



Finding Our Way with Every Body Outdoors - big bodies, good kit and community (ft. Steph Wetherell)

Mary-Ann

Hello, I'm Mary-Ann Ochota and welcome to Finding Our Way, the podcast from the British Mountaineering Council, a.k.a. the BMC. It's all about diversifying the voices we normally hear, talking about the outdoors.

So in each episode we talk to people who are usually busy climbing, mountaineering or walking, and we find out from them what they've learnt from their adventures and perhaps what the rest of us might learn from them as well. So think good chat, memorable stories and hopefully some insight and inspiration from people who are making real change happen.

Okay. So joining us today is a long-distance walker who is co-founder of Every Body Outdoors, a movement fighting for better representation, clothing and gear for larger and plus-sized bodies in the UK outdoors. So for some of us, this is going to be a welcome and long overdue clarion call demanding a shake-up of sizest attitudes in the outdoors. But for some of us, this might be an issue that's new.

Think about it, though. When was the last time you saw a plus sized person featured in an outdoors magazine or social media feed? If you wear a size 24, where would you go to get technical clothing that can deal with a full day in the Scottish hills? Our guest is getting to the heart of bodies in the outdoors. So connecting with us from Bristol, welcome, Steph Wetherell! Hi.

Steph Wetherell Hi. Thanks so much for having me.

Mary-Ann I'm very excited to talk to you about this. Let's start off with how you got into hillwalking and hiking.

Steph

I guess I'd always kind of done a bit of ambling in the countryside, but it wasn't until about ten years ago I was living in Canada at the time and my friend Rosemary took me on my first big hike up into the Valhalla Mountains and I genuinely didn't really realise I could do it.

I thought because I never saw bodies like mine represented in the outdoors that things like climbing a mountain were just not something I could do. But she was one of my good friends and she took me on a walk that she'd already done so she was able to kind of explain to me what it was going to involve. She lent me all the kit I needed, like her partner's rucksack and off we went. It was a kind of overnight trip; we hiked up to a place called Gwillim Lakes and camped there overnight, and I just fell in love with it.

So when I came back to the UK, my sister subscribed to Country Walking magazine and she cut out all the walks in the south west for me and I just started going off on my own and following the routes and just kind of getting the confidence. And realising that I could do it and building up my walking fitness from there.

Mary-Ann

So you describe this, kind of, not being sure of what you could or couldn't do it. How much do you think that was external societal pressure, that idea of, you know, 'I don't see anyone else who looks like me doing this'? Or how much was it a sort of an internal voice?

Steph

Mostly the former, I'd say. I think a huge amount of it was that, you know, you open an outdoors magazine and there's nobody who looks remotely like me in them and I think I just thought that there was no way a body like mine could do it. And it was before I got on, I guess, before I got on Instagram, before I started finding people like 'Unlikely Hikers' in America, and Jenny Bruso, who've been really showcasing a lot of this. You know, before that, my intake was just a fairly kind of standard outdoors media.

And there probably was a little bit of self doubt in my mind. But, you know, at that point I was working as a farmer. I was quite physically fit even though I was, you know, at that point probably a size 18. But I didn't know anybody who did it either and I think for a lot of plus-sized people, that's a real barrier. It was like, how do you get started?

You know, maybe you've got an interest in it, but what's that first step for a lot of people going along to a standard walking group, there's a massive barrier there because, you know, what if they're the slowest person? What if they can't do it? What if people look at them? What if they don't have the right clothing and kit? There's a lot of challenges around that.

Mary-Ann

I mean, that gets us to that idea, isn't it, that I think in the outdoors, on Finding Our Way, we talk a lot about some aspects of diversity - or lack of diversity - in the outdoors, whether that's in representation or participation. Things like ethnicity, gender, disability, perhaps. But some people won't have thought of size, body size. Is it really that divisive, that prejudiced, that unwelcoming?

Steph

Yes. I mean, imagine going into a shop and not one single thing in that shop will fit you. Like an outdoor shop. So I can go into like a huge amount of the major outdoor brand shops, and there's not a single thing that will fit me. Like last year, I almost had an anxiety attack in a shop in the Lake District when I walked in, just trying to find one thing in my size. And I'm currently a size 20, which is not, you know, not particularly large on the plus-sized spectrum. I found two things in a three floor shop that were in my size. And I mean, that's that's a great way to make you feel unwelcome in the outdoors, is just to not make clothing in your size. And then the clothing that is available does not fit.

So instead, you end up having to go to the men's section, which is pretty humiliating for a lot of women. You know, when you walk into a shop and the shop assistant tells you to go to the men's section, that's a pretty horrendous experience for people.

And then you follow these brands and there's nobody that looks like you. There's nobody that looks even remotely like you represented. And obviously the representation issue is a huge thing across a lot of aspects of diversity, it's not just a size issue. I got very excited recently when I saw my first UK major outdoors brand having a plus-size model. So North Face have just put a plus size model on their feed. I mean, she is wearing athletic leisurewear I would say, rather than technical hiking gear, but I still got really excited because I've not seen that from a single UK outdoors brand, a major one. Full stop. Not one photo.

Mary-Ann

What about the people...And I'm aware, Steph, I don't really know how to phrase this question without sounding rude, basically...but what about the people who say, 'Oh, well, that's because this is

equipment and clothing is for people who are fit and want to go and do big, athletic, outdoorsy things, which isn't you, love!' Where is the thinking wrong in that statement?

Steph

I'll see you at top of the mountain and we can talk about it there!

I think there's a growing huge evidence base that weight and fitness are not correlated. I mean, I've gone hiking with friends who are a size 8 and I'm fitter than they are. Fitness and weight are not intrinsically linked.

And also, say you are unfit - I mean, surely doing exercise and going walking to get fitter is a positive thing. We still need, people still need the kit to do that. Excluding people from an entire activity because we don't fit your perception of what an outdoors person should look like is horrendous, really. The outdoors is for everyone. The mountains don't care if you're a size 8 or a size 28. So why do people care?

Mary-Ann

It's tricky, isn't it? Because it comes back, actually, when you start to peel back the layers, I wonder if for some brands, for some media outlets, they kind of just go, 'Well, that's not what we, our brand, wants to look like'. And then you go, 'Yeah, but why?' And then you get into pretty dark, gnarly stuff pretty quickly.

Steph

And I think it's funny. Because I feel like the fashion industry has made huge leaps and bounds forward. I'm not saying they're there, but you've got some amazing brands. You've got people like Snag and Molke who make bras, who do amazing genuine representation. But even brands like Marks and Spencers and ASOS are using genuine plus-size models.

