

Funny and moving: Podcast host Sonia Beldom with actor and impressionist Steve Nallon, and, left, with comedian Shazia Mirza and actress Su Pollard

Unbelievable stories of our mums

By Julia Lawrence

As a child, growing up in Hendon, Sonia Beldom was frequently embarrassed by her mother Margaret. And what's so unusual about that, readers will rightfully ask: surely, it's a mother's remit to appal and mortify her offspring. Only Sonia's mother went beyond the odd questionable outfit or anachronistic comment.

Before she was eventually sectioned in 2010, at the age of 80, Margaret had spent her life secretly, and bravely, battling a host of mental health issues, including frontal lobe disorder, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety and ADHD. It furnished Sonia, who now lives in Long Lane, N3, with a treasure trove of hilarious and deeply touching stories of life with a mother who was never destined to follow a conventional path through life.

And her beloved mother, who died six years ago, aged 88, has been the inspiration behind a new podcast series, aptly named *Mumbelievable*, in which Sonia, a former radio and TV producer, interviews guests about their own unique relationships with their mum.

Guests so far have included

actors Su Pollard and Helen Lederer, actor and impressionist Steve Nallon, stand-up comedian Shazia Mirza and the pianist and songwriter Bobby Crush, and the podcast has been attracting up to 400,000 downloads per episode.

"There are so many podcasts out there about how to be a good mother, but nothing like this," says Sonia. "Everyone has, or had, a Mum. Everyone has a story. We are finding things out about people that even their best friends didn't know. 'Shortly before she died, Mum said to me 'I've been a terrible mother', and I told her: 'no, Mum, you're incredible. Look at me: I have a lovely life, a happy marriage, a great career. You achieved all that, with everything you had to cope

with. You did an amazing job.'" Find *Mumbelievable* wherever you usually get your podcasts.

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:
July 2014

This month saw work begin in Stanley Road, N2, on the site of the Archer Academy's new campus. Before work began, Museum of London archaeologists investigated the site for historical interest, but nothing of significance was found.

15 years ago:
July 2009

The Archer launched its first full colour edition this month, giving the paper a livelier, more modern look. We featured the 70th birthday of East Finchley station, our local grade II listed art deco gem. In 1937 it replaced the old 19th-century building when East Finchley became part of the Northern line. At the same time tunnels were constructed, linking Highgate station to East Finchley, completing the changeover.

23 years ago:
July 2001

The RSPCA gave a local dog a top award after she saved her family from a house fire in Eastern Road, N2. Trine, an 18-month-old King Charles spaniel, alerted her owners to the fire, enabling them to escape safely. She was given the RSPCA animal medallion for vigilance by the Society's Council Member for North London, Alan Anyon.

Marathon man makes it across the line at the big six

By Ruth Anders

To complete one marathon is a feat, but to complete all six Marathon Majors is a mighty achievement indeed. And with his completion of the 2024 Boston Marathon, the oldest modern marathon in the world, that's just what local resident Keith Jordan has accomplished, taking 25 years to do it.

The Marathon Majors comprise London, Berlin, Tokyo, New York, Chicago and Boston, all with a length of 26.2 miles. Approximately 35,000 entered this year's 128th Boston race, with 25,530 runners finishing the course and Keith coming in 7,976th in 3 hours 24 minutes. "In marathons," says Keith modestly, "the race doesn't really begin until mile 18."

He told *The Archer*: "When I first came to London, I started feeling worse and worse shut up all day in an office. Trying a run in the local path for some fresh air, I collapsed after 300 metres! So, something had to be done. I began running into work in the City from Clapham, with my office clothes in my backpack, and slowly graduated to running half-marathons, then marathons."

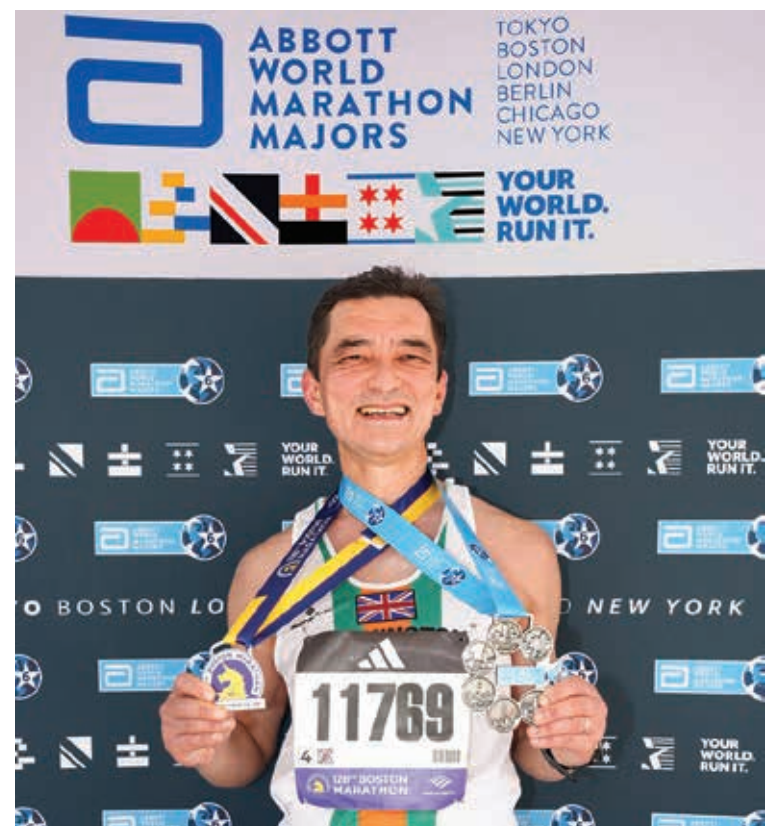
He started his marathon journey with the Berlin Marathon in 1999, running it with a hangover

("Well, I was young," he smiles) in 3 hours 18 minutes, and has now done 13. After a disastrous London Marathon in 2008 when he started too fast and struggled to finish, he took an 11-year break. Then came Lockdown, and when the London Marathon was cancelled, he ran the New York Marathon instead, finishing in a very respectable 3 hours 5 minutes at the age of 52.

Addictive sport

Which was his favourite? "Running over London Bridge to a wall of sound is an experience I'll never forget", says Keith. He adds: "Running is an addictive sport and undoubtedly helps improve one's mood. Through running I have made a good many friends."

Having achieved the Big Six, he'll now concentrate on fell racing which he prefers to big city races. "But I might still enter the odd Marathon if my son does," he admits with a grin.



Medallion man: Runner Keith Jordan with his medals from the Big Six Marathons

Send in the clowns

By Diana Cormack

If you suffer from coulrophobia, an event which starts this month may not be for you! In early July the London Clown Festival opens for a week at the Soho Theatre before moving for the first time to Jacksons Lane Centre, in Archway Road, Highgate.

Starting on Tuesday 16 July, there are six shows with performers differing from the conventional Bertram Mills Circus clowns of my childhood and probable source of my own fear of clowns. These internationally acclaimed acts are influenced by mime, circus and physical comedy. For further details visit www.jacksonslane.org.uk



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