

## **NEVER MIND THE BOTOX**

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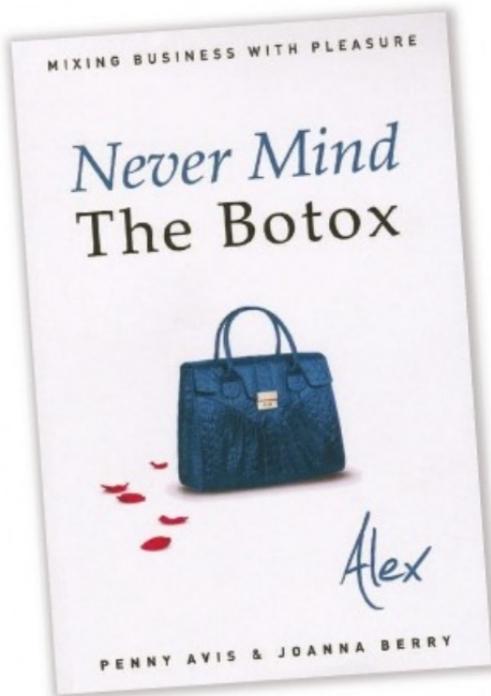
Cheshire Independent

Live Magazine (Cheshire)

Wilmslow Express

# Bookshelf

We flick through some of the latest titles with a Cheshire link



## Never Mind the Botox

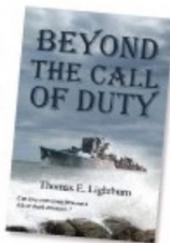
By Penny Avis and Joanna Berry, £6.99, Matador, [www.troubador.co.uk/matador](http://www.troubador.co.uk/matador). Available from June 17th *Never Mind the Botox* is a four book series about four professional women working on the sale of high profile cosmetic surgery business. Each book reveals how the women cope with one of the most glamorous but challenging deals of their careers and the impact it has on their lives. The first book follows Alex Fisher, a high-flying lawyer close to making partner and planning her perfect wedding to musician Elliott.

Co-authors Penny Avis and Joanna Berry wrote the book because they were tired of what they considered to be unrealistic role models in women's contemporary fiction. Joanna, a solicitor who also used to work for Children in Need, is from Cheshire.

## Beyond the Call of Duty

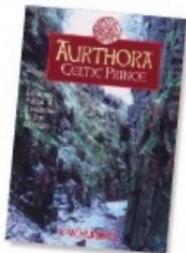
By Thomas E Lightburn, £9.99, Pegasus Elliot MacKenzie Publishers Ltd, [www.pegasuspublishers.com](http://www.pegasuspublishers.com)  
Surgeon Lieutenant Clive Drummond leaves the woman he loves to join HMS Glimmer, which becomes detached from the convoy she is escorting at sea and is confronted with an enemy battleship. This story of love, deceit and courage is based on true events.

Thomas E Lightburn, who now lives in Wallasey, Wirral, served for 22 years in the medical branch of the Royal Navy.



## Aurthora: Celtic Prince

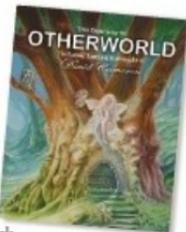
By R W Hughes, £7.99, Troubador, [www.troubador.co.uk](http://www.troubador.co.uk)  
When Congleton author Rod Hughes discovered the remains of a Roman checkpoint in the corner of his field, he was inspired to write this book, his first novel. *Aurthora* is based on a legendary British warrior and takes place in the years immediately after the Romans left Britain leaving it with no leader or army to defend its shores. The book brings this history of England during the Dark Ages to life.



## The Doorway to Otherworld

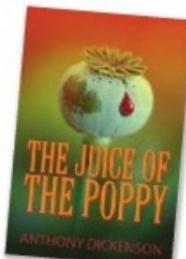
By David Cameron, £30/£25, [www.davidcameronartist.co.uk](http://www.davidcameronartist.co.uk)  
This book delves into the inspiration behind the fantasy paintings David Cameron produces at Blakemere Craft Centre in Sandiway. The artist creates fairy paintings and fantasy art that is inspired by nature and folklore. The book chronicles his work from sketches of animals when he was an eight-year-old to the present day.

The Hartford author and artist moved back to Cheshire from Nottinghamshire five years ago.



