



SUNDAY

SUNDAY PEOPLE • 25 JULY 2021

JULIA BRADBURY
'I need moments of calm in my life'

BALTIC BANQUETS
Sumptuous summer dishes from Eastern Europe

REAL LIFE
'My rescue dog saved my life – so I set up an animal hospice'

YOUR SEVEN-DAY TV LISTINGS INSIDE

Kate Humble

'You don't need to travel to have an adventure'

PLUS 6 PAGES OF FANTASTIC PUZZLES AND YOUR CHANCE TO WIN £250

'I need moments of calm in my life'

Julia Bradbury reveals the roots of her passion for walking and the challenge that nearly beat her

Local parks and green spaces were our saviours in lockdown, and seasoned walker Julia Bradbury invites us to pick up the pace and explore five terrific trails from her childhood. In a series of online films, the TV presenter urges viewers to spend summer in her hometown of Sheffield, 'The Outdoor City' in the Peak District where her father Michael instilled her love of walking.

Tinsley Canal, Porter Valley and Redmires Reservoir are just some of the beauty spots she ventures out to on the city's doorstep.

"Dad introduced me to my life-long friend, therapist and workout buddy – nature," says Julia. "Sheffield is 61% green space. We must learn to let nature into our lives."

Julia, 51, now lives in London with husband Gerard Cunningham and their children Zephyrus, nine, and six-year-old twins, Xanthe and Zena.

Tell us about your first memorable walk with your dad...

I was about seven, at Stanage Edge, a dramatic moorland in the Peak District with imposing grey rock as its backdrop. I held Dad's hand, feeling awestruck – it might as well have been Everest. A breathtaking landscape reminds me of how small I am in the world.

Do you have a favourite walk to do together?

Dad's 80 and his knees have gone, so he can't reach the

tops of hills and mountains any more, but we love a river section of Dovedale Walk in the Peak District. I'm sad we won't sit atop mountains together again.

Were you always keen on walking?

I was a willing participant in the beginning. Dad is an engaging fellow and would tell me stories to keep me entertained. By 15, walking wasn't as enjoyable as Duran Duran and getting drunk on Malibu and pineapple. But my early experiences stuck with me and I've come full circle.

Do your children enjoy it?

They're mad about nature and love litterpicking. Their favourite day was having a leaf fight and rolling down hills in October's pouring rain.

Does walking help your mental health?

Every doctor will tell you, outside is where you need to be. It makes us sleep, think and communicate better, and keeps us happy.

At home, my happy place is looking down at London from the peak of Hampstead Heath. Hugging trees, looking up at leaves – I need those moments of calm in my life.

How many miles have you clocked up?

Someone worked out that on my walking TV series, I walked to New York and back. I easily walk 40 miles a week in all weathers. I just pick a cagoule to match the



Julia is out with her kids, come rain or shine

day. Deeply unglamorous, but I'm comforted by rain on a coat hood.

What makes the UK so special for walks?

I've walked all over the world, but big countries don't have what we do: a massive diversity of landscapes, with ancient woodland, beaches, lochs and mountains all within easy reach.

Why is Sheffield so special to explore?

These walks show you the variety of Sheffield's green spaces and heritage. They're all achievable, so set yourself a challenge and learn about a new place you've never been to before. My favourite is the Porter Brook walk – a peaceful stream surrounded by woodland, which ends in Endcliffe Park, where I spent my teens.

Do you have any other favourite walks?

Castle Crag in the Lake District is a charming, three-hour walk with a magical, otherworldly summit. It looks a bit like *Lord Of The Rings* up there. It's a brilliant walk for families, too.

What's the most unexpected thing you've come across on a walk?

I did a documentary called *Ultimate Rock Climb*. My final challenge was to free climb a sea stack in Sutherland called the Old Man of Stoer. As it came into view, I nearly weed myself. It's 60m high, with water swirling all around it. I did it, and I never will again!

Julia Bradbury is urging people to get back to nature in a series of walks filmed by The Outdoor Guide in conjunction with Sheffield City Council's Outdoor City campaign. Find out more at theoutdoorguide.co.uk/walks/walks-by-location/sheffield-walks



Julia loves walking with her dad Michael