But the outdoors movement is stuck in the 1980s where, you know, everybody has to look a certain way. And I don't think brands realise that people are really values driven. I found a piece research recently that suggested using plus-size models actually has a favourable impact on people's view of your brand. Like, if you use more plus-size models, you will probably sell more clothes to size 8, 10, 12's as well as to the plus sizes because people like representation. It's seen as forward thinking, it's seen as kind of 'with the times'.

But the Outdoors movement is, it's just...it kind of astounds me. I mean, America has come a long way, but I think that's because Unlikely Hikers, Jenny Bruso, and a few other people out there have been doing some really pioneering work and knocking on that door. Yeah. So there's some great companies out there who are doing it well.

Mary-Ann

How much do you think sizeism is a society wide issue and are there sort of, I guess, specific aspects that you see or notice in the outdoors industry, outdoors brands or people that you meet on the trail, I guess, or in the YHA or at the top of the mountain?

Steph

I think it's definitely, there's a huge amount of judgement. I'm aware of the fact that as a size 20 I kind of get off lightly with it. I can now buy clothing from a fairly wide range of places, which is very different to how it was ten years ago. But there's a definite society-wide perception about your health and your fitness and judgement.

I was talking to one of the people who came on one of the courses I ran and she was saying that every time she goes to the GP they weigh her. Even if she's going about something else. I mean, I went to the GP to ask about my eczema and I got offered diet pills. It's the perception that everything in your life is related to the fact that you are in inverted commas, 'overweight'. And it's a very blanket view.

It's interesting because for me in the outdoors, my weight does impact my experience. I feel pressure to not fail at things, because if I fail, I'm not just looking bad. I feel like I'm making plus-size people

look bad. If I look out of breath going up the hill, I'm worried that people are going to look at me and be like, 'This is why plus sized people shouldn't go hiking.' Or if I can't, if I go bouldering and I can't get up the wall, it's because plus-size people can't climb.

Mary-Ann

So every activity you're doing, you're representing, you're performing the fact that you collectively should be here, should be entitled to be here. That's a big burden!

Steph

Yeah. I was talking to a friend who's a plumber, a female friend. It is a very male dominated industry. And we were reflecting on her experience as a woman in a male-dominated industry it's that she feels like she's representing the entirety of female plumbers, when she's working.

Mary-Ann So if she's got the wrong wrench, it's because women are rubbish at plumbing?!

Steph

Yeah! And I know some of that thought is in my own head and I've kind of got to get through that. But I face a lot of judgement from people when I'm out hiking. People assume, they look at me and they assume I'm a beginner. They presume I don't know what I'm doing. They presume I'm about to try and climb something, you know, a mountain that's way out of my ability. People can't hide that look of surprise in their face when I'm like, 'oh no, this is one of my favourite walks. I do this all the time'. And you get a lot of faux encouragement. Like, 'you're almost there. You can do this! You got it' you know? 'Well done you!' and actually, if that happened once or twice, you might be like, 'Oh, that's nice. That's just people being friendly.' But when it happens all of the time and it doesn't happen to the person who's straight size who you are with.

Mary-Ann

Right, it reveals that it's people's prejudice rather than positive.

Steph

People have preconceptions and judgement that you need this encouragement to do it. Yeah. And multi-day walks is probably where I've found the most surprise from people that I'm doing the same route that they're doing.

Mary-Ann

Do you think it's surprise borne of the fact that they don't often see people with plus-sized bodies as well? Or is it something more pernicious than that?

Steph

No, I think it's I think it's because they're consuming the same media. And actually, I hold brands and magazines and the media to account for that because that's what people are consuming. They're scrolling the Instagram feeds of the brands. They're reading those outdoors magazines, and they never see bodies represented. So for the same reason that I didn't think I could do it for such a long time, they don't think I could do it.

And actually, I've had friends who've messaged me saying, 'Thank you so much. I've learnt so much from following what you do. I am humbled because I genuinely didn't realise that people in larger bodies could do these things'.

And I'm constantly inspired by some of the people I've met and started following through Every Body Outdoors. Some of the climbers are absolutely amazing. And I think climbing is one of those things that I always thought I couldn't do, or at least I couldn't do very well. And so it's really been great for me to be inspired as to what is possible, what's possible in my body and to push myself outside of that comfort zone that I'm in. So I just think it's really important to diversify what we're consuming. Whether that's following some different people on social media, whether that's challenging brands and magazines to show different shape and size bodies, it's really important.

Mary-Ann



Yeah, and I guess, you know, before you said that there's evidence that suggests, research, that suggests that people are values driven, consumers are values driven, so they can go, oh, you know, this brand actually practices what it preaches and has diverse feeds and images. But I guess even if a brand said, we're going to take a hit if we post all these various bodies and abilities and, you know, how people look. Maybe that's the kind of the crunchy step in order to actually effect a wider change. And until we all embrace a kind of more equitable equation.

Steph

I would say that if brands are going to start using plus size bodies, they have a bit of a responsibility to manage that. There was an incident with 'Fat Lad At The Back', a cycling brand, that is kind of set up around diversity and different shape bodies. But some of the...

Mary-Ann

That's the name of the brand?

Steph

Yeah, Fat Lad At The Back. So that's a cycling brand that goes up to large sizes and they have a 'Fat Lass At The Back' side [too]. But specifically their women's plus size models - there was an incident recently where there was a load of hate put on some of their social media posts and they managed it, they dealt with it well. And I think that's really important that the brand is on it and shuts that down and moderates that.

I'd question as to whether you'd want the customers who think that fat and plus size bodies shouldn't be in the outdoors?! And I think, maybe this is also why at the moment we're having more inroads with some of the brands who are quite values driven in what they're doing already. And they're the ones who seem to be far more open in these conversations.

Mary-Ann

So let's talk about that for a bit then. What are the major problems that your group has found with outdoor clothing? What's going on here? Bear in mind, we are sponsored by Berghaus, so I'm going to go to them for a comment in a minute and lay it out.

Steph

So the biggest problem is that most clothes are graded up from a size eight or like a small size.

Mary-Ann

Explain what that means?

Steph

That means that you design the clothing for a certain size and then you just add inches or whatever measurements to different parts of the clothes. But those errors, by the time you get to a size 20 can be quite large! And also body shape changes, so there's quite a lot of research that shows your hip to bust ratio changes. And also, as somebody who has a belly, my trouser fit is going to need to be different to that of someone who's a size eight. I need my trousers to have a higher rise because it has to come over my belly. If I'm going to be hiking all day I can't have trousers that sit on my hips and fall down.

