

Five minutes with...

Would you like to have a go at answering our weekly Q&A? Call 01280 827977 for details or email editorial@buckinghamadvertiser.co.uk

> What is your earliest memory?

I think my first memory is when I was three years old and sitting at my birthday party and everyone singing happy birthday to me. I was sitting on my mum's knee and enjoying the attention that comes with the achievement of being a whole three years old.

> What do you wish they had taught you at school?

I wish they had taught me more about money. You leave school and you don't even know how to open a bank account. No one really tells you anything about managing your finances, taxes and so forth. I think the current initiatives to teach school children about money management are really important.

> Ignoring what you're doing now, if you could do any job in the world what would it be and why?

I love travelling, so if I wasn't running an accountancy firm, I'd probably be a travel writer, documenting my adventures and sharing experiences from far corners of the globe.

> Of all the places you've been in your life, which would you recommend to a stranger?

I recently went to Timbuktu, which was really quite amazing. I travelled up the River Niger and it made me realise that despite how it can seem in the daily buzz of running a business, I can, in fact, live without my mobile phone and manage a lie in without getting up to work!

> If you could pass one new law tomorrow what would it be and why?

I see a lot of great new businesses struggle because they are faced with too much red tape at the outset. I'd get rid of a lot of this for new

This week, we spend five minutes with Anita Brook, who runs Accounts Assist in Silverstone and London

businesses, so that they could concentrate on growing and thriving, rather than filling in forms.

> Invite three people, living or dead, from any period round for dinner... who are they and why?

I was a child of the Thatcher era so I'd have to invite Margaret Thatcher along as an example of a strong female figure with a lot of interesting views about politics. I'd also invite Simon Cowell because I think he's hilarious, while Coco Chanel would bring a bit of style to the occasion.

> If you were on Death Row what would you eat for your final meal?

Fish and chips, with mushy peas.

> If you could write your own epitaph or come up with famous last words in advance, what would you pick?

Something along the lines of: 'She lived life to the full and she tried everything.' That has always been my approach, really - make every second count and never be afraid of the unknown.

> If you could have any super power what would it be and why?

I would like to be invisible, so that I could see what was going on. We can learn so much from observing people just going about their lives and work.

> How do you relax?

After a long day at work, I relax by watching shocking TV like The X Factor, Strictly, What Katie Did Next ...

> What's your greatest fear?

My mum sadly died of cancer so I'm



petrified that that could happen to me. My family are extremely important so I wouldn't want to leave them behind.

> What was the last little treat you bought for yourself or someone else?

I bought my little girl, aged two, a goldfish because she wanted one and it's a great first pet - not too much responsibility.

> If you had to give up something tomorrow what would you find it hardest to live without?

I couldn't live without my little girl and my husband.

> What's the most important lesson that life has taught you so far?

Losing my mum was my biggest lesson in life so far. It taught me you only live once, so you've got to make

every day count.

> If you could leap forward to the year 2050 what would you expect or hope to find there?

I'd be in my 70s! I would hope to be surrounded by my family, and the world to be a safer place. Economic stability would be nice as well!

> Favourite films of all time?

Notting Hill because I love romantic comedy with a happy ending. I also love The Devil Wears Prada, but I'm nothing like Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep's character). And The Shawshank Redemption, for a bit of dramatic brilliance.

> Favourite books of all time?

For a bit of relaxed reading, I love Dan Brown. I also love Mansfield Park by Jane Austen, and you might also catch me reading the odd business book by Seth Godin or Stephen Covey.

> Favourite albums or songs of all time?

My favourite song of all time is Talk Talk, Life Is What You Make It. It's inspirational but it's still pop. I'm also a really big fan of pretty much anything by the Kings Of Leon.

> What is the website you use or value the most?

There are a lot of useful tools and snippets of advice on the HMRC (HMRC.gov.uk) website that many people aren't aware of. Obviously I use it every day for my work, but I'd recommend anyone in business takes a good look.

I also love Smarta.com, it's a business advice and news website and the blog is a brilliant mix of commentary and borderline satire. I visit it most days.

> Favourite restaurants within 20 miles of Buckingham?

I'm very partial to the Buckingham Fort, which does a really great curry.

> Favourite shop within 20 miles of Buckingham?

There's a really nice big shop on the High Street called Mooch (mooch.co.uk), which has some really unusual gifts and homeware. I love browsing in there.

> You're taking friends and family out for the day but you can't go more than 20 miles from Buckingham. What are your recommendations and why?

If the weather's good, Stowe Gardens is a fantastic place have a picnic because it's very pretty with a really nice walk round. It's beautiful.

> What's your best-kept entertainment or social life secret or guilty pleasure?

I love karaoke. I'm the first one up anywhere and I can't sing a note. It's just good to get up there and challenge myself. I also don't tell many people that my favourite tippie is pink cava and I'm partial to joining my daughter on the sofa and watching a bit of children's TV every now and then.

> Which person in the public eye would you most like to meet and why?

Boris Johnson. He's an interesting character and I think some of the changes he's made in London are great.

> What do you go out of your way to avoid?

Snobby people.

> Always leave them laughing so please tell us a joke.

Why don't seismologists have many friends? Because they're always finding faults!