



Above: Julia has presented on a number of shows including GMTV, Watchdog and Wish You Were Here...? Facing page: With her bundle of joy Zephyr as a tot

AFTER JOINING THE PRINCE OF WALES AT HIGHGROVE

'CHARLES TOLD ME HE CAN'T WAIT TO BE A GRANDPA'

PRESENTER **JULIA BRADBURY** TELLS OK!'S NICOLA AGIUS WHY SHE EMPATHISES WITH OLDER PARENTS AND HOW GRATEFUL SHE IS TO HAVE HAD HER ADORABLE SON - WHO NOW MIXES WITH ROYALTY!

Back in the day, whenever Julia Bradbury was asked to jet to the other side of the world to film the latest TV show, the presenter never thought twice about packing her suitcase and digging out her passport. In fact, she tells OK! that she dedicated the whole of her twenties and thirties to establishing her career. 'Everything else was on the backburner, relationships, friends, everything,' admits Julia, 42. 'Yeah, it was pretty hard for me to be in a relationship because how can you commit to someone when you're never there?'

Although Julia's still fiercely independent and loves her job, her perspective on life suddenly changed when she hit 40 and welcomed her first child into the world with her partner Gerard Cunningham. 'Our son has just turned my world upside down and for all the right reasons,' adds the gorgeous presenter. 'Zephyr is now my number one priority. I've spent my whole life concentrating on myself and my career, and I just being able to give all my attention to him now.'

Here, *Countryfile* presenter Julia opens up exclusively to OK! about royal baby conversations with potential grandfather-to-be Prince Charles, what it's like to be a first-time mum in her forties and why she says she'll never wed...

It's an exciting time for the royal family. Didn't you meet Prince Charles recently?

Yes, I interviewed him twice for *Countryfile* at Highgrove - which is his favourite place in the world and where he likes to call home. He is so nice and charming. He was a fine guest of the show and really well-informed.

Did he have a huge entourage with him?

[Laughs] I was expecting him to arrive in the middle of rows and rows of men in black suits with dark glasses, talking into their sleeves, but he didn't. Charles was just happily walking across the fields on his own when he came to greet us. I think because we were at Highgrove, he was in his element and felt really relaxed. Apparently he did have his bodyguards in close proximity but we didn't see them. It was all very discreet.

We hear you try to take your son to work with you when you can - did you take him to meet the future King?

Yes I did actually. It was a wonderful experience.

So Zephyr's not even two years old and he's already mixing with royalty...

[Laughs] Actually I have to say he's doing okay really, isn't he? I guess I've just got to keep this up now for the next 20 years!

During your time with Charles, did he say anything about becoming a grandfather for the first time? He must have been looking forward to it...

Yes of course, he seemed very happy about becoming a grandpa. He was

telling me that the royal baby will really change his perspective on things. Obviously he's a father already but becoming a grandfather has made him think about the future in the long-term. He was telling me that he had been thinking more about what we can do now to protect our planet so that it's a better environment for centuries to come.

Maybe he'll be teaching the royal baby all about greener living...

I should think so. His first port of call obviously lies with William and Harry, though. I would be very surprised if he hasn't taught them about conservation. So it should really be William's job to pass on these lessons to the baby.

Perhaps if he does, William and Kate could appear on the show next with their little one?

Oh, I would love that. And Harry would be great fun too.

You could teach him about environmentally friendly ways to party?

[Laughs] Yes, exactly. He could even help us out with the upcoming *Countryfile* 20th anniversary celebrations.

Talking of parties, both you and Zephyr celebrate birthdays soon. Have you got any plans?

I know, I can't believe he's going to be two next month! We're going to have a huge joint party in the garden with lots of balloons everywhere and lots of running around!

Can we detect a desire to give Zephyr a brother or sister to play with soon?

Kate Garraway recently said she regretted leaving having children so late. As an older mum, I can see where she's coming from. If I had started my family earlier I would have had more children but as I didn't become a mum until I was in my forties, I'm counting my blessings and am very happy to have Zephyr.

Do you regret not starting a family sooner?

I think the biggest misconception about starting a family is that you can put it off and that it will just happen eventually. But that's not the case. It can be incredibly hard to conceive, so to take that for granted is very risky.



But there are a lot of advantages to waiting...

Yes there are. Hard on heart, I personally can't complain. I'm financially stable, I've established my career, and being an older mother, I'm more confident in who I am as a human being. There's also this emotional stability I now have. I don't want to sound smug but they are the advantages I've found with waiting.

We'd never hear you complaining about being tired then?

'I EXPECTED CHARLES TO ARRIVE WITH MEN IN SUITS AND DARK GLASSES'

Not at the moment but ask me in ten years' time! [Laughs] Where my job is so physically demanding, I've always been on the move. So no I'm not tired. Although in ten years' time when my little boy is at his energetic prime, I'll be in my fifties - I'm not sure how I'll be coping then realistically! But for me, honestly the fact I can even have children is a blessing because I didn't even know if I could, with my endometriosis. I'm very lucky. I couldn't imagine not being a mother now.

You and Zephyr's father, Gerard, have been together for a number of years. Can we hear the sound of wedding bells?

Well, I believe in marriage as an institution and I think that if two people want to get married and share that union then they should do it. If it makes them feel secure as a couple, then why not? I also believe that people of the same sex should be allowed to get married.

But marriage isn't a dream of yours?

No. Never. I don't know why. My parents have been happily married for more than 50 years. I come from a secure background but marriage isn't important to me.

What would you say to people who believe that married parents can give a child a more stable home?

I completely disagree. The stability of a home isn't based on a piece of paper. A child doesn't need that. The most important thing for a child is to feel loved and secure.

So you wouldn't be fussed over not having the same surname as your child?

No it's not a big issue although it can make things more complicated, like for passports and when we want to travel. But I think there's more to a person's identity than their name.

What would you do if you found yourself in Angelina Jolie's situation and your child told you he wanted you and Gerard to get married?

[Laughs] I don't know, you'll have to ask me in a few years' time. I don't think he would put that kind of pressure on me and I don't know how I'd react!

COUNTRYFILE IS CHURCH, SUNDAYS AT 9PM. ARIA CO-HOSTS, LONG LIVE BRADBURY ON BBC1, JEREMY AND THE ANDY DALL ON THE TWISTERS ON ITV1, WEDNESDAYS AT 9PM.

TWITTER.COM/ANAGAS NICOLA PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIC. BRIAN AND ARTHUR. 2010 SPRING/2011



Above: Julia says she's not fussed about getting hitched despite the fact that her parents have been married for 50 years. Left: Prince Charles joins Julia on *Countryfile*