So I think so many problems are things that don't fit, aren't big enough around the hips, aren't accounting for plus size body shape - so larger belly, hip, bum and trouser-rise but then you get weirdly baggy legs often because they've decided that, you know, they've just graded up the width of your calves. So I had a pair of waterproof trousers that I swear were like a pair of flares. They were so baggy that every time I walked, they flapped against each other.

Mary-Ann

Wait, so because they've added two extra inches to the waist, they've added two extra inches to the calf as well?

Steph

Pretty much! So I think it's just that you know, they've made clothes in a size 20, but they haven't looked at size 20 bodies. It's a major issue. Also, a huge amount of outdoors brands fit small. So I am a size 20 in pretty much everything I wear and then I get to outdoors clothing and a huge amount of brands... I can't fit into a Berghaus size 20. I would say a Berghaus size 20 is a size 18, actually. And they're not generally roomy enough on the hips and the bums, and the trousers are too lowrise. I mean, it's pretty standard across most brands.

Mary-Ann

Is that a vanity sizing thing? Like you were saying, you know back in the 1980s that [puts on a fancy voice] a lady choosing an item of clothing from the peg would go, 'I fit into a 10 or a 12 or whatever.' And actually you don't. It's just they've sized up a bit.

Steph

Yeah. I don't know what it is. There's a huge amount of laziness or not bothering to do the work. I mean, I'm aware of the fact that brands are, you know, up against it in many ways. But actually, all you're doing is producing clothing that doesn't fit. Even like someone like Mountain Warehouse, who go up to a size 28. So at the moment, clothing wise, in a plus size, up to a size 18, you can get, in inverted commas, 'technical gear'; At size 20, a few in 22, you can get entry level gear. I can go to Go Outdoors and buy some of their own brand stuff. Above a size 22, you are basically Mountain Warehouse or nothing, but Mountain Warehouse clothing is a terrible fit! For a brand that makes so much plus-sized clothing, a lot of it is just the wrong shape. I mean, I walked for years in a horrendous shaped coat because that's all I could get.

For the first time in my life, I've just got a waterproof, a technical waterproof that fits. And I don't think I had realised how much stress having a not very waterproof bad coat had on me. Like it didn't stop me doing anything, but it meant I always had to carry spare clothes.

Mary-Ann Because you'd get wet?

Steph I'll get wet. And you know, then especially for camping, you're carrying a spare set of clothes. To go out for the day and be like 'I know I'm staying dry, all day' is amazing.

Mary-Ann Yeah. And something that I guess most people who are committed to walking take for granted unless it's really pouring it down.

Steph Yeah.

Mary-Ann

Wow. That has an impact, doesn't it, on what objectives you might be safe to take on as well? Because if you go, 'Actually the weather's terrible. I don't have the kit that can keep me safe in these conditions and get me down after 12 hours or whatever'. Being a sensible and responsible outdoors person means that you therefore wouldn't take on the objective and you change your plans. Which in itself is terrible!

Steph

Yeah, it's one of the reasons I've probably done a lot more hill walking than mountain walking it's because I haven't felt comfortable that I'm going to stay dry if the weather changes. I've done bits, but it's always been quite fair-weather based or shorter walks. I haven't gone out for the full day or gone somewhere really remote because I can't trust that if something goes wrong, I'm going to stay dry because my coat soaks through after an hour, you know, and...

Mary-Ann Oh, man.

Steph

But that's the reality that so many people are living with. We jokingly did #badlyfittingwaterproof week where we got people to share their photographs of their terribly fitting waterproofs! You know, it's

men's waterproofs, outdoors brands' horrendously fitting waterproofs. People have to have the bottom undone perpetually.

Mary-Ann So it fits over your hips?

Mary-Ann

I mean, I'm a size 16 Steph, and I struggle to get stuff that goes over my bum. And I do have that kind of thing thinking 'I'm not, in the grand scheme of big, I'm not big. What? Who is this? Who are these people that it's designed for? Apart from those kind of very kind of straight up-and-down athletic figures, I guess, like you say, you see in the pictures, but you don't necessarily see on the street around you.

Steph

It's because it's designed for a size eight and then just scaled sideways. And it just doesn't account for body shape, but it is also, most outdoor clothing is designed for a specific shape of woman as well. The thing is, I think we could agree that in women's clothing, one thing is not going to fit everybody. There's so much diversity in body shape.

I'm just waiting for one brand to start doing a curvy range. And that can be like, you know, you can be a curvy size 12 whose pear-shaped. I know people who have to take in their size 12 trousers because the waist to hip ratio doesn't work for them.

Mary-Ann

Yeah. Because there are a sort of high street, you know, everyday streetwear retailers that especially focus on the curve, you know, smaller waist, bigger hips, you know, like you say, where you carry your weight. Is it because brands feel like there's too much diversity of body shape? You know, we're not going to please everyone, so we're just going to do the bare minimum? Because what fits Steph isn't going to fit someone else in the group, isn't going to fit, you know, this third person who has a bigger tummy and narrower hips, or what have you?

Steph I don't even think there's that much thought into it, I think. I think there's a preconception from brands that they probably won't sell very much stuff...

Mary-Ann How big is the market? I mean is there is that demand if it were there, do you think?

Steph I mean, we hit a thousand Instagram followers on our first day of launching Every Body Outdoors. I think there is a huge market and it's not just the market of people like me who are already doing these things and struggling without the right kit.

There's a huge market of people who didn't go on that hike because when they went to try and get a waterproof, they couldn't find one that fitted. There's a huge market of people who would love to give climbing a go, but a too scared to go to the climbing gym. There's a huge market of people who would love to try, you know, paddleboarding, but they are worried that the personal flotation device won't fit. You know, there's a massive untapped market. I genuinely think it's like if you build it, they will come. I think people underestimate what that market is. I mean, if you look at what's kind of currently available - a quarter of women in the UK are a size 18 or above. I had a look on the Cotswold Outdoor website and they had the same number of clothes available in a size four as they do in a size 18. I'm pretty sure, but...

Mary-Ann I don't know many people who are a size four.

Steph

Yeah. And it's just so under-served. And I know that women's clothing in the outdoors, a lot of people struggle with it. But plus-size people are hugely, disproportionately affected. If you cannot stay safe, if you cannot get a climbing harness that fits, if you can't get a waterproof to keep you dry, you know, these are real issues of safety. And I think, you know, there's a huge potential for people to be inspired about what's possible.

