

# First things first

In her inaugural column, Grace Timothy, former Bond Street beauty editor and now mother of Emie, reflects on a year of change

It's been a whole year since the time I kicked a midwife in the head. Or rather, gave birth to my daughter, but the vicious attempt at GBH is what will most likely flash before my eyes as we blow out the candles on Emie's first birthday cake. Wind back another 12 months, and I was reporting from London Fashion Week, dodging Anna Wintour's steely stare and treating myself to a sneaky blow-dry in between fashion shows. Which will make this September all the more surreal, as I most likely find myself dodging some clown's invoice, treating myself to a sneaky feed Gem in between breast feeds.

Since I swapped life as a beauty editor on London's Bond Street for life as a new mother in Chichester, I've had to learn on my feet. For the first six months I



Above: Having fun at Red Jelly, Howe Below: Grace with Emie

incorrectly thought nappies went on with 'frills in', which would explain the constant trail of baby fluids in my wake.

But if there's one thing I'll definitely get right, it's throwing birthday bashes. I know parties. I've attended them in New York, LA, Paris and Rome. I've outlasted two Rolling Stones. And Sussex is the perfect place to facilitate my new role as the doyenne of baby party planning.

Emie is too young for the traditional children's entertainer or - gulp - soft play. Which is fortunate, as both make me want to repeat my head-kicking offence. But there are plenty of ways to mark the early birthdays.

First up, there's a myriad of places where your little darlings can get messy a comfortable distance from your cream upholstery. I love Doodle & Daub in Bosham Walk, Chichester, where you can print baby hands and feet onto various ceramics - a lovely keepsake. In Brighton and Howe, Red Jelly Kids Parties combine similar sensory-led arts and crafts with a spot of singing and storytelling.

At home, several of the local baby group leaders can create a taster session for your party. Baby Sensory comes highly recommended if you like parachutes, bubbles and up-tempo music. Jo Jingles is good for the all-singing, all-dancing types. Both cover most of Sussex between them, while Tatty Bumpkins in Brighton and Howe also includes baby-friendly yoga.

Let's face it, beyond a few rice cakes and fruit slices, the only food you need worry

about is for the guests no longer in nappies. Rather than having to cook, I'd go mobile with food. The Mobile Pizzeria brings the most delicious wood-fired artisan pizzas to your door. For dessert, it has to be Betty, the Vintage Scoops ice cream van. She's usually parked near Lewes, but does cover a large area across Sussex. Everything else, I'll get from [prettylittlepartyshop.co.uk](http://prettylittlepartyshop.co.uk).

Forget champagne at Soho House, birthdays are all about bunting and Bo Peep from here on in. ■

## Buy Of The Month

Jazz For Babies is the brainchild of music professor, Michael Janisch, who wanted to create soft, lulling music for his unborn child in utero to kickstart a love of jazz. Whether it's a baby shower or birthday gift, something to soothe a cranky newborn, or even entertain a toddler, these jazz renditions of mainstream songs - both old and new - will do the job without sending you round the bend like the majority of lullaby CDs. No tiny bells or synthesized keyboard sounds, so you'll love it as much as your child will. My favourite track? Moon River on the Piano Album. £10.99.

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| [BabySensory.com](http://BabySensory.com) | [JoJingles.com](http://JoJingles.com)  
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