## The Juice of the Poppy

By Anthony Dickenson, £8.75, Strategic Book Group, [www.strategicbookgroup.com](http://www.strategicbookgroup.com)  
This action-filled novel tells of the drug trade and corruption in a world where no-one can be trusted. But even in the thick of things, love and romance still manage to flourish. Anthony Dickenson is an osteopath and an acupuncturist from Malpas, Cheshire. His travels and knowledge of the Far East and his concern about illicit drugs form the basis of the book.



May 2011

# INCheshire

ISSUE 55

ALDERLEY EDGE, KNUTSFORD, WILMSLOW AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES

## INTERVIEW

with new  
Wilmslow  
author on a  
4-book deal

Bet you'll enjoy  
KNUTSFORD RACES

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May Fair



Tales of sex, passion and scandal are, perhaps, a dime a dozen on the book shelves. But add the topicality of boob jobs and the driving ambition of a heroine who has more in her head than thoughts of retail therapy and first-time author, Joanna Berry from Wilmslow, might well have a run-away success on her hands. Barry Hook finds-out how she does it.

**JOANNA'S JOURNEY**  
*From corporate lawyer to author. And it looks like being a happy ending.*

"It's not entirely all my own work but I did write it." The words are those of first-time novelist, Joanna Berry.

*Never Mind The Botox* is a series of four books of which Joanna has written the first, subtitled 'Alex', due out next month. Her close friend and co-author, Penny Avis from London, has written the second book (sub-titled Rachel) which will be published in the Autumn. The duo will then each write one of the two remaining books, scheduled for publication next year. They will be subtitled Stella and Meredith.

The two authors are both professional ladies. Joanna is an Oxford graduate who gave-up her position as a partner specialising in corporate law with Eversheds, after the birth of her third child. Penny has similarly taken a career-break from her role as a corporate finance partner with Deloitte.

“ We also loved the idea of writing about a cosmetic surgery business and felt that it tapped into the current zeitgeist. ”

They met through their husbands who trained in the City together.

"The idea for the books came about from a chance discussion we had one summer. I had always fancied writing a book about a lawyer working on a deal who met her partner over a boardroom table," says Joanna. "Coincidentally, Penny mentioned the idea of a book about a woman working in the City."

The idea grew into a series of four books, each with a high-profile female professional as the heroine - a lawyer, a financier, a surgeon and a banker.

"We knew that four women had been used successfully in other media, such as *Sex and the City* and *Mistresses*. We also loved the idea of writing about a cosmetic surgery business and felt that it tapped into the current zeitgeist." So the whole series is based around the sale of a high-profile cosmetic surgery business which has a secret list of celebs amongst its clients.

As a former solicitor, Joanna is writing about a world she knows intimately. She became a legal partner at the age of 31 and during her career worked on deals with Channel Five, the Spice Girls and Coronation Street amongst many others.



The pair spent most of last year planning and plotting the books. And as something of a backstop, Joanna admits to reading Stephen King *On Writing* ("That was insightful.") as well as lots of other books on how to write.

"Penny and I would meet once a month during the planning stages; sometimes in The Lowry Manchester or in The Adelphi, London. "Plotting the characters was essential. If we were to walk into any of their kitchens, we needed to know what would be in their fridges."

Then came the writing. "We would send each chapter to the other for editing." The Wilmslow mother estimates it took her 9-months to write "Alex" and the same for Penny to complete "Rachel".

"I would complete the school run in the morning and spend until 2pm writing. I started by writing long-hand in a beautiful leather-bound note book but quickly switched to my laptop."

Sometimes she would write in the upstairs study in her stunning Wilmslow house - "After I gave-up work, we spent 2-years renovating the house." - or on the dining room table. "If my brain ran out I would take my laptop to The Marriott in Hale and

get myself a pot of coffee." That seemed to get the creative cells churning.

"Once I had drafted a chapter I would put it away for 6-weeks before re-visiting it and doing a cold edit. That was something I learned from Stephen King, and he's right. I was able to get distance from it before doing a thorough edit."

With the first book of the quadruplet still a month away from launch, it has already been a whirlwind start to Joanna's new-found career.



Already she has been caught-up in the heady world of press conferences, TV studios, book award ceremonies and chatting to Andrew Marr on the OK! Sofa. Next month comes a round of book signings at Waterstones in Manchester, Trafford Centre, Putney, London's Oxford St and Ludgate Circus, Sheffield and Wilmslow and the book has already been submitted by the publishers, Matador, to the Summer Reads TV Book Club.

"I think we were very fortunate in being taken-on by Matador. We had approached several agents. They were all positive about the sassy writing and the plots and none of them advised us to hang-up our pens. However, none were willing to take us on in the current economic situation.



