

>> Nancy Stevens is an image consultant and has been running **Altered Image** (www.alteredimage.co.uk) for five years.

>> Her aim is to brighten up people's lives by showing them that we all have the potential to look amazing.

>> Nancy has two sons, is separated, very amicably, and lives in Woburn Sands. She is very passionate about her job and her other interests including reading, am-dram and musical theatre.

>> She appears on BBC Three Counties radio on a monthly basis talking about what's hot and what's not in the world of fashion.

>> Nancy also writes for national press and regularly appears in *Style* magazine.



What's your earliest memory?

Sailing on a liner, The Africa from Mozambique to Cape Town when I was four, everyone on board was violently seasick but I thought life on board was so glamorous, everyone was dressed to the nines for dinner. I remember going up in a cable car to Table Mountain, eating in the restaurant which was set in the mountain side, watching the dassies (rock rabbits) outside. I vividly recall visiting the Asian markets in Durban and my love affair with colour started there and then, I became obsessed with all the jewel coloured silks.

What do you wish they'd taught you at school, but didn't?

That life experience is the best and that algebra would be of no relevance in the outside world.

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

Mmmm it's a toss up between being a West End star or to have my own show like Gok.

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

As a Zimbabwean, this is a really sad one for me as 20 years ago I would have said Zimbabwe, without hesitation. For such a small country there are so many natural wonders and Victoria Falls is quite simply the most breathtaking sight in the world but Israel comes a pretty close second. Even if one isn't religious, one cannot fail to be fascinated by the history, no other country can claim to have such living history. Jerusalem casts a spell over you and floating in the Dead Sea is the strangest feeling in the world.

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

Slightly frivolous, but effective, this would be to make everyone wear something colourful everyday as colour really does brighten you and everyone else around you up.

You can invite three people - living or dead, from any period - round for dinner. Who are they and why?

Anne Frank because as a young girl, I read her diary and it had such an incredible impression on me. I would like to know how she managed to stay so brave under such mitigating circumstances.

Dave Allen - Irish comedian, long deceased but THE funniest man ever to grace our screens. I loved his deadpan delivery.

My dad - who was a successful businessman, died 10 years ago, before he had the chance to see me set up my business, I would love just to sit and talk business with him.

If you were stuck on death row, what would you pick for your final meal?

Baguettes because although I love them, they make me feel sick but then it wouldn't matter much then would it?, ham and mushroom tagliatelle and strawberry pavlova as I adore meringue.

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

She was gutsy, colourful and very loving.

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

To be able to whizz all over the world with my boys to see my family and friends who are scattered in four corners of the globe. I cannot believe the price of airfares at the moment, three quarters of my airfare to South Africa is fuel and tax!

How do you relax?

Relax, you are joking! When I do get the chance, I love soaking in the bath with a great read.

What's your greatest fear?

Flying and snakes. God, imagine snakes on a plane!

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

I gave a £100 cheque to a very special friend who is in dire straits through no fault of her own. I have also discovered that the giving of girly cupcakes instead of flowers makes a great thank-you present.

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

My lovely boys, Henry and Benjy. I can't even begin to contemplate what life would be like without them.

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

That life is NOT a dress rehearsal, this is the real thing, so don't be afraid and have a go.

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

Although I am not a raging feminist, I would like to see more women in power, women tend not to start wars.

Favourite films of all time?

I am total film nut, so this is almost impossible for me to choose.

Chariots Of Fire - because it is a truly inspirational film about Olympian glory and religious conviction and has the best,

Question time

most recognisable theme tune of all time.

Priscilla, Queen Of The Desert - an absolutely hysterical road movie about two drag queens and a transsexual crossing the Australian outback, an ABBA soundtrack AND Guy Pearce all in one movie!

Singing In The Rain - the tap scene with Gene Kelly and Donald O'Connor is the funniest dance scene ever and Gene Kelly knocks spots off Fred Astaire.