Mary-Ann



Yeah! Preach. That's what Finding Our Way' is about! Absolutely. Okay. So as well as actually talking to people with plus sized bodies and doing the fit research, what other fixes could make clothing and gear more accessible?

Steph

So better size-charts on brands websites is a really, really huge thing. So most plus-size people have to shop online because shops don't stock it. So even some of the retailers who do larger sizes, you can't buy them in the shops. So, you know, like I buy most of my normal clothes online. So size charts are really key and accurate size charts. Patagonia's charts for their coat has a chest measurement, but not a hip measurement. It's like, 'Well, how am I supposed to decide if that's going to fit me or not if you don't give me the relevant measurements?'

Mary-Ann

Oh, right. Okay. So you've got that table and it's kind of got the different sizes. So if you had more of the actual figures, so how it fits across the bust, the waist, the hip...

Steph Yeah. So there's missing measurements.

And some places don't have the plus sizes. So Go Outdoors, a lot of them don't have the sizes 18 or 20 or 22 measurements on the size charts, the size charts end at a 16 or an 18. So there isn't a size chart at all!

And there's the issue of inaccuracy in size charts. There's a lot of ease built into clothes. One of my colleagues, Emily, she fits between two sizes. And if she had some information about how much ease is built in, she would know which sizes she needs to fit. You know, does she need to size up, so it fits around her hips or can she go for the smaller - for her bust measurement - because she's knowing that the coat's got a bit of give in it.

Mary-Ann

I guess that would make sense in the life cycle of running a retail organization [too]. That actually serves the brand or the shop better as well because they're not getting people returning products that aren't saleable while they're being posted to somewhere and then being returned and all that extra cost and expense and palaver?

Steph

I mean, trying to buy a pair of outdoor shorts, I think I bought five different pairs and had to return four of them. And that's just quite normal. That's my life: studying size charts, googling to see if I can find a picture of a plus-size person wearing it. And that's the other thing that's really good - having different size models because, you know, I don't want to see that piece of clothing on a size 8 body because I don't know what it's going to look like on mine. I want to know how it's going to sit round my tummy. I know what that's going to look like, how baggy the legs are, for example. That would be really useful. I mean, maybe if they put them on some plus size models, they'd realise that the legs are too baggy and the trousers don't come up high enough!

Mary-Ann Maybe they did do those photographs and went, 'Guys, we can't put this out into the public domain! It's terrible!'

Steph

I mean. Well, there's one smaller brand, Dark Peak gear, who do down jackets. And they have a load of different models wearing their jackets and it says the model's height, it says the model's weight, it says some really helpful things. I mean, they don't fit me, it still doesn't go to my size! But as one of the better examples, that's the kind of thing that is useful.

Mary-Ann

Yeah. You have had some recent wins with brands. Tell us about your work with Alpkit.

Steph

So we started chatting to Alpkit, in fact, they got in touch the first day that we launched back in



February. And I think what's been really great about Alpkit is they're really, really committed to this work.

They've invested in their fit team's knowledge about plus-size fitting specifically, and they've just listened. They've really listened to us about what doesn't work in plus size outdoor clothing. So as a result they've actually changed some of the aspects of their clothing. So their trousers are all a higher rise. I think they've slightly increased the sizing as well between sizes, if that makes sense. And then two of us went up for a fitting session and tried on samples and we took along any other kit we had and we spent the whole day there trying on the clothes that they'd got, working out what needed to be changing, working out what worked well.

And the two of us who went up are quite different shapes within the size 20 as well. So it was really useful to them to see it. It's like, okay, that fits like that. That fits her better than it fits me. And that's okay because this fits me better than it fits her. You know, realising it doesn't have to fit everybody brilliantly. You know, not every item in Alpkit's new size 20 range is going to fit me perfectly, but that's okay because some of it will. So they're actually bringing out the entire of their range in size 20. And we're also working with them to make sure that the kit side of things, so things like rucksacks, sleeping bags... is proportionally going to work for larger bodies as well.

Mary-Ann Oh yes, sleeping bags! I never thought of that, of course!

Steph Oh, my goodness. And the thing is, if you can't get a lightweight technical sleeping bag that fits you, it means you can't wild camp.

Mary-Ann You're so right. You'd have to get one of those really rubbish, massive cold ones from Argos, which is basically for kids going on Brownie camp.

Steph Yep.

Mary-Ann Yeah, that's not going to work you know, on the TGO Challenge is it? Steph, you're blowing my mind!

Steph

Yeah. It's so far-reaching it's like it's not just that. It's climbing harnesses, its PFD's [personal flotation devices]. It reaches into so much stuff, you know. But I think the thing with Alpkit is that they have a really good understanding that size 20 isn't inclusive, that's not their end goal. They're on a journey and we're going with them on that journey.

And for me, they are the brand who has been most open, who has listened, who want us to speak to their store staff about our experiences as plus size people shopping, so that they know how to welcome people into the shops. You know, they want to talk about representation and that kind of stuff. So it's been a really, really positive experience that and I'm kind of looking forward to seeing where that goes, really.

Mary-Ann I looked at their Instagram this morning though, and it is quite a straight-sized visual representation. I had a moment when I was like 'Oh they're brillia... oh wait a minute...'

Steph We are working on that

Mary-Ann Okay, good.

Steph I think it's something that they are aware that we have a lot of opinions on. So I hope that is really going to change in the next six months. The plus size market, you know, is there, but plus size people don't do well with tokenistic work. You know, it gets called out. But I genuinely, I've talked to lots of different teams within Alpkit and I feel like it's a really embedded change. And it's not just like, 'oh, we're going to make some coats and put them on the website'. You know, it's something they're really committed to and want to see and are quite vocal about it. They wrote a really great blog recently that's up on their website kind of all about their approach and what they've learnt.

Mary-Ann That's cool. We shall include a link in our episode show notes folks, if you want to follow up on that. Steph, through Every Body Outdoors, you started organising Mountain Skills courses exclusively for plus-size folk. Tell me about that. What made you set that up?

Steph

So weirdly, it's actually something that proceeded me actually setting up Every Body Outdoors, because I wanted to do a Navigation course. And then I got super anxious myself about the idea of going on a course with a lot of people and being really worried about being left behind on the pace and being self-conscious about my body. And then I met a Mountain Leader called Kat who runs Latitude 534 based out of Snowdonia and she does loads of work with groups that are underrepresented in the outdoors and so just instantly had a really good understanding of what I was talking about and my experiences. And so we decided to put on a couple of courses. So in March we ran two courses specifically for plus-size people - a two-day introduction to Mountain Skills covering kit and gear, some basic navigation, safety, you know, the basic two day course.

