

The Diary

THEATRE MUSIC COMEDY EVENTS EXHIBITIONS FILM FURTHER AFIELD...

Wild thing

TV STAR BEN FOGLE CHATS AHEAD OF HIS LATEST LIVE TOUR.



Broadcaster and adventurer Ben Fogle is about to tackle his latest walk on the wild side with a new tour full of hair-raising and uplifting stories from a life of amazing encounters.

Best known from hit shows including *Animal Park*, *Lost Worlds* and *New Lives In The Wild*, the popular presenter is preparing to bring his new live tour **BEN FOGLE – WILD** to 22 towns and cities in May and June.

BEN FOGLE – WILD will see Ben sharing stories of hope, possibility and

positivity, all learned from a career which has taken him to some of the most extreme locations in the world, whether filming for documentaries or tackling some of mankind's greatest physical challenges.

But it all began back in 2000 when Ben was one of 36 people to embark on the ground-breaking BBC *Castaway* series, which saw the adventurous souls ditch the rat race for a 12-month social experiment living on the remote Scottish island of Taransay.

"I think it's all luck, but you make a bit of that yourself," he says, reflecting on the past 23 years. "I have always loved travel, nature, the outdoors – that's why I did *Castaway*. But it was a much more intense experience than anything I could have had under normal circumstances.

"I get asked about *Castaway* a lot and will be talking about it on the tour, as it's a big part of me and relative to so much of what I do and have done.

"Y2K' was a definitive time. It was

pre-mobile phones, social media didn't exist, so many things were very, very different. Now things have changed so profoundly it would be difficult to go back to that innocence and simplicity.

"A channel might try it again one day but no one has replicated it so far. Partly due to the fact nothing like it existed at that time, and people went for very pure and innocent reasons. The landscape has changed, people go on TV now for fame and fortune and that naturally changes the dynamic.

"Heading off to spend a year on an island with a load of strangers, gave me a real grounding, and a foundation of what it takes to make a simple, off-grid life."

That foundation allowed Ben to build his career and stood him in perfect stead for his many varied TV projects.

Perhaps none more so than *New Lives In The Wild*, for which he has spent the past 12 years travelling the world to meet people living extreme off-grid lives – in a world now dominated by ease of communication and all-too-often dictated by being on-grid.

"*Castaway* definitely gave me the qualifications to be able to do a series like *New Lives* – to spend time with people living their whole life the way I did for 12 months," he said.

"I have a better understanding of the trials and tribulations, the highs and lows, the benefits and sacrifices they make.

"The more people I have spent time with over 12 years of making that show, the more I understand what goes into making a sustainable, off-grid life like that.

"A lot of these people are quite reserved, not anti-social necessarily, but they perhaps don't enjoy being round other people. But as I have experienced it, they can open up with me – there's almost a mutual respect between us."

Ben's experience of meeting those who live in some of the world's most diverse environments will form the basis of his new tour.

In **WILD**, Ben will take audiences on a journey to relive some of the inspiring and uplifting tales he has encountered on



his travels to places such as the wilderness of northern Sweden, the jungles of Honduras, the hostility of Chernobyl and the mountains of Nepal.

Having previously filmed in Chernobyl, when he met those who returned to live there as it continues to recover from the 1986 nuclear disaster, Ben took the opportunity to go back on a private visit in September, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Early in the conflict, Russian Armed Forces seized the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone – and soldiers were later reported to have radiation poisoning following their operations in the highly contaminated area.

Ben has previously spoken of the emotion he felt at seeing the families he'd previously met there – and more than a year after the invasion he doesn't see it coming to an end soon.

"I fear this is in for the long run, decades and decades of unrest in that part of the world. I can't see a quick resolution unfortunately.

"It's another thing the tour will look at – the effects that war and disaster can have on places, not just the landscape but the people too.

"It seems harsh to say, but war is part of what happens in a world where seven billion people live. It's another way that

man destroys the environment around us – but can also provide examples of how a place can bounce back."

Ben's love of the great outdoors reaches back to his own childhood, where his time was divided between rural Dorset and central London – with extended school holiday trips to the Canadian wilderness to visit his paternal grandparents.

So, for someone who has experienced the wilder side of life – whether directly on his expeditions, or through his encounters with those who make a lifelong commitment to it – could Ben ever step fully out of modern life, and would he take his family along for the adventure?

"I'm incredibly lucky that I get to straddle two worlds, being in the urban world with all it offers then going off to the wilderness – and that gives me perspective, which is so important in life," he explains.