Favourite books of all time?

This is so difficult as I am a voracious reader.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne. As soon as I'd finished it, I read it again in floods of tears. It is written from a nine year old's perspective of the Holocaust and has the most shockingly, moving ending I have ever read.

The Shell Seekers - Rosamunde Pilcher - a beautifully crafted story about a Cornish family during Second World War. Can't recommend this book highly enough.

All of Enid Blyton's books - these books shaped my childhood and I especially loved Mallory Towers, although my illusions were slightly shattered when I went to boarding school expecting midnight feasts and lashings of ginger beer. Instead we had to check our shoes regularly for scorpions, and sleep under mosquito nets as we were out in the African bush.

Favourite albums/songs of all time?

Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves by Giuseppe Verdi from Nabucco - it's my mum's favourite and my husband, Karl, sang it at my brother's wedding and there wasn't a dry eye in the church.

The Holy City (not to be confused with Jerusalem) - this was the first song I sang in the choir at my lovely boarding school with my totally inspirational choir mistress. I can barely sing it through without getting an enormous lump in my throat. Music is so evocative.

Erasure - I was a massive fan and attended eight of their concerts, the furthest one away was in Edinburgh. I was even a member of their fan club.

Websites you use/value the most

Strictly Come Dancing Digital Spy (I am completely obsessed with SCD, this is a forum which gives all the behind-the-scenes gossip and who has been evicted).

Hecklerspray - provides a wry look at showbiz and the peculiarities of celebrities

BBC five day weather forecast - how sad!

Favourite restaurants

The Red Lion at Milton Bryan - the staff are great, nothing is too much trouble, it has a lovely ambience and the food never disappoints.

The Carriage House at Claydon House is a very special dining experience.

Marcello's in MK - the best pasta for miles around.

I am not a huge fan of eating out as I am always disappointed, English customer service sucks!

Have you got a favourite shop within 20 miles of MK city centre?

As an image consultant, I shop for other people every week and can always find a fantastic choice of clothing for my clients who are aged 19-70 in John Lewis.

I visit Bicester Village twice a year and get some incredible bargains.

You're taking friends or family out for the day, but you can't go more than 20 miles from MK. What's your recommendation and why?

I recently took my boys to Bletchley Park for the Ian Fleming Centenary Day and all the Aston Martins aside, Bletchley Park is just the most fascinating place, I love Second World War memorabilia, there is a mini wartime cinema with Pathe news and old cameras, the Churchill Room is amazing. There is a super little model railway display and the actual grounds are lovely. I have lived in MK for 10 years and I have been meaning to go for years. I will definitely go back for a picnic in the summer and have a proper look around minus two easily bored boys!

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

Well I have been obsessed with ABBA since the 1970s and it was deeply unfashionable to like them for about 20 years but I was obviously ahead of my time because it's no longer shameful to admit liking them.

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

Gok Wan is my idol as the way he deals with clients is so empathetic and that is how I am with mine. He truly loves what he does and so do I.

What do you go out of your way to avoid?

Nightclubs, strobe lights, sweaty men, a crowded dance floor and appalling dance music - this is my idea of hell. Fast food, makes me feel sick and never fills me up. The plethora of soaps on TV, I used to be a complete addict but I think they are such a waste of time.

Most adverts really annoy me too, thank God for Sky+! Supermarkets on a Saturday, last week my cupboard resembled Old Mother Hubbard's so in desperation, I went to Tesco and nearly had a nervous breakdown. I once spent five hours circumnavigating the M25, this motorway is truly the road to hell. The list grows longer as I get older....

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

As I am rubbish at remembering jokes, mine is short and sweet and I can't forget the punch line!

Man goes to the zoo and the only exhibit is a dog.

It's a shih-tzu. Boom boom.

Fancy putting yourself in the frame for this weekly format? Then email contact details to first@mkcitizen.co.uk and we'll be in touch