And it was pretty amazing, if I'm honest. There were so many people who said that either they wouldn't have done that if it hadn't been for this course, if it hadn't been a safe space for them to come and learn. And it also meant that we were able to tailor parts of the course, so we were able to tailor the whole clothing and kit conversation beyond the 'here are all the wonderfully technical things that you should have in your bag' to 'here's what you kind of might want to aim for. But equally, you can just have this', or 'maybe you could do that.' And I was able to share my experiences of, after all the years of searching, the few things I have found that do work or that do fit. We had a little bit of a clothing bring-and-share where people brought things along. So that was really great.

And, you know, we set the pace. I think a lot of people thought that we were just going to be, you know, going up some small little tiny hills. But actually, when we're in the Lake District, yeah, we went quite high. And I think a lot of people wouldn't have felt comfortable doing that in another group, because they would be worried about the pace, worried about having to stop, worried about not having the right clothing and things that add up. But actually in a group of ten people, it was an amazing experience.

Mary-Ann How much is it about finding that sense of community, of sort of kindred spirits?

Steph It's huge. And I think that's the thing about Every Body Outdoors that maybe we hadn't quite considered. When we started it, we were like, 'it's about working with brands, it's about representation', and actually one of the things that I've got most out of is the community.

I'm still in touch with most of the people who came on the courses, in fact there's a bunch of people going camping together later this year and I think until I started doing this, I didn't have any plus size outdoorsy friends and I don't think I realised what I'd been missing because, you know, it is a part of my life and my experience and just having people I can kind of share that with or not have to explain. To meet up with a bunch of strangers and not feel self-conscious about my body. To be able to be on a hilltop eating Welsh cakes and not feel judged that people are going to think that I'm fat because I'm eating Welsh cakes. Which is, you know, I think a thing that a lot of people struggle with, feeling like they can't eat because people will make judgements about what they're eating.

But yeah, just not feeling at all self-conscious about my body or about the speed that we're walking at and just being able to share really openly the experiences we've had. Some really heartfelt conversations and honest sharing went on. And so I've started meeting with some people in South Wales every couple of months to do a walk together, partly because I realised that I've got the confidence and experience now. I've done a lot of walking on my own. I've got good navigation, I can plan a route. But not everyone has that. And I think the gateway entrance in, is, is a real barrier.

Mary-Ann

That's one of the things that I've discovered about my own personal experiences in the hills as well. You know, in daily life, I think being a woman, having a female body, often your body is about how it looks, whereas in the hills it's about what it's doing. And that's really liberating, I think. It doesn't matter how it looks, it's where it takes you. It's what you are enabled to do by the fact that your

muscles are working, that your body is working hard, that you feel strong - or not strong - but working hard on it or whatever is. Yeah.

Steph

I mean, the outdoors has made me fall in love with my body, I guess. In a way, I struggled for years with how I looked in my body, and I think it's shown me, instead of focussing on what my body can't do, what it isn't, it shown me what it is and how strong it can be and where it can take me. I've done some amazing things. You know, I wild camped and and hiked for two weeks on my own in Norway and it's like, 'that's amazing'. My body carried me 160 miles across Norwegian hills carrying a pack of my own. And that's like a marvel to me. And I love the fact that when I'm outdoors, I'm exercising, but it's not about losing weight. It's about becoming stronger and feeling my body becoming stronger. And that's been a real positive for me. Definitely.

Mary-Ann

Amazing. How much do you think the experience of setting up Every Body Outdoors, of finding that community... how much has it changed how you see the role of spending time outdoors or perhaps your focus for hiking and walking?

Steph I love walking on my own and I'm going to carry on doing that. But I think historically I've been I'm quite picky about who I go walking with. If anyone has a hint of summit fever, it's a hard 'no'. I'll walk up a hill with somebody I feel comfortable with. So I have a small group of friends who I walk with. I walk a lot one on one with people. And I've always shied away from groups. And I think Every Body Outdoors has shown me that I actually have a real longing for that community, that going with a group can be a really amazing thing and a really important space and a really nice space for me to be able to share some of the stuff I learn and to learn from others, you know.

It's made me want to try climbing. You know, I've been once to a bouldering gym and it was a pretty traumatic experience because I think there was some kind of competition going on. So there are lots of topless men swinging around on one arm and I was genuinely the only person in there above a size 12 in that bouldering gym and I felt so self-conscious the whole time. But actually the idea of potentially meeting up with some people who are also plus size to go climbing with, some people in that group who have quite a lot of experience, is a really amazing idea for me and an opportunity to try something that I wouldn't otherwise give a go. So I think it's just, you know, it's kind of a little bit like, I believe in life you have kind of lots of different tribes. But, you know, I found a tribe I didn't know that I was missing in many ways and found the community I didn't know I was missing. I made some great friends through it. So yeah.

Mary-Ann Amen to that. What's next? For you personally and for Every Body Outdoors?

Steph So I'm doing two more Mountain Skills courses- one Mountain Skills Course and an Advanced Navigation course this autumn again. And Every Body Outdoors, we are just, I guess a lot of it is continuing the work we're doing. So reaching out to brands, trying to get them to include us in their conversations and their work. We're always up for those conversations and really pushing for that representation, especially with the brands we're already working with like Alpkit.

I mean in the long term we'd really love to help facilitate that community a bit more. I mean, it's a small group of five people who are all juggling jobs and stuff alongside it. So I think, you know, in the long term, that's something we'd really like to look at, how we can do that, how we can encourage that in a responsible way. Just more of the same, more trying to get the word out there and spread the word and challenge people's preconceptions about plus-sized bodies in the outdoors.

Mary-Ann Yeah, I'm going to take it back to BMC Towers as well and have a few words. Because I would imagine that the BMC media output is just as bad as everyone else's. It's one of the aspects of inclusivity that I think probably has been overlooked up till now.

Steph Yeah. It's been really great actually to engage in the kind of wider inclusivity movement like I've been part of All The Elements. That's been really great to hear about all the work other people are doing and kind of, you know, realising the breadth of the problem I guess, and work out how we

can support each other through that community. And you know, help. With the brands we're working with, we make sure we're also raising other issues.

Mary-Ann Amazing.

Okay. We're going to finish off with our quickfire questions. These are ten questions we ask our guests on finding our way. Steph Wetherell, are you ready?

Steph Yes. Yes, I am. I'm ready.

Mary-Ann Describe yourself in three words.

Steph enthusiastic, organised, laughs.

Mary-Ann Favourite mountain snack?

Steph Flapjack.

Mary-Ann Best mountain memory?

