

## Feature

After a lockdown hiatus, East Anglian funnyman Ben Langley is back on the road. He talks to **Danielle Lett**

A much-loved performer, who moved the country to tears (of laughter) on Britain's Got Talent, is back on the road, with performances planned across East Anglia – the region he calls home.

Tacolneston-based comedian, actor, writer and director Ben Langley has embarked on a 135-date tour across the country, stopping off at some of Norfolk and Suffolk's most popular venues, and he can't wait to perform for his loyal fans here once again.

But what is it that Ben loves so much about this part of the world? "The people," he says.

"They've supported me so much over the last few years, coming out of the panto in Norwich and onto the Christmas Spectacular at the Hippodrome Circus. I also love the countryside and how green it is. We actually live in my wife's childhood home now, and we feel incredibly lucky to be here."

Originally hailing from the West County, Ben met his wife, Norfolk native Sarah, while the two were working as performers at the Octagon Theatre in Yeovil.

"We fell in love, moved to East Anglia, and three years later we were married," he says.

In 2020, the pair had their first child, Elwood, followed by their youngest, Loxley.

Ben previously trained with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford and spent years working as a street performer in Covent Garden.

Over the years he has become very established in his trade, working with some of the most respected names in the industry – including Joe Pasquale, Cannon & Ball, Su Pollard, Mackenzie Crook, Derek Griffiths and Plácido Domingo. TV credits to his name include CBeebies' Treasure Champs, Detectorists, and Worzel Gummidge.

His hilarious one-man show has gained a huge following with comedy lovers in the UK and overseas – and he has even performed for the Queen at Windsor Castle.

Then there was his spectacular performance a few years ago on ITV's Britain's Got Talent.

"They'd actually asked me a couple of times to audition before, but I gracefully declined. Although I had a great act, I felt that if the judges didn't like me it would be detrimental to any of my future bookings," he says.

But 2018 was finally the right year for Ben – and the next day he headed up to Manchester to audition in front of the panel of judges and audience.

"I actually went on at 11pm and was the last audition of the day," he says.

However, it was clear they'd

Ben Langley  
Picture: DANIEL  
MASON

'I'm looking forward to performing on home turf'





Ben Langley  
Picture: KATE  
ANDERSON

saved the best for last, as Ben received a standing ovation from all four judges and brought the house down with his misheard lyrics routine. Simon Cowell commented: "Ben Langley, you are a very funny man!" – and his performance has since gained a staggering 27 million hits on YouTube.

Ben has continued to perform at venues in the east.

"It's wonderful to have support from the good people of East Anglia," he says.

"I knew that no matter what the outcome was with Britain's Got Talent, I'd always be loved and welcomed back by people."

Everything was going great – until early 2020 when lockdown struck.

Like all performers across the globe, Ben was without an audience – but that didn't mean he sat down and did nothing as he waited for the world to open back up.

"Everybody was affected by it, and we felt like we didn't have a purpose in our lives. I think our daily routines give us a reason to get up every morning – and so many of us were without that," he says.

Not one to rest on his laurels, however, Ben got up each day and still managed to entertain.

"I was striving to remain in people's minds and living rooms, so on my daily runs, I would write, video, and upload a different poem every day. I wrote about 250 of them."

It became such a success that he turned his poems into a book, 'Poems On The Run', which he released in December 2020.

"Creating those comedy poems really helped me get through lockdown and the crazy world that was unfolding in front of us," he said.

Ben is currently planning to release a follow-up book, featuring his poetry from the

second lockdown.

But with theatre doors open once again, he's been busy touring – and the enforced hiatus has made him realise even more how much he loves being on stage, performing for his fans.

"There's an amazing release on both sides of the stage, and I'm still feeling it now. People are delighted to be back, and so hungry for live entertainment.

"I actually mention in my shows how great it is that we can do this again. Two years ago we couldn't – but now we're in the same room, rubbing shoulders with people we don't know and having a beer and enjoying live entertainment. That always creates such a wonderful moment of cheer, and I don't think people will forget that."

Ben will be bringing his family-friendly act to a number of stages here over the coming summer months.

