams18), Nikki Loy (nikkiloy.com), The Half Rabbits (halfrabbits.co.uk), Robots With Souls (robotswithsouls.com) and The Graceful Slicks (myspace.com/thegraceful-slicks) have all released videos to accompany their music - you can check out them and many more on our YouTube channel at (youtube.com/user/musicinxford/videos).

It's not letting up, either - over the past week alone, indie-poppers Alphabet Backwards (alphabetbackwards.net) have shared a new video to go with their track Big Top.

Instrumental post-rockers Listing Ships (listingships.drupalgardens.com) have also announced a competition inviting creative types to put together a video for their track

WHAT'S ON THE MUSICINOXFORD.CO.UK STEREO THIS WEEK?

by **Simon Minter**

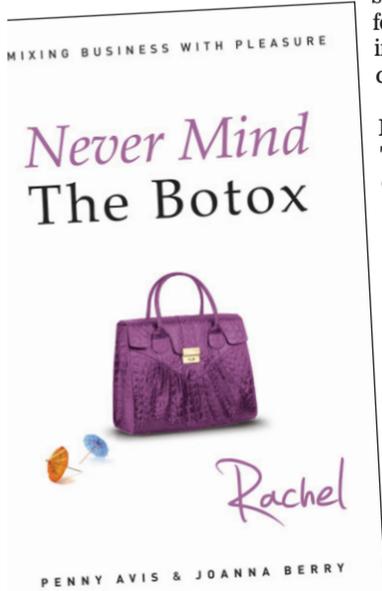
Skipperr's Daughter:

The year has only just begun, so it's good to see that already 2012

is kicking off with lots of activity. The Oxford gig scene is slowly starting to pick up after a Christmas lull, too, with quite a bit lined up in the calendar (musicinxford.co.uk/gig-calendar) over the coming weeks, and local music website Oxford Music Blog has announced their first foray into gig promoting, with a January 21 show featuring Gunning For Tamar (gunningfortamar.co.uk), Listing Ships and more.

Maybe somebody should video it...

Read full reviews of the latest releases, and find out loads more about Oxford bands, music and gigs, at MusicInOxford.co.uk



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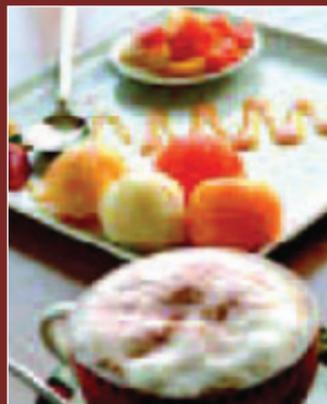
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## Literary duo team up for novels that get under skin of the corporate world

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Joanna Berry and Penny Avis

Published on Friday 17 February 2012 00:00

Friends Joanna Berry and Penny Avis turned away from jobs in big business...to write novels about that very world. **Sheena Hastings** reports.

Desperate to impress her boss in order to gain promotion, Rachel becomes snarled up in a Catch-22 moral situation when she discovers that he is embroiled in an affair with the nurse who's up to her neck in the embezzlement. Meanwhile that no-good boyfriend, Harry, decides to make some cash on the side by plundering the list of names of celebrities having secret breast implants and facelifts and offering the information to a tabloid. Rachel panics and the house of cards comes tumbling down.

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Desperate to impress her boss in order to gain promotion, Rachel becomes snarled up in a Catch-22 moral situation when she discovers that he is embroiled in an affair with the nurse who's up to her neck in the embezzlement. Meanwhile that no-good boyfriend, Harry, decides to make some cash on the side by plundering the list of names of celebrities having secret breast implants and facelifts and offering the information to a tabloid. Rachel panics and the house of cards comes tumbling down.

A good read for the beach or the commute, *Never Mind the Botox* – Rachel has been touted as doing for cosmetic surgery what *Absolutely Fabulous* did for fashion. A nip here, a tuck there, and you could imagine this tale of high heels, sharp suits and afternoon sex hitting the small screen in the same sort of niche as *Mistresses*, say, although it aspires perhaps to follow the impressive Manolo footprints of *Carrie Bradshaw* and her three chums in the late *Sex and the City*.

Few novelists, and even fewer of those who have spent most of their adult lives until recently pursuing an entirely different profession than writing, find their first efforts rewarded with interest from a television production company. But Penny Avis and Joanna Berry have signed a joint venture agreement to develop a series of programmes based on their series of four *Never Mind the Botox* books, of which Rachel is the second. They're coy about the sales of the first book, except to say "we were delighted with how well it did..." Successful enough for international film and TV production company Future Films to see a glittering future for the tales, which centre on a strand of celebrity culture that helps to sell millions of gossip magazines each year.

Jo and Penny, who met "years and years ago" through their then boyfriends (now husbands), found it relatively easy to plunder the world of the law and corporate finance to lend credibility to the quartet of novels which looks at the world of big business through the prism of one deal and the different experiences of four women involved from different angles – including Stella, the cosmetic surgeon who's given to occasional spasms of conscience over doing so much private work, Alex the lawyer and Meredith the banker. Each of the four books views the ongoing cut-and-thrust of the transaction from the point of view of one of the women involved, but the shenanigans amid the double-entry book keeping and legal contracts is balanced by the colourful private lives of the gals who may work long hours but still manage to freight gallons of white wine each week.

Jo, who's from Doncaster and studied at Oxford before working as a solicitor in London and Leeds, moved from Eversheds to Yorkshire Television then Manchester. She left full-time work in the law when pregnant with her second child (she has three), and later went part-time as an in-house lawyer for a chain of care homes. These days she lives in "WAG-land" Wilmslow, Cheshire, and in between novels, school concerts and taxiing the kids, is heavily involved in work for Children in Need.

Penny, a mum-of-two now living in London, studied at Sheffield University, trained as a chartered accountant and by her 30s was a partner at Deloitte. The two women reached a point of "what next?" at around the same time. Over a Sunday lunch they realised they harboured the same desire to take an entirely new direction and have a go at fiction.

"It was funny that we had separately had the same thought and never discussed it until then, although we'd known each other for so long," says Jo. "It seemed natural to create a plot around the kind of world and people we knew – the meetings that go on until 4am, or even days on end, the endless arguments about where full-stops should go... And some of the egos involved, too." Jo says the accountancy and legal press are very taken with the two *Never Mind the Botox* novels so far. Well, how often is a chartered accountant or a corporate lawyer the heroine of a novel?

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