Steph Probably... It's a really difficult one. It's probably actually in the Lake District. I can't even remember which hill we climbed, but being at the top of a pretty big hill with nine plus-sized women with joyful looks on their faces.

Mary-Ann Bucket list destination?

Steph The Lofoten Islands in Norway.

Mary-Ann How often do you get lost?

Steph Ask my friends?! I'm not usually super lost. I usually realise quite quickly.

Mary-Ann If you could go for a walk with someone famous or otherwise, who would it be?

Steph Jenny Bruso from Unlikely Hikers.

Mary-Ann If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

Steph Owl. Who knows why... I don't know why... I like owls.

Mary-Ann That's as good a reason as any. One thing you always carry on the hill.

Steph Um. Extra water because I get really thirsty.

Mary-Ann What does walking mean to you?

Steph Headspace, Joy. Just time away, I guess.

Mary-Ann And lastly, if we want more of you, where do we go?

Steph So our Instagram handle is [@every_body_outdoors](#). And we also have a website of [everybodyoutdoors.co.uk](#), which is pretty sparse at the moment but we are working on it. And if you are plus-sized and want to join the Facebook group, just search for Every Body Outdoors, all separate words, on Facebook.

Mary-Ann Perfect. Brilliant. And folks, if you want any of those links, we will have them all in our show notes and in the transcript. So head over to the BMC website and you'll be able to download all of that and access it. Thank you so much Steph and I wish you the best of luck with Every Body

Outdoors.

Steph Thanks for having me.

[music]

Mary-Ann: Well, I took some of Steph's points to Berghaus, our esteemed sponsors. I spoke to Katie McNamara, Brand Manager at Berghaus, and Fiona Taylor, the Head of Design – here's what they had to say:

Katie: my name is Katie and I am a brand manager here at Berghaus

Fiona Hi. And I'm Fiona, I'm the head of design at Berghaus

Mary-Ann So, Katie, Fiona, you're the brains behind the operation at Berghaus. I mean, I'm sure you've got lots of other people in your team, but tell me - Finding Our Way is all about diversity, inclusion, broadening the reach for the outdoors and indoor climbing to all people. Everybody. How does Berghaus see their role in championing that cause?

Katie So this brand was born out of a love of nature. And since its beginnings, way back in the in the mid sixties, Berghaus is being fuelled by a passion to get more and more people outdoors. And I think that passion is as strong today as it was way back then and helping everybody to access outside and outdoor spaces, whatever their age, shape, background, ability, your gender is something that and myself, Fiona and the whole team that you can't see or hear here today feel super, super passionate about.

Mary-Ann It's tricky, though, isn't it? Because all your technical clothes do stop at a size 18 and it's quite small. I mean, I wear your size 18 when I'm wearing Berghaus clothes and I'm not skinny, but I'm not big. I wouldn't call myself plus size, necessarily. And so it's kind of limiting, isn't it?

Fiona Well, from a product perspective, one of the things that I guess historically with the outdoor world is that it's been, distribution-wise, quite tight. So it's been quite difficult to broaden and diversify in terms of size ranges because of where distribution has been in the past. And that makes it also challenging when it comes to building bigger size breadth into your line.

Mary-Ann When you say a distribution thing, do you mean like the stock that a shop would carry in their actual shop? Is that the issue?

Fiona So sometimes when the customers place their order, for example, they will specify what sizes they're going to buy in. So they will say, 'right, we want if it's numerical sizing, say we're talking about sizing that goes from a size 8 to a size 18. They will say, right, we'll take ten size eights, 20 size ten, 20 size 12, ten 14, ten 16, ten 18'. So they'll specify by product how many, how many sizes and what quantities of those sizes. So in some cases, we can't necessarily control what the customer buys into. So they'll buy what they feel is appropriate for their consumer. And I think that that's something that is slowly starting to change in the outdoor market. I think that when you go into some of the brands that have a much wider distribution, particularly when you talk to more, say if we talk about the sportswear brands in that that cover different women's needs, you'll find that they often have a broader pattern of sizing versus what outdoor do.

Mary-Ann Why do you think that is? I mean, it just seems like you guys, collectively, the outdoor clothing industry, are really behind the curve with this one. What's going on?

Fiona When you get into specialist outdoor gear, it just becomes less broad in terms of its distribution. And and it's and it's something more historic I would say. But in the world that we live in now, coming out of the past couple years of big shifts in the outdoor market and also big shifts in terms of visibility of outdoor brands in the in the distribution, that is definitely starting to make those changes and start to move.

Historically - and not just within the outdoor world, but then in the sport world as well - I guess there's been such a big focus on Extreme sports being all about action, being a very sharp point of view. As more women coming into the into the market and coming more into different kinds of outdoor pursuits and actually introducing different kinds of outdoor pursuits into the outdoor world, it's kind of blowing up the whole thing. And that's something that that I think is an amazing opportunity for everybody. And it's something that Berghaus has definitely stood up, taken note of and are digging deep into. And it's you know, and I think that certainly from my perspective as a creative, we welcome as much feedback as possible and being able to contribute and collaborate with people. So that's something that we're really super open to and really interested in having more of those kind of discussions. [

Mary-Ann Katie, what are your thoughts? I mean, Steph in her interview said, you know, 25%, give or take, of the UK population of women are size 18 or over. So at the moment, you know, chances are many of them can't shop at Berghaus even if they wanted to, even if they thought you guys were like the best thing since sliced bread, and they're not going to wear any of those other things. They can't! Don't you want their money?!

Katie More than anything, we want as many women as possible in all shapes and sizes to be out there and enjoying and experiencing the benefits of being out in nature. And that's a collective vision and a collective ambition and a workstream that is very much in progress. So what's really interesting is Fiona talking about some of the changes that we are really, really pleased to be able to effect. So Steph talked so passionately in from her lived experience about some of those challenges around things like product fit. And that is a very real example of something that we are working on and something that we are able to affect.

So and, you know, there's been a there's been a bunch of people behind the scenes working away on answering I guess the issue that Steph highlighted around things like grading and the fact that as you start to move up the size, the size range... So our range currently in a number of styles ranges up to size 20 and we've been working on adjusting the fit so that the product feels better and the fit is much better. And that's a brilliant thing and it's a brilliant move on for us. And obviously we'd love to be able to bring those changes to bear quicker. We'd like them to be existing now, but they are a work in progress and the alternative is far worse. So I feel really proud about that and I know that the team behind the scenes feels really proud about that too.

Mary-Ann

What sort of time scale are you working on, then to get those changes to, you know, if I walk into a shop or buy something on the Berghaus website. When will I see that change as a consumer?