“...we have drawn widely on our experiences of working in, and with, the professions featured in the book.”

"We were then introduced to Matador who embraced the book and the whole idea of the series. They have been magnificent." It must give the authors a certain confidence that Matador have already printed not only the first two books but, also, the covers of the remaining two, even though the remaining two books have yet to be written.

The first in the series is racy, pacy and contemporary. It is aimed at women of all ages. Joanna is hoping they will enjoy the intrigue as well as the insight it gives into the everyday working life of professional women working in the intoxicating and sometimes lawless atmosphere of corporate London.

Alex, the heroine in the first book, is a social-climbing careerist. Like Joanna, she is a corporate lawyer. Does that mean it is autobiographical?

The answer was a resounding 'No'. "But we have drawn widely on our experiences of working in, and with, the professions featured in the book.

Neither will the two authors be telling the same story four times. "Each of the women has their own story but the fact that they are all working on the same project - the sale of the cosmetic surgery business - is the common thread. Each plot is driven by the heroines' personal stories, relationships and friends but their own perspective and experience of the deal to complete the sale of the controversial business is totally different - and so are the men in their lives.

"We had great fun dreaming up improbable characters and story lines, which we subsequently toned-down to protect the not-so-innocent and our own reputations."

Cleverly, when the two authors worked on the central plot, they did it in a way which means you can read any of the books in any order.

Although she is now engrossed on writing the next book in the series, Joanna is heavily committed to Children In Need. Indeed, she is head of the Northern Committee deciding which local charities will benefit from the several millions of pounds raised by the charity this year.

She is also a member of Wilmslow Rock Choir and this month, along with 7,000 other Rock Choir members from all over the country, will be singing at Wembley. She also competes in the Manchester 10K run each year.

Thus far, Joanna's Journey has been remarkable... and I see no reason why it shouldn't be a happy ending.

**Cheshire Independent**  
27 December 2011

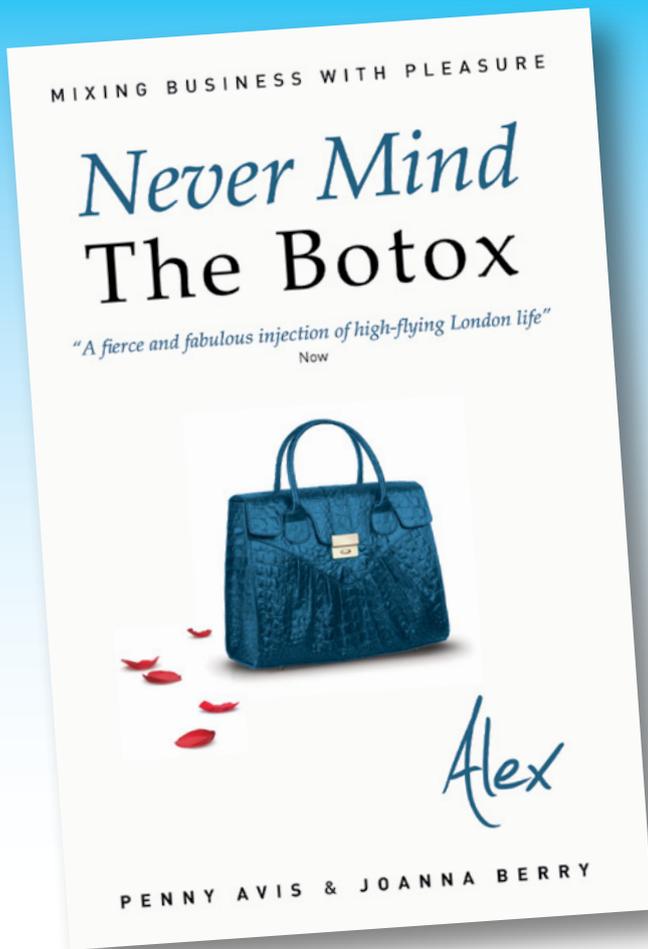
.....  
**WILMSLOW** mum Joanna Berry's second novel has hit the bookshelves. Called **Never Mind the Botox: Rachel**, the novel is about four professional women all working on the sale of a cosmetic surgery business and is set to be brought to the small screen.

A former corporate lawyer who has worked with the Spice Girls and helped to launch Channel Five, Joanna is now a full-time mum and author as well as spending her spare time working for Children in Need as the chairwoman of the Northern Allocation committee.