"I'm really looking forward to performing at Fisher Theatre. I did a stand-up night there a few months ago – it's such a lovely theatre," he says.

In between a jam-packed touring special and working on his second book, Ben is keeping busy and always working on new material for both his stage shows and his TikTok page.

"I'm planning on introducing a bit of magic to my comedy act. It's an old routine but I'm sprucing it up, to help keep my show fresh and exciting for my family audience. It's all onwards and upwards now, I'm always looking ahead at dates, but also looking forward to having some time off!"

Ben will be performing at Haven Wild Duck, Tattershall Lakes, The Fisher Theatre in Bungay and Hemsby Beach Holiday Park this summer.

**To keep up to date with him, and for other tour dates and tickets, visit [benlangley.co.uk](http://benlangley.co.uk) or on TikTok @thebenlangleyshow**

## I need a new home...

### Jet, nine-year-old female domestic short-haired cat

Jet came into the centre after her previous owner could no longer care for her.

When first at the centre, Jet did come across a little shy and worried by her new environment but since getting to know her human companions she is starting to show her true affectionate character.

Jet's favourite pastimes consist of sleeping, watching the world go by and cheek rubs! She also loves to sit next to you and let you know she is there by gently tapping you with her paw.

Jet did come into the centre with a weight issue so is currently on a



Jet is starting to show her true affectionate character.  
Picture: RSPCA SUFFOLK CENTRAL

special diet to help her lose those pounds. She will need to continue with this food to help keep her body and joints healthy. This food can be purchased from the centre.

Do you have room in your home for this wonderful girl?

If you think you can offer Jet a home or any other pet in our care, then please get in contact with our reception team by emailing [info@rspca-suffolkcentral.org.uk](mailto:info@rspca-suffolkcentral.org.uk) or by calling 0300 999 7321 between 9am-4pm and we will be happy to help.

## ask the vet

**Nina Downing, PDSA veterinary nurse**



*I've noticed that my nine-week-old kitten sometimes has blood in her faeces. Is this something I should be worried about?*

Finding blood in your cat's faeces can be worrying – there are many possible causes but, fortunately, most of them are treatable. Worms or other infections are the most common causes of blood in a kitten's poo, but it's important to have your kitten checked over by your vet as soon as possible, especially if they seem unwell in any way. The blood may appear as either red, meaning it's fresh, or black, meaning it's been digested.

Fresh blood in faeces is usually caused by a problem in the lower part of the gut (such as the colon, anus, or anal glands), but digested blood generally points to bleeding further up the digestive tract (such as the stomach or small intestines). For more information on caring for you cat, please visit <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/cat-health>

*One of my guinea pigs seems to be laying down and panting a lot recently. Could this be a sign he is too hot? And how can I keep him cool?*

If your guinea pig is taking short, quick breaths and acting lethargic in warmer weather, it could be a sign of overheating. It's crucial to keep your guinea pigs out of direct sunlight with plenty of shade – ensure they

always have access to multiple water sources, to encourage them to drink more. Increase fluid intake by offering hydrating treats like pears, apples (avoid the pips!), and celery – these can be high in sugar so give sparingly or drench their greens in water. Avoid giving your furry friend cold baths, as this could send him into shock. Instead, try making your own ice pack to cool him down – freeze a water bottle and place inside a sock. Speak to a vet for advice if his symptoms don't improve quickly.

*I recently had to take my gerbil, Peanut, to the vet to have her teeth trimmed. What can I do to stop them from growing too long?*

Gerbils love to chew things – it naturally wears their teeth down, preventing them from growing too long – and it also alleviates boredom! Offering tempting things to gnaw on such as banana leaves, cardboard, coconut shells, hay cubes, mineral lava, unbleached loofah, pumice stone, and seagrass, will help to maintain your gerbil's teeth. You can also wash and then bake untreated softwood (on a low heat for an hour) for them to nibble on as a special treat. Good woods to use include apple, dogwood, elm, grapevine, hawthorn, hazelnut, pear, poplar, quince, willow and yucca.

**Nina Downing is a veterinary nurse at the PDSA, answering questions on pet-related concerns**

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