Katie

So those changes are actioned at Berghaus now. But what that means in terms of when the consumer will start to be able to feel the difference when they put on a Berghaus product is Spring/Summer '24. So we go into Spring Summer 23 at the turn of the year and it will be the season that follows that we'll have adjusted the grading and fit on on our outerwear products, which is really, really positive news.

And well, there's a way bigger ambition and way fairer scope for us to take our work in that space. You know we recognise that women's bodies are different, at every size, at every life stage, and you know, as part of the changes that Fiona mentioned earlier, we are working really, really hard to better understand that and better get under the skin of that and think about not just how we better equip women with plus size clothing, but how we best equip women across the board, you know, all life stages, all body shapes, all body sizes.

But it takes time and it can be frustrating because we'd love to be able to influence these things and have them here today for consumers to engage with. But the important thing is that and it's work in progress and that we are learning quick, learning fast, learning lots from the lived experience of other people, just like Steph. And to make sure that we can become a brand that women are super glad exists.

Mary-Ann

What do you think Berghaus' role is in terms of that, that sort of experience as a customer walking into a shop or trying to buy online and that thing where they go, 'Ah, yeah, no, there's nothing that's going to fit you in the women's range. You're going to have to go to the men's.' Or, 'no, there's nothing in the three floors of this really top end outdoors or outdoors place that that is going to fit you. Sorry, you'll have to go to Go Outdoors or Mountain Warehouse. Or hope for the best that it doesn't rain'. What role does Berghaus see in working with actual retailers in terms of making that the whole experience better for plus-size people?

Fiona

The team internally have been working into and building broader across size ranges, we've equally been speaking face to face with customers. And basically being able to speak more to the actual breadth of the fit and the adjustment in terms of what we're doing to accommodate fit and flexibility around fit. So that comes not just in terms of of grading product up, but in terms of the fabrics that are used and in terms of the construction of certain things. So, for example, adjustability through waistbands. It not just being an elastic waistband, for example, to try and accommodate a breadth of fit, but around kind of tailoring the construction and the detailing and making sure that the adjustability is fit for purpose.

We've got a few projects that are ongoing at the moment that are specifically focussed on that in terms of 'right, what is the, the exact detail that we need that's going to change the entire experience for for that female consumer'. And it actually doesn't matter whether you are size ten or size 18. We want to be able to to build that, I guess, it's that it's that finesse and and that craftsmanship into the product. And that's all work that's been going on. As Katie said about SS24, we already started the work there. And then we've got actually two or three ongoing specific projects that focus on fit, on feel and experience for the female consumer at the moment.

Mary-Ann I mean, Fiona, you're absolutely right, I wa33s I was describing my conversation with Steph with a friend who's outdoorsy and she's a size 12, but she's got wide hips and a slim waist and she's like, 'Oh! That's exactly my experience,' I mean, because women's bodies are very, you know, wonderful and varied. She can't get jackets that comfortably fit over her hips, that aren't massively baggy on her shoulders and her waist. And so she was saying, 'how is it that it feels like whichever brand you pick up they're all designed for this this sort of like the semi-mythical woman who is, you know, five foot ten, a size ten, athletic, slim, quite slim-hipped doesn't have big boobs, definitely not - I mean, speaking as someone with big boobs, woah! - Would you see a kind of a vision where different lines in Berghaus outdoor wear offer different shapes of fit? So there are some where, it's still technical, it's still going to see you through a whole day in the Scottish hills, it's not kind of your everyday high street vibe, but there are some where it is tailored for someone who's more straight up and down and someone who's more curvy?

Fiona We're sitting down having these conversations with a multitude of different kinds of consumers. So the ones that are [at] the top of the mountain, but we're also talking to, you know, the consumer that, you know, just wants a really good jacket to be able to walk the dog in at the weekends or a great pant to be able to do a cross section of activities

We really need to look at building flexibility into a fit like what I mentioned around adjustability for example, around a waistband or something like that. We recognise also that it's about using the right materials in the right ways and being able to really concept and pattern cut in a much closer way.

So we're working with different tools internally. We work with pattern cutters, we work with 3D design, and we can really kind of obsess how that product is built so that we are looking at where the stress points are. How does that impact if you have the material that has a mechanical stretch by it's the construction of the material versus a built in stretch using an elastane, for example. So how can we utilise different heroes and different ways to come to those solutions? And I think that's one of the one of the things that, you know, the athletic sports world has been so good at historically, you know, which is why you see people in leggings versus in, you know, in a true outdoor pant. But as we evolve as we evolve what we're doing at the moment, we've actually got these these projects that are running with specialists effectively in terms of construction and in terms of 3D ideation, where we can

really go into that that level of detail and then go back to the consumer and talk to them about it.

Mary-Ann And does that include increasing the actual size range as well? So some of the Berghaus technical stuff, that isn't the high street stuff, is going to be available in a size bigger than a size 18?

Fiona Yeah. So we've already have a size offer that's 18-20 already across quite a few of the core products. So it is available in certain products. But obviously we we also need to really pay attention to what consumers are buying into so that we can address more directly to specific products. And that's some of the work that we're doing at the moment as well. So being able to say, right, so what, what products are we seeing that they're buying into?

Mary-Ann But you can't buy it if you don't make it. So Steph can't buy, and many of the other people in Every Body Outdoors simply can't. You can't judge what they want to buy based on what they are buying now because they literally can't buy your clothes.

Fiona [So yes and no, I would say.

Mary-Ann Unless they buy two and sew it together themselves?!

Fiona Well, that would be an interesting outcome. [laughs] No, I mean, I totally understand that perspective and what Steph's feedback is on that.

So we already do 18 to 20, it's just being able to build out visibility of that product and directing the consumer to the right place as well. But this is definitely going to be a lot more visible over the coming 12 months I would say.

Mary-Ann Katie, how much of a priority is it that someone like Steph, someone from Every Body Outdoors, who might be, say, a size 24. They go, 'Okay, great. Spring/Summer 24. That's going to sort out some people and get round, you know, a big bum. But it's not going to get round *my* bum. When is Steph, or another member of Every Body Outdoors, going to be able to go on a navigation course in the Lake District wearing a Berghaus pair of walking trousers and jacket?

Katie It's a good question, and it's a question that I wish I would be able to put a time frame around. Hopefully what's clear is that this is massively on the radar of the brand Ensuring that everybody has access to nature is our MO, and it's our guiding light. Plus size clothing is one of many of the conversations and the projects that we've got happening at the moment that look at how, for example, we better serve women.