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I have reached that stage in my life when for an hour twice a day I become taxi-driver/carer/ anger management counsellor/conflict resolution expert and DJ. Yes, in between my work as a writer, I have the daily joy of The School Run, writes Cheshire author *Joanna Berry*

# THERE'S NOWHERE QUITE LIKE CHESHIRE...

Millions of us do it every day and I often wonder how our experiences differ. How many of my friends in Yorkshire and London have waved to Ronaldo on the way to school? How many of their sons bring their autograph book to swimming lessons just in case they bump into another member of the Manchester City squad?

There's nowhere quite like Cheshire and the school run really brings this home. Most mums are holding down jobs and busy lives and pull on their jeans and slap on a bit of lipstick before they head out, but there is that Cheshire phenomenon that appears on the school run as well as in the café bars of Alderley Edge. First, there's the cars. Anything smaller than a Range Rover is invisible. I pass one armour plated Hummer every morning in my Mini and feel like I could drive into its boot like the small rescue vehicle that lives inside my son's Thunderbird 2.

Then there's the clothes. If it isn't skinny

jeans, Gucci tops and designer shades it's gym gear; and I'm not talking baggy leggings, a T shirt and a pair of Green flash trainers. It's lycra all the way advertising precisely how much exercise the wearer has done recently.

And the shoes! They can never be too high whether on a cricket pitch or on the school parquet floor. Last week, as I watched my son at football training in the familiar North West downpour, I missed his 'mint header' as I stared open-mouthed at a mum in the most amazing Lady Gaga-esque suede, almost orthopaedic, boots trudge through the quagmire that passed for a football pitch.

The really scary thing is that I think I am going native. I am having regular manicures for the first time in my life and that full face of make-up seems to land on my face each morning. The pre-holiday fake tan is now a given. Before I know it I'll be driving to school in a tank! ■

Joanna Berry is the co-author of a fabulous new book series, *Never Mind the Botox*, about four city women working on the sale of a cosmetic surgery business and the dramatic impact it has on their personal and professional lives. The first book in the series, *Alex*, is out now (Matador £6.99)

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## NEWS

# Lawyer has novel idea for book on working women

BY CHRIS MORRIS

A FORMER lawyer has released a new novel drawing on her own experiences juggling tough work

lives and very busy social schedules.

Joanna Berry, 43, aimed to turn the buoyant chick-lit market on its head with her four-part

series focusing on women who battle in the boardroom by day but face personal dilemmas at night.

Joanna, of Pownall Park, Wilmslow, and co-author Penny Avis, weave together four separate stories of ladies in finance, law and cosmetic surgery as they work towards the deal of a lifetime.

Their stories are laced with hidden secrets – and tell of how they cope with the ups and downs of their own extremely hectic lives.

The mum-of-three said she was keen for the story to appeal to normal, hardworking women with 'proper' jobs.

She said: "I would say the books are contemporary women's fiction."

"Usually chick-lit is about women who are quite helpless and are normally a bit shoes, shopping and finding the right man."

"We wanted to write about women who have proper jobs and are working quite hard but at the same time have the personal issues that anybody has."

Joanna moved to Wilmslow 11 years ago with husband Grant

after working as an entertainment lawyer, later working for Granada in its TV legal department.

But after a career break, she started to work on the books with trained accountant and friend Penny, who lives in London, over the past 18 months and their first book, *Never Mind The Boss*, is on sale now.

Joanna said: "We plotted the books together and did the characterisations, and then I wrote the first book, while Penny did the second and we would keep sending each other the work to check over."

"We haven't based the characters on anybody but we have had lots of experience coming across all sort of characters and there are bits of people in there, and hopefully that gives in authenticity."

"A couple of my friends have read the book and come up to me and said things like 'I remember that meeting'."

The self-published novels will be released over the coming months.

The first is on sale online and in the Wilmslow branch of Waterstones.



**NOVEL IDEA** Joanna Berry has written a new book about work/life balance

## Nursery opens doors

A NURSERY with big plans for little people opened its doors to the public for the first time.

Children and their parents helped celebrate the launch of the new Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery, on Hawthorn Lane, with a family fun day – which was hailed as a fantastic success.

The nursery is on the site of the former Wilmslow Day Nursery, which closed last year.

It was formally opened by Kate Puc from Francis House Children's Hospice, its chosen charity for this year.

The owner is Liz Butterworth.

She said: "The family fun day involved free music and dance classes for children, hair styling for youngsters, a colouring competition and a number of other activities all in aid of the charity."

"They were generously sponsored by local businesses, including Peter Herd and Simon Drum."

"It also saw the completion of our monkey scarecrow festival"

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