



FIRST LADY

Club President **Julia Bradbury** shares some behind-the-scenes highlights from her latest TV series

Devon and Cornwall... they go together like tea and scones don't they? Just don't mention the jam first/cream first question. I was on the receiving end of my first death threat on social media because of it. It was a joke, but one viewer messaged me saying "you're dead to me" after I dared apply the cream first in my latest walks series. Comedian and Cornwall resident Dawn French even sent me a photo of a tapestry: "With respect @juliabradbury, may I remind you of this... 'Jam first. No exceptions.'"

You never know what's going to get people talking when you film something new, but luckily the sun-blessed shores, brooding dramatic moors, epic coastal scenery and inviting river banks and villages, were equally noted and enjoyed by the millions of viewers who tuned in (if you missed it on ITV you can still catch up with the eight episodes on the ITV Hub, and all the walks are on theoutdoorguide.co.uk).

Our Club members love camping (and walking) in this wonderful part of the world, so I thought I'd share a few highlights and behind-the-scenes stories in this month's column, in case you were thinking about heading in that direction this summer.

During the series I visited Land's End, Dartmoor, Salcombe, the Dart Valley and loads of other fabulous locations, and met some fascinating people - each with their own unique story to tell.

One couple who didn't end up on screen but really inspired me, are Richard and Nicola Eckersley who run their own zero waste store in Totnes. Richard gave up his life as a Premier League footballer with Manchester United to move to the south-west with his wife, and launch Earth.Food.Love - the UK's first zero waste wholefood shop. Basically, these guys epitomise to me what Totnes - arguably the birthplace of sustainability - is all about. People there really care about the planet and community; Richard and Nicola have gone from living busy city lives to bringing up their kids in a commune with no TV, trying to create a more sustainable simple way of

life. It was a brave decision and they really ooze happiness.

During the same episode (in the Dart Valley) I was lucky enough to visit the Sharpham Estate, which is a fantastic place renowned not only for its produce, but there's a beautiful old stately home there serving as a kind of nature retreat, with an ethos that's all about rewilding and connecting to nature, which of course really resonates with me.

At Land's End the crew and I experienced the most glorious sunset (did you know that sunset in Land's End takes place 22 minutes after sunset in London? Well, now you do). It was a fitting oil-painting end to an episode focused on why the area has attracted artists from all over the world for centuries, including the internationally renowned Kurt Jackson who I interviewed on a cliff-top.

The conditions we had were the best we could have wished for - just a bit cold on the extremities, which Kurt didn't feel at all. In his old tweed jacket and well worn jumper he paints in all weathers and sometimes bits of the landscape and weather system (sand, soil, dust, even rain drops) find their way painted into and on to his oil works. Stunning.

After that it was on to Dartmoor, where I walked from Haytor, one of the National

Park's best-known spots, to Saddle Tor. Dartmoor's a highly evocative place, with its moody landscape covered in dark granite.

On Haytor, I got up to a high point where you could look out over one of the moor's best views. Going back a few years now (!) Queen Victoria had been due to visit Haytor, so in anticipation of her call of duty, some cast iron grab-rails were welded into the rock so she'd be able to make a more elegant ascent to the top. On the day she arrived the weather was a bit wet and she never stepped in the grooves they'd carved out of the rock for her, and her hands never touched the railings.

I, however, took full advantage, and so can you. Thanks to our beloved Queen Vic you can get one of the best views possible of Dartmoor in several easy steps. God save the (former) Queen.

In Salcombe, on a walk to Prawle Point, I met Sophie Horton, who runs A Fishy Business. It's a lovely traditional old fishing lockup, still in its original state, and the owner doesn't want it to become just another boutique shop or duplex apartments - which I think is lovely. Sophie sells delicious locally-caught crab - caught in fact by her husband who's out every day bringing home the fishies. A true family business and rare gem among Salcombe's glitzy high-end demeanour

And out on the South West Coast Path I met Claire Morris, a naturalist, who helped me identify some of the local birdlife and even talked me through the key differences between grasshoppers and crickets, once she'd caught one! In the show we see Claire for about five minutes, but I spent at least three hours with her, picking up on her fascinating knowledge of the flora and fauna of the area.

It was one of the memorable moments of the series for me, and a privilege to share her infectious spirit for the outdoors. By the way, in the UK we have about 20 species of cricket and 11 species of grasshopper, and one of the easiest ways to tell the difference is the antennae. Crickets have longer ones. Thank you Claire. 🦗



▲ Clockwise from top left: Julia with the Eckersley family; picking grapes at Sharpham Estate; a selfie at Land's End; at A Fishy Business in Salcombe; talking crickets with Claire Morris