There are there are so many things that we need to consider and which are about, you know, the right products, the right materials, the right fit, the right construction, the right distribution, the right partners. And that stuff takes time. And I'd love to be able to sit here today and say, you know, 'February 2024'. But that would be a disservice to Steph because we've still got so much learning to do and so much that we want to move forward to to do this well and to make sure that it's a success. And so I don't have a hard and fast date, but we do have a team that is working on it and and looking at how we, how we implement change to make sure that more women like Steph can get outdoors more often.

Mary-Ann You could take a sort of top of the range jacket that you have in production now and commission samples of size 22, 24, 26 and send them off with Every Body Outdoors and go, 'all right, test this to destruction' or 'try it on in the showroom' or, you know, 'come up to the factory and tell us what works with this. How are the arms, how's the neck? Does it fit over your bum? Does it feel like the pockets are in the right place?' You know, all the stuff that you guys do day in, day out.

You could just, you know, throw some money at this and make some actual jackets out of the same materials, couldn't you?

Fiona it's not just a case of us making it bigger. We also have to create new patterns and a new way of grading and making sure that we have the right people to work with, both internally and externally

to get to get this to the right people. So it's a process. Because we're coming from new exploration. We also want to make sure that we we do this in exactly the right way. And that does take time. And it does take this feedback loop where we go back to the consumers.

Katie Better inputs will equal better outputs when it comes to product testing and that feedback loop. So the more care and craft and attention that we can put into our thinking - Well, listening, and then our thinking and then our development will help the overall and the overall output and end product.

Mary-Ann You've still got to make 'em bigger though, don't ya? I mean, bottom line, however great they are, if they don't fit, then you can't buy it.

But let's move on. Let's move on. So Steph described a couple of - to me - it sounded like quite easy wins, like having extra size measurements on size charts, making sure that size charts actually cover the whole range of the garments that are provided, things like hip measurements for jackets rather than just chest, and of course, measurements that are actually a measurement of the garment rather than what Berghaus says the body that should be wearing the garment is. Because then if you're between sizes, you can actually go, 'okay, well that's going to work for me, that's not going to work for me'. Also as well, obviously pictures of people wearing the garment that aren't just perhaps the size ten model that you're using. They seem like pretty easy wins that you could kind of change overnight, give or take - a few nights perhaps.

Are they things that we're going to see a change in Berghaus if I go onto the Berghaus website in a couple of months time?

Fiona Yeah, I mean, we've actually already started using plus-size models in a lot of our photography. So that's I guess historically it's been fairly limited in terms of where we've used it, but we're using it more and more at the moment.

so going into going into the photography but actually broadening the range of sizing of the models that we're using as well. So it's actually being communicated directly out to the consumer through, through visuals that way.

Mary-Ann And what about size charts? What about the additional measurements on the charts that you've got online so that I could work out whether I want a size 16 jacket or size 18 jacket, whether it's going to be super-baggy on my waist or kind of reasonable?

Fiona Well, those are things that I guess historically haven't been shared out because some are actual kind of IP [intellectual property] almost in a way. So with some of our engineering of our products, we don't like to publish all of that outwardly. But it's definitely something as we're building the size charts going into Autumn/Winter 2023, then we're addressing looking at all of that kind of proposition anyway. So we're looking across the range of tools that we can communicate out to.

Mary-Ann Oh, that's brilliant, though. I mean, if Autumn/Winter 2023, I can look and see on a jacket and say, 'okay, well these are the measurements that a size 16 would fit or size 18 or size 20', then I mean, surely good for me because I don't need to buy three different jackets, try them all on and then send two back. And good for you, because you're not producing stock that's getting circulated around the postal system rather than being sold and worn?

Fiona Yeah. As we build out from a sizing perspective, looking at the different products that we do and how we address the needs of the consumer, whether it's the size 8 consumer or the size 20 consumer, that will be increasing that information as we build season on season because it's as I mentioned, it's it's all it's all part of that feedback loop getting getting consumer feedback, which is great and being able to implement that.

Mary-Ann Okay. So let's just finish off Katie or perhaps Fiona, what would your message be to the members of Every Body Outdoors? Because they shouldn't put in their calendars when they should be going onto the Berghaus website to try on their new size 24 Berghaus jacket, can they? You can't

put a date on that. What would you say to them about what Berghaus represents and what your part in their journey in the outdoors is?

Katie I think first off and you know a big, big thank you to Steph. She is really that she's doing an unbelievable job of creating safe spaces for women you know regardless of shape and size to get outdoors and and I A) admire her work and B) learnt a lot from listening to your conversation. So that feels important, that Steph's work is recognised and that her community that she's created is massively celebrated.

We've spoken to Steph and aside from this specific conversation and she's helping us with a project that's really going to help understand the broader cultural barriers that are in place for, for for all women. And my hope for anyone listening to this podcast, anybody that belongs to Steph's community, anybody that has any woman that wants to get outdoors to understand that we have an appetite to make sure that more and more women are getting out into nature.

And there is a team with an ambitious workstream and that's looking at the right places for us to effect change, the right time for us to affect change, and the biggest opportunities for us to go after to make sure that change is, is, is as wide reaching as possible. And so I hope that anybody listening feels heard and understands that there's a team behind the scenes that are beavering away on making this stuff happen.

Mary-Ann Katie McNamara, Fiona Taylor from Berghaus, thank you very much for your time.

Mary-Ann

Let's keep this conversation going on social – tag TeamBMC and EverybodyOutdoors. And if you want to be an ally, and help push for real change, here are four things you can do.

[Music bed:]

1. Diversify your feeds – find and follow communities and individuals who are already shouting about these issues. Amplify their messages, give them oxygen.
2. Make sure you're raising your voice for all bodies in the outdoors, and speak up when you see or hear bad behavior, online and in person.
3. Call out the brands you wear – or want to wear – that aren't size inclusive. Vote with your feet – if a brand isn't representing values that are important to you, maybe they don't deserve your money? If they're doing something, are they doing enough?
4. Tell the magazines and feeds you like, what you want to see and celebrate.

This is the last episode of Finding Our Way in this run. But if you've missed a few, head back to season 1 and find interviews that explore, amongst other things, young people and the outdoors, black joy and hiking, chronic illness and climbing films, gay men and community, mental health on expeditions and high altitude ambition.

I'm Mary-Ann Ochota.

Finding our Way is brought to you by the British Mountaineering Council, and it's supported by Berghaus. This episode was hosted by me, Mary-Ann Ochota, and edited and mixed by Chris Stone.