

OF NEW MOTHERS IN FORTIES

NEVER TOO OLD
... right, with Alan on their first wedding day in 1979; below their second wedding in Vegas in 2008



WHIPPED INTO SHAPE BY DIET DOMINATRIX

By JENNIFER TIPPETT

I AM in a dungeon, being whipped on the back of my legs with tree branches by a dominatrix.

No, I am not auditioning as an extra for the upcoming *Fifty Shades Of Grey* movie - I am at the *Slimmeria* retreat in East Sussex and I am told this treatment will do wonders for my health.

It is a miracle I am still alive after three days on a raw, vegetarian diet - a meagre 400 calories a day - and a brutal exercise regime.

The birching process, which involves being whipped by branches, is to help stimulate circulation and is brilliant for cellulite and will make my legs as smooth and toned as Elle Macpherson's, apparently.

From the cedar steam barrel, where your body is left to sweat in a locked-up tub, to the honey massage, where you are hit all over your body for an hour by a woman with the sweet nectar on her hands, this is anything but a spa break.

"What doesn't kill you, makes you thinner," owner Galia Grainger bellows to a group of jaded "inmates".

"Diet dominatrix" Galia, from Uzbekistan, calls her guests inmates because the regime is so strict it is not dissimilar to prison. Nobody gets away without being yelled at but everybody goes home having lost LOADS of weight. In three days, I lost 6lb.

A typical day is as follows: At 7am you are woken for a cup of lemon tonic (warm water). Then there is a two-hour hike followed by an egg cup's worth of vegetable juice. Yoga is next, before lunch is served - a plate of raw veg. More exercise follows in the afternoon with more veg for dinner and it is lights out at 9pm.

Galia says: "I am a mixture of a headmistress and a prison warden. I am not here to make friends. I am here to get results."

"Sometimes the guests call me Cruella but 30 per cent of clients return for more."

I leave feeling invigorated. Galia is an inspiration - but she did have me dreaming of Jaffa Cakes.



'MOTHERHOOD OVER 50 CAN BE JOYFUL - BUT THERE ARE RISKS'

SUN Doctor CAROL COOPER believes today's middle-aged women are fitter and healthier than ever.

She says: "More of them are becoming mothers, often through assisted conception techniques.

"Motherhood over 50 can bring huge joys. By that age, a woman is often more settled financially and socially. She does not have the dilemma of putting her education or



By Dr CAROL COOPER

career on hold for the sake of her baby and can therefore enjoy parenting to the full.

"Perhaps most crucial of all, she has often found the right partner. But you cannot cheat biology completely. Mums over 50 have a higher risk of carrying a baby with a chromosome problem such as Down's syndrome.

"The pregnancy is more likely to be

complicated by miscarriage, high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, and even premature labour.

"And in the early days as a parent, there is the very real issue of lack of energy.

"However, the single biggest drawback to being a mother over 50 must be simple arithmetic.

"Her own children will be caring for her much sooner than expected and she is unlikely ever to become a hands-on grandmother."

Number of 40+ women having babies has also doubled since 1971, from 12

