

Woman

Teresa Driscoll



Technology pitfalls... or, the invitation disaster

Communication at the touch of a button is completely fabulous, don't you think?

Also dangerous. Infuriating. And potentially life-changing.

We've all heard the one about the man who writes a whingeing text about his wife to his mistress...then sends it to the former.

I had a thankfully more amusing hiccup this week. For my sins, I am in charge of emails for my book club. For years this has caused no problem more serious than me leaving it to the last minute to confirm arrangements ... or forgetting which book we are all supposed to be reading.

But having installed a new computer and upgraded my broadband, my address book settings have gone a little awry. Imagine my dismay when I realised too late that I had sent my latest book mail missive, not just to my lovely friends, but to the editor of this column, to my whole family, to friends in America, not to mention the producers of various TV and radio programmes and many others besides.

Fitz, presenter on Radio Devon, is probably wondering even as I write why on earth he has to read *The Help* or face detention.

But the complications spiralled

'I realised too late that I had sent the missive to my entire address book'

when one of my book club members "replied to all" asking directions. I have since had many witty missives from all parts of the country and all walks of life and find myself wondering just how many people will be turning up to our next meeting.

I sincerely hope no one sends directions "to all" or we may well need to get some extra wine in...

On a positive note, I am heartened to learn from replies just how many people are still enjoying similar clubs. Some of the accidental recipients of my message have even been kind enough to share suggestions for our reading list.

For myself, I wasn't at all sure what to expect when someone first invited me to join the club. It seemed a bit odd, even potentially embarrassing to me - the concept of sitting down to debate a book with your friends.

Nobody told me it would involve delicious and lively sisterhood sessions over wine and posh nibbles when anything and everything would be debated ... sometimes even the book in hand.

No, really. We do discuss the literature and it's fun and feisty and often quite enlightening to see just how subjective things can be.

So if you were among the many who accidentally received my invitation for the September meeting I apologise and offer you this. "What do you call a group of women discussing house prices and their husbands?"

Yeah, yeah... A book club. But then - aren't the old ones the best?

It's stripes, smiles and style as Pat gets a well-earned pamper day

To celebrate this year's Festival of Fashion in Exeter, Woman teamed up with Princesshay and Hospiscare to give a fashion boost to someone in need of a treat. Pat Quick from Exmouth is a part-time cleaner whose husband, Mike, was recently diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND). Their family has had a stressful year: that's why we treated Pat to a great new look, a pamper session and £200 to spend on clothes.

"It started in his throat," said Pat, who is originally from Nottingham. "He first noticed it in March - he couldn't stop yawning. He does work long hours in his job as a lorry driver; but soon we noticed his speech was getting slurred as well. He didn't want to go to the doctor. It was frustrating and puzzling.

"Then he was diagnosed with MND, which is a horrible degenerative disease of the central nervous system. There are different forms of it - probably the most famous person to have it is Dr Stephen Hawking."

Pat now looks after her husband, only 56, at home. Although he can still perform many tasks, there are others he can't do, such as eat solids. On Tuesdays, Pat takes him to Hospiscare in Exeter, where Mike enjoys watercolour painting and Pat appreciates the help and support given to carers.

"When something goes wrong like this it can be very stressful," said Pat. "Fortunately there is a lot of support out there. Hospiscare have been wonderful, as have the MND Association. I don't know where we'd be without them."

Pat was delighted when a Hospiscare worker told her she had been chosen as the subject for our makeover - and just a teensy bit worried. After all, she was going to receive the attentions of a personal stylist, as well as having her hair cut and makeup done before a photo shoot.

"I was a bit worried what they were going to do," she admitted. "But they asked me a lot of questions and I still felt like me at the end of it. Everyone was lovely on the day - it was a nice experience.

"At my age fashion is rather young-orientated. A woman of 55 isn't going to want to wear a ra-ra skirt, for instance. But I still want to find things that are nice and that suit me.

"The stylist picked out some nice jackets and a pretty dress; she knew about clothes suiting your style and shape.



Pat sports Stacie shirt, Coast, £65; Roxanne scarf, Hobbs, £39; John Rocha trench coat, £60, and jeans, £45, both from Debenhams



looked 'sensational' and Mike said it looked like it's been done by a real pro.

"It was a lovely day. When you have something upsetting like this you have to take your pleasures where you can get them - it helps to buck you up a bit and make you feel more cheerful.

"Thanks to everyone who made it possible."

Princesshay's professional stylist Chantelle Znideric said: "Pat wears a uniform to work, so I wanted to focus on refreshing her casual image. Being 5ft 1in tall, top heavy and a size 18 she's limited with petite ranges to choose from; however, I was determined to show Pat the options open to her.

"For me, it was important to balance Pat's proportions so ultimately she looked taller, slimmer and younger - she's always in trousers so I wanted to get her legs out!"

Emma Wepp, make-up artist at Space Hair and Beauty said, "I used subtle earthy tones from the Bare Minerals makeup range which is made of natural ingredients in order to bring out Pat's eyes keeping it simple and up to date while being practical for Pat's age with a soft, natural look."

Pat's hair was cut by stylist Sammy Webber from Space, who said: "Pat admired Sharon Osbourne's look so I wanted to give her a more choppy style with a modern edge, bringing her fringe over. Ladies can often get stuck in the 'round brush blow-dry' style but there are so many styles that are less harsh and more natural that can bring your look up to date."

Libby Tucker from Space Hair and Beauty said: "It is really rewarding to transform someone and show them how good they can look. Hospiscare is such a fantastic charity and I am so

pleased we were able to be part of Pat's makeover."

officer from Hospiscare, said: "Every day at Hospiscare we see amazing people like Pat facing difficult times with tremendous courage so it is wonderful for us to see the boost this has been for her.

"We are so grateful for the partnership with the WMN and Princesshay which made this treat possible."

"At Princesshay's Festival of Fashion on September 24 and 25, Hospiscare will be running a drop off point for unwanted clothes opposite Carluccio's. Put your castoffs to work for charity; bring them along!"

Chantelle will be offering free style tips during Princesshay's Festival of Fashion; to enquire about a personal shopping day like Pat's, call Chantelle on 07971 484882 or visit www.personal-stylist.co.uk.

Teresa Driscoll, PR and marketing



Chic and smiley in Leigh Jersey Dress, £85, and chain twist necklace, £40, Coast; Wilma black boots, Debenhams, £130

CHANTELLE'S TOP TIPS FOR THE PETITE AND TOP-HEAVY WOMAN:

- 1 Don't be inclined to cover up big breasts; this will make them look even larger!
 - 2 Opt for more structured, fitted clothing that will give the figure shape and avoid wearing oversized baggy items.
 - 3 A wrap top or dress is a great style to try, as they will usually fit well around the bust area and also enhance your waistline.
- Layer a vest top underneath if the neckline is a little low.



Shoot coordinators

Hannah Overton and Mia Bartlett

Stylist Chantelle Znideric

Makeup Emma Wepp

Hair Sammy Webber

Text Gillian Molesworth

Pictures Richard Austin

AUTUMN/WINTER FASHION FESTIVAL
FRI 24 & SAT 25 SEPT 10AM - 4PM

Princesshay will be showcasing this season's hottest looks with fabulous fashion shows and our professional stylists will be giving advice on how to wear the latest trends. After your fashion fix, visit the pamper lounge where you can enjoy complimentary beauty treatments. You'll want to be part of this style celebration taking place from 10am - 4pm in the main thoroughfare of Princesshay.



Because *fashion* matters

Exeter's Princesshay
princesshay.com