

It's cool to be kind says theatre mogul

Impresario and mum-of-three Dame Rosemary on why a little humanity goes a long way

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PARTNERS: Dame Rosemary and, inset, with Sir Howard

ous benefits because we have many staff who are mothers – and fathers – or carers looking after parents with dementia. You lose your best people if you don't try to accommodate the things that affect all of us in life."

Rosemary is the embodiment of the superwoman generation. Her eldest daughter has Down's Syndrome which presented huge challenges in her 20s when her career was taking off and now, in her 60s, she has a child still living at home and an elderly mother to look after.

"I had children in my 20s, 30s and 40s so I have been at it a long time," says Rosemary, who lives with Howard in a large house outside Woking, in Surrey. "I am predominantly the one who went home for the children. You have to have your antennae on for your children to make sure nothing's going disastrously wrong."

Rosemary says that even in 2019 this is still massively skewed against mothers.

"So much business still happens in the pub. I have and have always had colleagues who don't have to get home. They faff around all day, chatting, then they work flat out and go for a

drink and it all happens in the pub and it's hard for women and carers to do that.

"You can't work in theatre and not go out in the evening so I had to rely on a nanny but five mornings a week I am planning what everyone's eating for dinner and I'm getting it out to defrost. It was worse when I had three kids at three different schools."

After her divorce from Alan, Rosemary and Howard married in 1994, with actor Simon Callow as best man. While her role in theatres has always been the management side, the running of the business, Howard is the creative one, with a long background in staging plays.

In 2016, they stepped down from ATG and co-founded a new business, Trafalgar Entertainment, and acquired the successful Stagecoach theatre school franchise, which is run out of their Woking office.

Theatre – but not acting – is in Rosemary's blood. Her parents, Mary, a teacher, and Donald, a physicist, took Rosemary and her older sister, Eleanor, to the theatre regularly.

"My mother took me to Stratford-upon-Avon to see Shakespeare," Rosemary says. "I

did a little acting with friends Rik Mayall and Ade Edmondson but it wasn't for me. I always thought you have more say if you are on the business side, setting budgets."

Ade and his wife, comedian Jennifer Saunders, are good friends, but Rosemary doesn't envy actors, especially women.

"There are still all kinds of glass ceilings. I am still heavily involved in various feminist organisations. My work will be done when we have the second woman artistic director at the National Theatre. We haven't had one yet. The big jobs still go exclusively to the men."

Rosemary has been appalled at the trolling of women MPs and her friend, the historian Mary Beard, on Twitter.

"Mary says that she only calls the police now when a troll says they are actively planning to kill her. How appalling is that? They abuse her about her hair and not wearing make-up, not conforming to the stereotypes of what middle-aged women should be."

For this reason, Rosemary is not on Twitter. She is also calling on senior politicians to set a better example.

"The body language and disrespectful behaviour is pretty shocking. Jacob Rees Mogg lounging in the House of Commons was disrespectful and an MP (Jo Cox) lost her life over Brexit. That's a ghastly thing in the 21st century."

"No one should have to put up with abuse and thuggery. It is not on."

Rosemary fancies being a crossbencher like BBC director general, Tony Hall, and thinks arts and culture can help heal the rift caused by Brexit. "People feel they've been forgotten and that's a damaging thing. We need to take arts and culture to every corner of the UK."

The immediate remedy, according to Rosemary, is panto.

"Families do too little together these days. Christmas is panto and it's a family show across the generations – it's a great thing to do, this Christmas. Go!"

HICKEY

CURRENTLY making headlines after describing the popularity of jeans as "tragic", Dame Joan Collins didn't let this prevent her from launching her own denim line 40 years ago.

Recalling her range of "designer jeans," Dame Joan, pictured, later explained in her memoirs: "So off I went to flog 'em in various department stores in the provinces. They created quite a stir, as they fitted perfectly and were very flattering."



She concluded: "Sadly, however, the line didn't last, so a rare pair of 'JC Jeans' now apparently go for a pretty penny on eBay."

WHILE Lib Dem leader Jo Swinson has been denying a "fake news" story about her firing stones at squirrels with a slingshot, one old political heavyweight happily admits to eliminating them.

Former deputy PM Lord Heseltine memorably claimed in recent years he'd shot dead 350 grey squirrels in the space of six months in the grounds of his Northamptonshire home.

COLOURFUL former Lib Dem MP Lembit Opik dismisses laughable talk in the leadership ranks of a General Election victory for his old party, describing it as "entirely unrealistic".

The one-time Cheeky Girl consort bluntly adds: "Jo Swinson's a perfectly nice person, but she's just not cutting it in the Premier League."

UNKINDLY dubbed a "Poundshop Boris" courtesy of his own bizarre-looking blond barnet, eccentric Tory Michael Fabricant, 69, responds: "I and my hair was in Parliament long before Boris!"

First elected in 1992, Fabricant has been the subject of wig-wearing rumours for years. The politician only admits to what he curiously describes as "some enhancement of the follicular area".

TURNING 80 next year, Al Pacino, pictured, is irked by constant references to his age, complaining: "There's something rude about asking someone how old they are."

He tells GQ magazine: "This is what we're plagued with, you have to understand. When celebrities have birthdays, it's all over the news... that expression, 'You look good for your age,' comes in."