"There's definitely something about that kind of life that appeals to me – but not right now. My children, Ludo and Iona, are 14 and 12 this year, and are very much involved in urban living.

"They are very well travelled. They have spent time in the jungle, in remote islands, wood cabins, the Norwegian wilderness. But then they go to school and are very much engaged with 'normal' society, and love researching on computers, having pizza or going to the cinema.

"We live outside London now, and that helps – we ride horses, go wild swimming, long dog walks. But it's balance; I want them to be street savvy as well as being able in bush craft skills. I want my children to be able to wire a plug and start a fire, to make a bed and to put up a tent. They're all skills for life and don't need to be exclusive.

"It's one of the biggest lessons I think I've learnt from meeting hundreds of people all over the world – that too many people follow a prescription for life and don't think about how you can change that."

BEN FOGLE – WILD is at York Barbican on 19 May. Visit www.yorkbarbican.co.uk to

Words: Paige Bailey



Comedy

Rhys James: Split Milk

5-6 May / City Varieties Music Hall
leedsheritagetheatres.com

Join Rhys James as he brings relatable comedy right to you. Rhys is not scared to laugh at himself and neither should you be! Rhys brings hilarious wit right to front of the stage. With using his Mock the week days to perfect his humour, he is nothing short of a hilarious comedian always wanting to put on his best show.

Jimmy Carr: Terribly Funny 2.0

13 May / Doncaster Dome
visitdoncaster.com

Known for his dark yet hilarious humour and deadpan delivery, Jimmy Carr is back on the road with some brand new material. Best known for his TV show, 8 out of 10 cats, Jimmy is bound to throw out some controversial one-liners, all in the name of comedy.

Film

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol.3

5 May
Marvel brings you their third sequel to the Guardians OfThe Galaxy film series. Well known faces such as Chris Pratt and Zoe Saldana return to their roles for the final film n the trilogy. Watch them try to save the galaxy for one last time, again.

The Little Mermaid

26 May
Watch a childhood classic be brought to life with The Little Mermaid. Based off the 1989 Disney cartoon movie, this re-make is sure to take your breath away as we follow Ariel's journey as she tries to escape the life she knows under water.



Himalayan Garden

Gardens

Himalayan Garden & Sculpture Park: Spring Events

Various dates
Hutts Lane, Ripon HG4 3DA
himalyangarden.com

Rhododendron Experience

24 May
The garden is famous for its extensive and beautiful national collection of Rhododendrons. Come and enjoy a tour, talk and afternoon tea and get top tips on how to care for Rhododendrons and the secrets behind the success and challenges of growing them here. Bring a soil sample from your garden and we will test it for its suitability for growing Rhododendrons. £30 per person see website for details.

Shiny Things Distract Me - A Dragon's Tale

31 May *
Once, whilst in the Peruvian Jungle, Dragonella got distracted by sparkling bright colours in the trees, and now she's spotted them here! Follow her through the garden and keep your eyes peeled as she tells tales of adventure and unexpected meetings with magical creatures. Booking essential see website for details.*

*Dragonella 1-hour interactive tours for 4-10-year-olds at 10.30am, 12noon & 2pm. Tour £10 per child includes entry (normal entry applies for adults, children must be accompanied by an adult). Limited places available. Booking essential - see website for details.

Music

Duran Duran

4 May / First Direct Arena
www.firstdirectarena.com
Formed in Birmingham, in 1978, Duran Duran are one of the most famous rock bands to come out of the UK. The band consists of Simon Le Bon (vocals), Nick Rhodes (keyboards), John Taylor (bass), Roger Taylor (drums), and Andy Taylor (guitar).

The band are ready to take you back in time to some of their greatest hits, 'Come Undone' and 'Save A Prayer'.

Celine Meets Elvis

26 May / Doncaster Little Theatre
doncasterlittletheatre.co.uk
Join this double tribute act as Lisa Press and Jim Santana take their roles as Celine Dion and Elvis Presley.

Lisa Press will be using her performance experience to perform 'My Heart Will Go On', 'I'm Alive', and 'Because You Loved Me', including many more favourites from Celine Dion.

Jim Santana is recognised as one of the greatest Elvis impersonators in Europe and will make sure to include Elvis favourites, such as 'Jailhouse Rock' and 'Hound Dog'.

Interpol

29 May / O2 Academy Leeds
www.academymusicgroup.com/o2academyleeds
Interpol return to the stage in support of their seventh critically acclaimed 2022 album The Other Side of Make-Believe, a masterpiece of sadness, darkness, and introspection.

