



COUNTRY WALKING OCTOBER 2008



"It's the best of both worlds. I now have the chance to walk, cycle and swim every day I'm in Mallorca."

NAME Peter Berkeley.

AGE Over 30!

LIFE BEFORE For over 20 years I've worked in events – producing corporate and awards shows. These are high-pressure and high-profile, demanding extreme concentration and commitment. Opportunities to relax were minimal and the chance to repeat youthful experiences of pot-holing in the Yorkshire Dales and walking in the Peak District were a distant dream.

LIFE NOW I run a rural activity centre – the Centro Rural Sineu – in Mallorca from April to October and during the winter months I still work on awards shows in the UK. It's the best of both worlds. I now have the chance to walk, cycle and swim every day I'm in Mallorca, and enjoy the company of like-minded people who come and stay.

WHY THE MOVE? After I got married in the 1970s, my wife and I worked in Mallorca for five years. We returned to the UK to pursue our careers and raise our children, but living in London we could only dream of wide-open spaces and agreeable weather. In 2000, we began the process of returning to Mallorca,

remortgaged and bought a property to run as an activity centre.

TOUGHEST BIT Not seeing my family. My wife continues to work in the UK although commuting to Mallorca for long weekends is easy thanks to budget flights. The upside of being here alone is my Spanish has improved immeasurably.

BEST BIT The weather, the space, being able to plan things without worrying it will rain. And having mountains, wild coasts, sandy beaches, and glorious undulating countryside, all within a few miles. I'm fitter, healthier and happier and looking forward to a seven-day trip through the mountains soon – not something I could have done a few years ago.

TOP TIPS Make sure you have a clear business plan and sufficient finance, but be prepared to continually change everything, including your expectations, as the project develops. Learn the language and understand and respect the local population – they're not different, you are. And understand that what you see as extremely hard work, your friends will see as one long holiday.
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