The Godfather actor light-heartedly adds: "But I haven't heard that in a long time. Maybe: 'You look good to still be alive'."



MEANWHILE, glamorous country music star Dolly Parton, 73, continues to defy Father Time.

Revealing she was recently approached about a 50th anniversary TV celebration, tongue-in-cheek Dolly remarks: "I said, 'I'm not even 50 years old!'"

PROFESSIONAL Sir Sean Connery lookalike John Allen, who appears as 007 at events globally, recalls briefly working as a body double with the man himself.

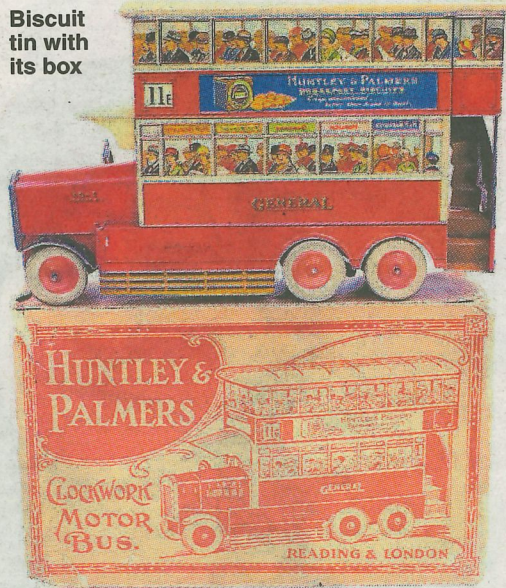
The 72-year-old American explains: "He comes down the elevator, he turns to me and says, 'Hello, John. You look wonderful today.' I said: 'Of course I do, sir... I look like you'."

Crumbs! Biccys tin fetches £3k

A BISCUIT tin left to gather dust at the back of a cupboard for decades has sold at auction for £3,000. The Huntley and Palmers box dates back to the 1920s and features a red double-decker London bus. Its owners, a retired couple, had tucked the object away and forgotten about it. They rediscovered the colourful tin while moving house and took it to an

antique valuation – where they were stunned to find it was a collectors' item worth thousands. The owners, who remain anonymous, said the tin had come from a distant family member who had run a corner shop in the Doncaster area. It sold for £3,100 at Hansons Auctioneers, in Etwell, Derbyshire.

Biscuit tin with its box



By Deborah Colcutt

DAME Rosemary Squire can remember her first ever theatre trip like it was yesterday. It was Christmas, a panto of course, and she was about six. She went with her family to the Theatre Royal in their home city, Nottingham.



DEVOTED MUM: With daughter Jenny

"I remember I was wearing a coat with a velvet collar. I liked the velvet collar very much," says Rosemary, smiling at the memory. From that humble introduction to grassroots theatre, hers has been a meteoric rise to become one of the most successful and wealthiest impresarios. But then it is typical Rosemary to start on the shop floor and not give up until she reached the very top of her profession. "I came up the hard way which may sound old-fashioned but I did and learned a lot. I was a magpie, I stole ideas."

Rosemary has crashed through glass ceilings and been relentless in her determination to make the company she founded with her husband, Sir Howard Panter, the world's number one. But what is more impressive is that, unlike many bosses, she did it without the ruthlessness that's the norm in this cut-throat business – a quality that has just earned Rosemary a kindness and leadership award.

"You can't please everybody all the time and it's hard to make everyone feel good about hard decisions but you have to be open and even if it's not a decision that everyone supports they can understand it. Kindness as a boss means understanding how others feel, valuing people and helping them to feel valued. It's about stepping into their shoes."

married another man, Alan Brodie, in 1982, and had two children, Jenny, now 33, and Daniel, 34, who is a theatre producer and works in his mother's company. It was while Rosemary was on maternity leave with her son that she was fired, made redundant, from a large theatre company where she was, she thought, on the management path.

"It was a really bad thing to do to me. I got a lawyer who negotiated a good settlement but I should have been offered the senior job. I could have done it really well."

Her fury and resentment burn still and the experience has shaped her management style ever since – hence the kindness award. "I went to St James's Palace and met the Countess of Wessex – we had a fabulous tea," laughs Rosemary, recalling the ceremony this week to celebrate the Kindness and Leadership 50 Leading Lights, run by the Women of the Future programme, of which Sophie Wessex is ambassador.

'It is terrible being fired so I think about it carefully - it is going to impact on their life and family'

"It wasn't all women – Jurgen Klopp (Liverpool FC manager) was one of those

on the list so I don't think kindness is exclusive to women but they are more empathic and I think they get that from dealing with small children," says Rosemary, who has a 17-year-old daughter, Kate, with Howard. "I've done more of the traditionally difficult things than Howard, like firing someone. Was it a conscious decision? Yes, because people feel less competitive with me, less angry. It is a terrible thing being fired so I think about it carefully."

"I am making a decision which is going to impact massively on somebody's life and on their family and whilst it might be the right decision for the company, you can do it in a decent way."

Again, because of her experience, Rosemary blazed a trail in equal opportunities, offering some of the very first flexible working contracts for women in the country.

"It was the 1990s, no one had heard of job sharing or remote working. But we offer gener-



TROLLS: Mary Beard
First Rosemary



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