Classical

Monteverdi: 1610 Vespers, by candlelight

13 May / York Minister
www.yorkminister.org
Written to impress the Pope, it is bound to impress you too. This will be one of history's most dramatic, varied and blessed choral works done by excellent instrumentalists. This will be an extraordinary rendition of religious music.

Andre Rieu

11 May / First Direct Arena
firstdirectarena.com
Experience an emotional journey with violin player Andre Rieu as he performs a mixture of light classics, waltzes, and music from musicals and film. His spellbinding performances are their to pull on your heart strings and are beautiful to witness.

He will be joined by his 60-piece Johann Strauss Orchestra who are the biggest private orchestra in the world. With over 40 million CD's and DVD's being sold during his career and attracting 600,000 fans per year, Andre really is a musical phenomenon.

Theatre

Good: David Tennant

10 May / City Varieties Music Hall
leedsheritagetheatres.com
Doctor Who star, David Tennant, returns to the West End stage to star in CP Taylor's 1981 play, 'Good'. This screened performance shows the life of a German literature professor during the rise of the Nazi regime. The play delves into themes of morality and responsibility.

Anything For Love

5-6 May / CAST Doncaster
castindoncaster.com
Number one recording artist, Steve Steinman, brings you his brand-new production featuring over 25 Meat Loaf and Jim Steinman's greatest hits. Jim has been touring the world for the last 30 years so has well and truly perfected his performance. He will be accompanied by a ten-piece live band. Many of Meat Loaf's greatest hits will be performed, like, 'Anything For Love', 'Dead Ringer For Love', and 'Bat Out Of Hell'.

Events

The D-Day Darlings: King's Coronation Tour

4 May / Leeds Heritage Theatre
leedsheritagetheatres.com
The D-Day Darlings went on Britain's Got Talent and made it all the way to the final. The group are the best all female group to ever come out of BGT as they received a BRIT Certified breakthrough award in 2019 and have since worked with major artists such as Pixie Lott.
The Forces' favourite sweethearts will perform a selection of stunning original songs and popular wartime songs, bringing the sound and sentiment of the era up to date.

Artisan Market

20 May
Doncaster Market
visitdoncaster.com
Doncaster's Market is giving all artisan makers the chance to showcase their products to the community and give them an opportunity to purchase their amazing and unique goods. This includes locally produced arts and crafts, ceramics, jewellery, clothing, flowers, and food and drinks.

Festival

Get Together Festival

20 May
Kelham Island
https://www.gettogetherfestival.com
Get Together Festival will be returning for its third year in a row this year and is bound to be a hot spot with tickets selling at just £35.
Get Together has gained the reputation for being one of the best festivals for independent music, art, food and drink. This festival is hosted in a number of warehouses, breweries and unconventional spaces in order to fit the ten stages in - this is definitely not a small event. Some of the best local independent businesses will be there to provide you with art, food and drinks, as well as the many DJ's and music creators performing to give you a day to remember.

Food & Drink

North Leeds Food Festival 2023

13-14 May / Roundhay Park
northleedsfoodfestival.co.uk
The North Leeds Food Festival will return for its seventh year to showcase the best of food, drink, performing arts and aspiring chefs from the North.

Chefs will be taking centre stage to show off their culinary skills and offer delicious tasting sessions your taste buds wont be able to say no to. You may even be able to learn a thing or two, as they offer top tips from their experience working at some of the best restaurants across Leeds. Food will be available from all around the world as the tastes take you on a journey from one side of the earth straight to the other.

8 independent bars will be spread across the beautiful Roundhay park, offering a selection of wines, beers and delicious cocktails made fresh.
You can sit down in the sun and enjoy your choice of drink as live music plays throughout the two day period keeping everyone entertained. Bring the kids along to enjoy entertainment from Magic Matt and the funfair that will be on site. There really is going to be something to keep everyone happy.

Exhibition

Drawing in the Dark: Henry Moore's Wartime Coal mining Drawings

6 May - 26 August / Danmum Gallery, Library and Museum
visitdoncaster.com
Henry Moore was an English sculptor and artist known for his abstract, organic sculptures. This exhibition showcases some of his best work made as a war artist in 1942. The images are based on a week Henry spent sketching at Wheldale Colliery in Castleford, Yorkshire. These sculptures often depict the human form and are characterised by their smooth, flowing shapes.