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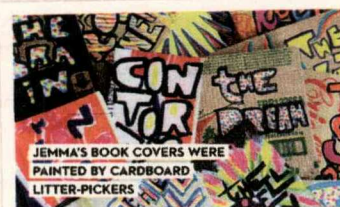
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*This week, a community project
with a difference*

When writer Jemma Foster recently arrived back in London from Argentine capital Buenos Aires where she had been living, she was lugging a suitcase full of her own beautifully presented, hand-painted books. Jemma's collection of 12 short stories draw on her travels, and the jackets were crafted by local people (combining her passion with helping the community).

"I'd been in the city a year when I was wandering around in the La Boca neighbourhood and stuck my head in to talk to a project called Eloisa Cartonera. This is a publishing group that makes books from the cartoneros who make a living collecting cardboard from the city's streets," she writes on MyDaily.co.uk.



Jemma was kickstarted into finishing her book, self-published it and commissioned Eloisa Cartonera to make the covers. "I would go into the offices and there would be all these people hanging out drinking maté (traditional South American tea) and doing this beautiful painting."

The final result was 2,400 individualistic book covers - and *The Cardboard Book Project* was born. Each story is illustrated either by emerging artists from around the world. For each book sold, one is donated to the Abuelas Cuentacuentos (Reading Grandmothers) charity, which invites elderly volunteers to read to children in the poorest parts of Argentina.

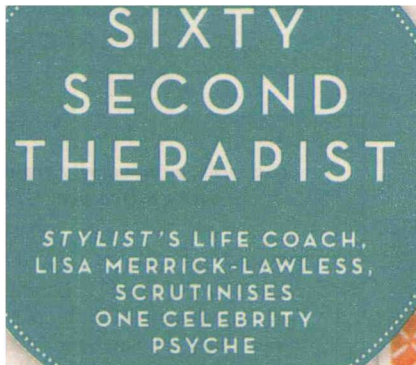
For more about Jemma Foster's trip and other must-read stories, log onto mydaily.co.uk - AOL's site that delivers content on fashion, beauty, mind and body, travel and debate

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On the couch with Meg Mathews

The former party girl and ex-wife of Noel Gallagher, 44, on kicking bad habits and launching her own business

You're involved with the website Nutrition Rocks, which aims to show women how to feel good through exercise and healthy eating. Is this a new, clean-living Meg?

Yes, this is a massive change for me. I've always been healthy with my eating, but I've now decided to completely cut out sugar, wheat and dairy. It was a holiday in France that triggered it - I ate too many croissants, baguettes and brie and came back feeling really lethargic.

You've also given up alcohol. What prompted that?

I went to rehab four years ago [for alcohol dependency] and started drinking again a year after. I've realised that I'm all or nothing - I can't have two glasses of wine because that becomes a bottle, and then we all know where that ends up. So I gave up drinking completely in January. I can't say I'll never drink again, but I don't plan to.

Having been part of the notoriously wild Primrose Hill set for many years, do you think it was inevitable that you were going to have to reign yourself in at some point?

Yes, of course. I've had the best time but you can't do it forever. I was a punk with a Mohican, I did the raving scene... you name it. But all of those things come with a drink or drug culture.

In the past, you've admitted you can be volatile. Have you calmed down?

Absolutely. I thought I was going to have to go for anger management classes. I never understood why I had such a short fuse, but to be fair I was probably hungover most of the time or full of crap food, so I always felt

rubbish. I'm so calm these days. I meditate daily, I walk my dogs and I go to the gym every day. It all helps.

You're also launched a furniture company, S&M, this year...

I am, and I love it. I studied graphic communications when I was younger and got into printing, but it kind of fell by the wayside. Four years ago I embraced it again and started the business with Sean Cochrane [interior designer]. I also design wallpapers and scarves that are stocked in Liberty. It's brilliant to have a creative outlet.

You've had a fair few different careers over the years...

Yes, I've done a lot of things, starting

my own PR company when I was 21, even becoming an aerobics instructor in the Eighties. After that I was headhunted by Warner Music to do A&R, looking after acts like Betty Boo and Ice-T. I got Ice-T his first UK hit actually. People think I married Noel, became famous and did nothing for myself, which is quite funny because Noel is really intelligent and would never have gone for some ditzty girl.

Are you currently dating? You split from your fiancé [art professor and London boutique owner Peter Sidell] earlier this year, which must have been difficult.

I'm kind of seeing a few people, but I'm very happy as I am. I woke up this morning in my lovely bedroom with my dogs and I thought how nice it is to be able to do as I please. I've been married and I have a beautiful daughter [Anais, 10, with Noel Gallagher] and I have an amazing life. I know people who are running around looking for a man, but I don't feel the need to do that.

You were married to Noel for over three years but went through a very public split in 2001. What's your relationship like now?

It's good. He's Anais' dad and he lives just around the corner. We don't go out for dinner or on holiday together or anything, because that would be weird. I've never understood people who do that kind of thing. We just have a nice, normal relationship. There's no reason for us not to get on.

Find Meg's designs at megmathews.co.uk and visit nutrition-rocks.co.uk

Lisa Merrick-Lawless is Stylist's therapist and founder of Headspace (theheadspace.co.uk).



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INSTANT LIFE COACH: CHANGE YOUR FUTURE

Meg talks about leaving her party-hard lifestyle behind and making some big life changes. If you want an overhaul, try following these rules:

DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT TO END UP

You can't move forwards without clarity about what your final goal is. Write it down in the back of your diary and refer to it daily.

THINK ABOUT HOW TO USE YOUR TIME

Fill your spare time with things you enjoy to take

your mind off the thing you're trying to change but don't go to extremes. For example, if you're trying to stop going out drinking so often, the answer isn't as simple as just staying in - try an evening class instead.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE FOR SUPPORT

Work towards a goal with a friend who has the same vision. You don't need to give up current friends completely, but try taking a break from

them if they're acting as a negative influence.

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

If you're not committed to change, you can't move forwards. If you're constantly saying "I should do that," it could be that you're chasing somebody else's dream.

DON'T BOOM AND BUST

Don't do everything at once. Break it down with a three-point plan to complete over three months.

WORDS: LISA MERRIPY, I AMI EEC RUMYORCA RUV. DEY EEATIRRE