

Why would anyone want to HAVE SURGERY?

Countryfile star Julia Bradbury tells Woman why she isn't afraid of the ageing process...

TV presenter Julia Bradbury's life has changed dramatically in the past three years. Having previously believed she'd be infertile, Julia, 42, was expecting son Zephyr, now two, when both her parents were diagnosed with cancer. Best known for her work on BBC1's *Countryfile*, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this week, she's about to face a new challenge with ITV quiz show *Take On The Twisters*. Here, Julia, who lives with property developer Gerard Cunningham, talks to us about ageing on TV and her wish for a bigger family...

I'd love to have more kids, but I think I've left it too late. Being an older mum really works for me and I'm a better mum because of it. It's quite well documented that our son Zeph was a bit of a miracle, so we're counting our blessings. Even as an ambitious woman, everything changed when he came along, and he really is the most important thing. I'm lucky that I have the choice now that I perhaps didn't have 10 years ago, where I have a bit more control over the projects I do, so that they work with my life.

I've always been very close to my parents and they're like a magnet to little Zeph - I can't blame them! Having a child hasn't strengthened our bond as such, because it was already pretty strong anyway, but I feel very lucky to have such a great support system. They're very hands-on grandparents and we call them Yaya and Papou, which is Greek for grandma and grandad, as my mum's Greek. Everything changed in the last three years, as both my parents had their own cancer fights. My dad had prostate cancer and my mum got bowel cancer at the same time. The only saving grace

was that I was expecting Zeph at the time. That was a real help to both my parents and helped them focus.

My feelings on marriage remain the same. Let's just say it's not on the cards. I understand why people ask about it, but it's just something I've never wanted to do. Don't get me wrong, I do believe in marriage, but it's not for me. And I think the most important thing for Zeph is that he's got two loving parents who are here for him. Gerard's an amazing dad.

Telly's a bit like a dress. There are certain dresses you look good in when you're 20 that you no longer look good in when you're 40. Television is

meant to be a tapestry of different colours, but there are certain shows I wouldn't be right for now. It's not just about looking young and amazing any more. You've got to have substance and passion, too. I do try to look my best on screen, but people have seen me with a cagoule wrapped round my eyeballs and my nose dripping with water, so it's hardly a vanity project! It's important for me to work hard and make sure there are still programmes that women of whatever age can be involved in.

I'm very anti-cosmetic surgery. I'm full of admiration for plastic surgeons, who do a fantastic job in emergency situations, and when it comes to reconstructive surgery, but I just can't understand why or how people go under the knife for any other reason. I don't know why anyone would opt to have a general anaesthetic and have someone put a scalpel in your face or boob! You're putting your body through trauma - it just doesn't make any sense to me at all. And you can always tell when somebody's had surgery. They don't look

any younger, they just look like they've had good surgery.

I don't spend my entire life in wellies, romping across fields chatting to sheep farmers! I'm like any normal woman. My mum's a fashion designer so I grew up with an appreciation of fabric and I love to keep up with fashion. I like everything, from Ted Baker through to Stella McCartney. I'm pretty strict with myself when it

comes to cleansing, toning and moisturising, too. I've never gone to bed with my make-up on. If it's a drunken all-night party, I haven't been to bed, so that doesn't count!

I've always been a healthy eater and had an appetite like a horse, but now I'm

more aware of what I'm putting inside me. I'm very lucky, because I've got my dad's build - he's in his 70s and still like a rake. I've got a natural metabolic rate that runs at a thousand miles an hour, but I'm sure that will stop one day, so I top myself up with yoga and lots of walking. But I can't resist a chocolate Hobnob or ice-cream!

Take On The Twisters is a departure for me because I've never done a quiz show before. It's exciting, because to have a completely new challenge come my way at 42 is something I couldn't resist. It's timely as well, because it allows me to spend a little bit of time at home with my little Zeph. I have breakfast with him in the morning, go to work, then I'm home in time for his bath. He's only two, but I can't tell you how fast the time is running away. I'm savouring every moment and trying not to miss too many of them.

I'd love to have a go at acting. I did some drama in my schooldays and I'd love to have another go, but I'd need a

bit of coaching. I'd love to play a baddie in a TV drama - the evil woman you don't know is evil until right at the end. One thing about this job is you can't predict what you'll be doing in five years, so it's all about making the right choices and moving in the right direction. Now I've got experience on my side, I've got producers and production companies that I know and we're all constantly churning out new ideas and hoping that something will click.

Interviewing Prince Charles for Countryfile was a real pleasure. He's properly passionate about the countryside and knows his stuff. We felt a proper sense of occasion when he decided to come on. But I don't really get starstruck. When I was a showbiz reporter in LA for *GM:TV*, I found you got a better interview out of someone if you treated them with respect and just got on with the job in hand. ☺

*** Julia Bradbury hosts Take On The Twisters weekdays at 5pm on ITV and also co-hosts Long Live Britain on BBC1 this week.**



Julia gives a glimpse of son Zeph, now two



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