20 questions

For KAREN TURNER, multi-award winning local writer and director, the move to Devon proved to be the pathway to career success

How old are you? 52.

Where do you live?
Just outside Exeter.

Do you have a partner, children and/or any pets?
I met my husband in 1995 which now I write it seems like a very long time ago! We are married, have two children and an eight-year-old yellow Lab called Milo.

How did you get into your business?
When I left university, I worked for the BBC and independents as a news reporter and newsreader both for radio and television. The decision to move to Devon with two small children changed everything but I continued to make documentaries and to write. This led to collaborations locally, making films both as a writer and director and ultimately to setting up a production company locally with a fellow filmmaker.

Can you tell us a bit about your business?
Lightning Oak Productions is an award-winning film production company.

What's the one tip you would give to start-up businesses?
Have passion for what you do and believe it will succeed – if you don't know-one else will, unfortunately.

What's the one object you cannot live without?
It's a cliché but it would have to be my phone.

How would you describe yourself?
Family-orientated.



ABOVE: Karen Turner, multi-award winning local writer and director

Why should people come to Exeter?
The city has the most amazing atmosphere. Shops, fantastic restaurants, bars and history all rolled into one.

What do you think the city is missing/lacking in?
More assistance for independent businesses to set-up and operate in the city centre.

What is your greatest strength? I was once assessed by a human resources officer and told I was a "completer/finisher" – it's a blessing and a curse!

What is your biggest weakness?
Forgoing sleep in favour of getting a project finished. Eventually it catches up with you.

Where's your favourite holiday destination?
Portugal. Sun, sea and mountains to explore. Beautiful.

What book are you currently reading?
I've just finished *Something to Live For* by Richard Roper.

What's your best dinner party dish? It's got to be Paella and Spanish orange and almond cake for pudding.

If you could invite any three people in the world to said dinner party, who would they be and why?
Michael Macintyre for the laughs, Adele for a refreshingly honest insight into mega stardom and Tim Peake for a first-hand account of what it feels like to be propelled into space at 17,150 miles per hour.

If you were Prime Minister for a day, what would you do?
Overhaul the education system – might take more than one day though...

If you could re-visit your younger self, what advice would you give him/her?
Obstacles are inevitable; the trick is finding a way around them and moving on.

What's the craziest thing that's ever happened to you in business? As a journalist I was once taken to a secret location to interview five militant activists all wearing balaclavas...I probably wouldn't agree to anything like that now.

Describe your perfect Sunday.
A long walk on Woodbury Common with the whole family and Milo followed by Sunday lunch in a pub. And in the evening, a trip to the cinema. Family, food and film are my top three favourite things. ◆