



© Alamy

THE 50 DIARIES

## The 50 Diaries: June

BY KATHLEEN BAIRD-MURRAY  
22 JUNE 2018

In her latest column for British *Vogue*, contributing beauty editor Kathleen Baird-Murray shares her experience of turning 50 this year. This month, she considers how to tackle the murky area of cosmetic procedures.



### The Wellness Tally So Far

**Time spent feeling anxious:** 1,440 minutes or one full day this month.

**Proportion of which was related to actual problems worth feeling anxious about:** One fifth. **Time spent feeling anxious about feeling anxious:** 2,880 minutes. (Make it stop).

### “Everything is stacked against you. If you’re a woman I mean. From the second you’re born it’s downhill all the way...”

My 18-year-old son is helping me with a zip. It’s a side zip which tugs up jerkily from the waist to the underarm. Nothing unusual. But in his eyes it’s not just a zip, it’s an item of clothing which is impractical, uncomfortable, and yet another thing that women have to put up with.

*Read more: [The 50 Diaries: May](#)*

“That’s nothing,” I say. “I’m about to put on a pair of four-inch stilettos and hobble down the stairs to head off into the night to attend a party I don’t want to go to where I will stand around until my feet ache and I get to go home.”

“Then why do you do it? I mean... Zips. Heels. And that whole big deal about getting older... No man would ever put up with all the crap women have to put up with.”

Ah! My work is done. I have raised a feminist. Whoever the lucky person is who gets to share a romantic, creative, blessed, whatever life with my son, rest assured, you’ve found a good one. No forcing yourself into Louboutins or worrying about how you’ll pay for Botox here. “I’m not being a feminist by the way...” he shouts down the stairs as I leave for the party.

*Read more: [The 50 Diaries: March](#)*

Of course, we all know it’s been stacked against us on the shoe/zip/ageing front for a long time. The relationship between feminism and worrying about one’s appearance is a shaky one at best. First we had the poster-girl feminists - Naomi Wolf, Gloria Steinem, Simone De Beauvoir, beauties whose beauty didn’t detract but quite possibly brought more attention to the conventions they challenged, pushing the world to wake up and at least give us better advertising/*Ms* magazine/a critique of the patriarchy that bravely set the standards for modern feminism. But before that there was Madame Noel, a rarely spoken about French suffragette who also worked as a plastic surgeon, and often gave pro-bono face lifts to women whose income depended on them looking a certain way (ie not old). Ethics, principles... lest we forget, these are luxuries if you can’t afford to put food on the table or pay for your rent.

I feel conflicted about surgery and injectables, and yet recognise the lack of logic about this stance - after all, I dye my hair without even thinking about it. Should I file this particular conundrum under “vegetarian who still wears leather shoes”? (Something else I do). In spite of the fact that most of my friends and colleagues seem to have accepted and/or embraced this as the future, for me it still feels like a bit of a cheat, a line crossed against the sisterhood, and therefore all humanity. But is this old-fashioned of me? At 50, should I be reconsidering a stance that to everyone else is a little outdated, long forgotten?

*Read more: [The 50 Diaries: April](#)*

I consider all this as I meet with my friend, erstwhile colleague and former *Tatler* magazine beauty director Olivia Falcon, who founded *The Editor’s List*, a concierge service to give women honest advice about what cosmetic procedures might suit them, and who they should choose to do them. Olivia gently humours me, looks at my face, and runs through “options”. There are treatments I can have without going near a needle or a scalpel. And others that involve only tiny needles. Teeny tiny ones, I optimistically imagine. “But how invasive are these treatments? How much downtime will I need?” I ask. “And how can you trust anyone?”

And so Olivia tells me about Renee Lapino, a medical facialist from Texas now in London, who has a space-age sounding machine called the Venus Versa which delivers a radio-frequency current in micro-columns to the crepey skin on the neck. “You’ll love her, she’s brilliant, and incredibly knowledgeable about skin.” Then she tells me about Dr Sabrina Shah-Desai, an ocular plastic surgeon who specialises in all manner of things but could possibly administer some Restylane filler to my under-eye circles, plumping them up before strategically placing a thicker filler on the bone at the cheek junction “for a natural result without any speed bump protrusions”.

Have I thought about injections of Profilla (injectable hyaluronic acid) and Botox across the neck? Dr Sophie Shotter is apparently great for this. Then there’s this amazing facialist in Putney who does the most wonderful treatments and I really should meet her.

*Read more: [Are You Ready For Skincare Injectables?](#)*

It all sounds tantalising, a brave new world of perfect skin, with an even tone and just the slightest amount of crinkly lines around the eyes to show that I am in fact a happy human being and not at all the type who scowls permanently at one’s children. But it could also be a minefield. A slippery slope towards - what was that line in the Terry Gilliam film, *Brazil*? “My complication had a little complication”. And where does it stop? What about flabby upper arms? Pigmentation? Rosacea? How would you even begin to unravel such a hot mess of skin ailments and know which ones to prioritise? Just the thought of coordinating all these treatments, complete with downtime is enough to age anyone 10 years. “All these people you’ve described are clearly experts in their fields,” I say to Olivia, “but no one is joining the dots. That’s where you come in.”

And she does come in, in the form of an email pinged its way into my inbox late at night. A detailed brief: a who, what, why, where of people to see - just for consultations, more if I wish so, no pressure to actually, you know, do anything. Olivia will arrange all the appointments for me.

“Let’s start with Dr Shah Desai,” I email back. “But for the record, I’m not promising I’ll do anything.”

*Read more: [The 50 Diaries: January](#)*

**Try:** *Julisis Eyemulsion*, £198. Less is more when it comes to skincare past a certain age. What I love about this little tube of skincare goodness (a light-textured eye cream packed with potent botanicals) is that although it’s meant for the eye area, it works just as well as an all-over-the-face moisturiser for travelling, and is particularly gentle on skins with rosacea. **Buy:** I love former beauty director Kate Shapland’s line of products focused solely on legs - it’s as if she’s reinvented the cellulite skincare category and made it credible. (Did I just say that?) *Legology* Sun Lite, £38, is a tinted sun cream for legs that smells of her signature fragrance, Capri Crush. Stroke it in upwards movements over your legs, being careful not to over-apply at the ankles or on the knees, and hey presto - tonight Matthew you are Gwyneth Paltrow in *The Talented Mr Ripley*. **Do:** In a bid to switch off the TV and my phone at night, I find a good compromise is to read the scripts of my favourite TV shows. *The Frasier Scripts* by David Angell is a proper laugh-out-loud-in-bed book featuring several of the show’s best episodes. It’s out of print but there’s usually a few second-hand copies to be found on [Amazon](#).

