

Bumper Christmas Issue

Woman's Weekly

2 December 2014 £1.75

Our Christmas Gifts To You

WIN **£1,000** Of Christmas Gift Cards A Holiday To Spain!



Quick Knits

Make These In Time For The Big Day!



* UK ONLY. CONDITIONS APPLY

JULIE WALTERS
On Bears, Books And Acting With Broom Handles

Shimmer & Shine

With Us This Christmas!

40 Magical Decs

To Make And Buy



Feel Your Best This Christmas

Why It's Better For Your Health Than You Think

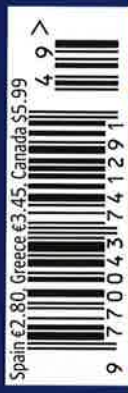


Presenting

Your Perfect Christmas Dinner



Four Readers Get Gorgeous Christmas Makeovers



Spain €2.80, Greece €3.45, Canada \$5.99

Julie Walters Bears All

Starring in the new *Paddington* film, the fun and fabulous actress talks about the notable bears in her life

You'd think having afternoon tea with Julie Walters would be a rather sophisticated affair, after all she's sipping from a fine china cup and saucer and the sandwiches are laid just so, on a floral cake

stand. But this is more reminiscent of a Mad Hatter's tea party, as the oversized armchair that petite Julie is sitting in threatens to swallow her up, then *Downton Abbey* star Hugh Bonneville breezes past, waving his hellos... and the sandwiches are filled with

marmalade! Julie laughs, proclaiming it's more like *The Borrowers* than *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*. 'Oooh, I loved *The Borrowers*. I vividly remember finding the first book in the library, taking it home and feeling that I'd discovered them myself. Pod, Homily and Arrietty were my little secrets that I thought no one else knew about. I still can't pass a hole in the floor without wondering if they're down there!'

Busy as ever

As bizarre as this all sounds, there is a perfectly good explanation - we are here to talk about Julie's new film, *Paddington*, in which she stars with Hugh. It's the heart-warming story of how the lovable bear arrives at the station with a label attached to his coat, saying, 'Please look after this bear. Thank you.'

Julie plays the Brown family's housekeeper, Mrs Bird, who looks more like a plumper

Mrs Overall from *Acorn Antiques* than the slim, glamorous woman sitting in front of me now. Dressed in skinny brown jeans and a beige jumper, Julie's once cropped hair, has now grown out and the all-over grey has been replaced by a smattering of honey blonde highlights. She's just stepped off a plane from Penang, Malaysia, where she's been filming another project, but she looks fresh-faced and relaxed. 'Oh, I don't know about that,' she says. 'I'm 64, tired, jet-lagged, and have gone through the menopause! But people keep telling me that 60 is the new 40, so maybe that's what it is!'

Since we last met 18 months ago, Julie has been trying to balance her career and home life on the farm she shares with her husband of 30 years, Grant. 'I'm getting there,' she says. 'I've just got back from being away for four weeks and I was offered to go straight into something else, which in my younger days I would have jumped at, but I just don't want to do that any more

- I can't do it - I'm too tired.' I remind her that if the new *Paddington* movie is a

Paddington



Paddington still has bear appeal 50 years on



The cast of the new *Paddington* film

success, there are another 150 books left to film. 'Gosh, I'll be in work until I'm 130,' she shrieks. 'I'll be far too tired to do it then!'

Childhood memories

She agreed to do *Paddington* because she thinks it's a wonderful story about humanity - about being different - an outsider, who is ultimately accepted. 'I think we're all guilty of not understanding someone who doesn't fit in,' Julie says. 'I remember feeling that myself when I was little. My mum had saved to send me to a private school, but we were working class and all the other children were middle class and didn't speak like me.

Throw in a staff of strict and unforgiving nuns and it was hell on Earth. I wasn't happy because I was made to feel different, and this film is about not doing that - of being inclusive and living in harmony.'

Paddington's enduring appeal, 50 years after he was created by Michael Bond is, Julie believes, his innocence. 'All teddy bears are innocent,' she says. 'I have always had teddies in my life - in fact, two of them are almost as old as I am! Tedland was given to me when I was born and has grey curly hair and a missing arm - my mum said

I was sick on him and his arm rotted away shortly afterwards! Big Ted was

given to me by my parents when I was two and they both still take pride of place in my bedroom today. Big Ted shudders when you pick him up and makes a throaty kind of noise, which is exactly how I feel most days, but I'd never part with either of them. They were the first thing I was able to hold on to - they're warm, cuddly and give you security. I was able to give them all sorts of personalities and enjoyed making them who I wanted them to be. I've even got two tiny bears called Teeny Teddy and Teeny Bunny who go places with me, but I won't go

the hours we did, so they'd be filmed first and we'd pretend to be in the scenes with them afterwards. Sometimes I wish the real person was there, but there have been other times when I have filmed with a real person only to think that a ball on a stick would have been a better alternative! I won't name names, though.'

The biggest perk of the job, for Julie, was undoubtedly the home-made marmalade that Michael Bond's wife Susan brought on to set. Initially, Julie intended to keep it as a treasured memento of her

time on the film. However, her sweet addiction soon got the better of her and

she managed to devour the whole jar, along with a loaf of white bread and half a pound of butter in one weekend. 'My husband was devastated,' she laughs. 'He's got a sweet tooth as well, but he didn't so much as get a sniff of it. 'I can't believe you've not left any for me,' he cried. I tried to, but I couldn't help myself - it was heavenly.'

Paddington tales

Her eyes are still rolling at the memory of it when, all too soon, our chat has come to an end and she says her goodbyes as she's ushered out of the grand drawing room. But wait a minute... where's that cake stand with the sandwiches gone? **Paddington is in cinemas from 28 November**

'I have always had teddies in my life - two of them are almost as old as I am'

Readers' Bear Necessities



This is the first teddy I designed and knitted - and I just couldn't bear to part with him!
Pat Alinejad

I remember, with love, my hand-me-down teddy made by sailors on my father's ship back in the Second World War. He was so unique!
Sue Reade

My teddy is over 75 years old now. He was given to me by my grandfather. Ted has lost his growl and almost all of his mohair now.
Jen Murphy



I never had a teddy when I was a child, so my husband bought me a 70-year-old one for my 70th birthday! And here he is.
Julie Mason

