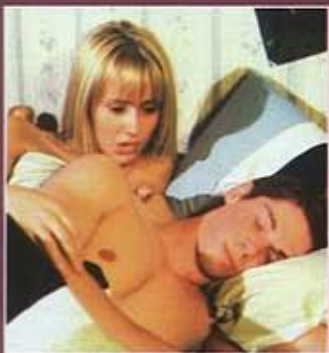


'I CRIED WHEN THE CAMERAS STOPPED ROLLING'

SAMMY WINWARD

THE 'EMMERDALE' BABE OPENS HER HEART ABOUT HER ON AND OFF SCREEN LOVE LIFE



Above: Sammy, who plays Kate Sugden in *Emmerdale*, sent ratings soaring during her adulterous storyline with Robert Sugden (inset). She wears jacket, £1,325, by Chloé at Cricket; and diamond studs, £5,500, from Boodle & Dunthorne. Facing page: Dress, £945, by Jenny Packham at Cricket

Sammy Winward was a 15-year-old schoolgirl from Bolton when she landed the chance of a lifetime – playing Katie Sugden in *Emmerdale*. But she could so easily have missed out. On the day of her audition, Sammy had such a bad migraine she ended up throwing up outside the car before she even got to the studios. She thought she'd lost out but was recalled by the casting directors, went for her screen test with Kelvin Fletcher, who plays Andy Sugden, and a few days later (while on the school bus), received the phone call that changed her life for ever. Now, nearly four years on, Sammy, 19, is living the life of a glamorous soap star and is engaged to Birmingham City striker David Dunn. As Sammy posed for *OK!*'s exclusive photo shoot, looking slender and fabulous, we asked her about her time on the soap and how Katie Sugden has changed her life...

There were reports that you'd split from your fiancé David. Can you set the record straight?

We've been seeing each other for over two years now and we're stronger than ever. We are both very happy. I still live at home with my parents and if I've had a tough day I like to relax in front of the TV with my David and my dogs, Wolfie, Hercules and Pod.

You've recently lost a lot of weight. How did you do it?

I joined WeightWatchers. It was impossible to go to a regular class so a lady from WeightWatchers offered to come down to the *Emmerdale* set, so

'David and I are stronger than ever. We are both very happy'

I was able to get the benefit of dietary advice and motivation tips in the same way as attending a normal class. The programme was brilliant. Before, I could easily eat a whole day's worth of calories at one meal with out realising it, but WeightWatchers taught me healthier eating habits.

So do you have to watch your weight...

When I was younger I could eat anything I wanted without putting on weight, but that was when I was going to dancing classes five nights a week. As soon as I started work on *Emmerdale* I had to give up most of my dance classes because it was impossible to fit them in with my filming schedule, but I still ate stupidly and obviously put on weight.

Was the diet hard to stick to?

I knew I'd be able to stick to it because it didn't say I'd have to give up all the foods I love, as long as I stuck to my points allowance. I love chocolate, and it meant I didn't have to give it up, and I could still have the odd McDonald's, as >





Above: Of her sexy soap status, Sammy says: 'It's a scream because Katie is the opposite of someone who's sexy.' We reckon these pictures tell a different story! Sammy wears chiffon and Swarovski crystal dress, £600, by Jason Ansell at Wade Smith; and shoes, £585, by Christian Louboutin at Cricket. **Below:** Cheeky Sammy wears shirt, £240, gilet, £715, jeans £140, and belt, £120, all by DSquared at Cricket



long as I was good at other times. I didn't find it a problem to get rid of the excess weight, and reached my personal target six months ago and have maintained it ever since.

What's your reaction to being described as one of soap's sexiest stars?

I think it's a scream! My character Katie is the opposite of someone who's sexy. There was a time when she didn't wear any make-up and spent her life crying because her whole world was collapsing. Plus, all her clothes were old because she had no money. It was getting so bad that most of the tops I had to wear had shrunk up to my elbows and were so tight I could hardly breathe, which really isn't a good look. But seriously, if I read that someone thinks that Katie - or me - is sexy then I'm flattered, but I still take it all with a pinch of salt.

You started playing Katie when you were 15. Do you think she's changed much?

Hugely. In the beginning she was a punk with mad hair and biker boots. But that went out of the window when she was involved in a hit and run and a teacher was killed. Out went the heavy make-up and the wild clothes and she was shocked into normality. She'd gained a reputation for being a rebel and wanted to conform. After that she got

involved with Andy, suffered a miscarriage, married Andy, then ended up having an affair with her brother-in-law, Robert.

That storyline, which saw you walking out of your marriage, upset a lot of viewers. How did you cope with that?

I was shocked too at first when I was told that Katie and Andy were going to split up, because they'd been through so much to be together. Having overcome all their obstacles she goes and falls for someone else! I was apprehensive, but I looked at the script and it was so well written and believable, I felt much better about it.

Do you think Katie is right to have chosen Robert over Andy?

Yes. Andy is dependable and would have provided her with a safe life, but ultimately she would have become bored and they would have probably grown apart. Sometimes it's inevitable, life is messy, but in the end you have to be true to yourself. Katie really loves Robert, he's a kindred spirit and will give her the excitement and challenge she needs.

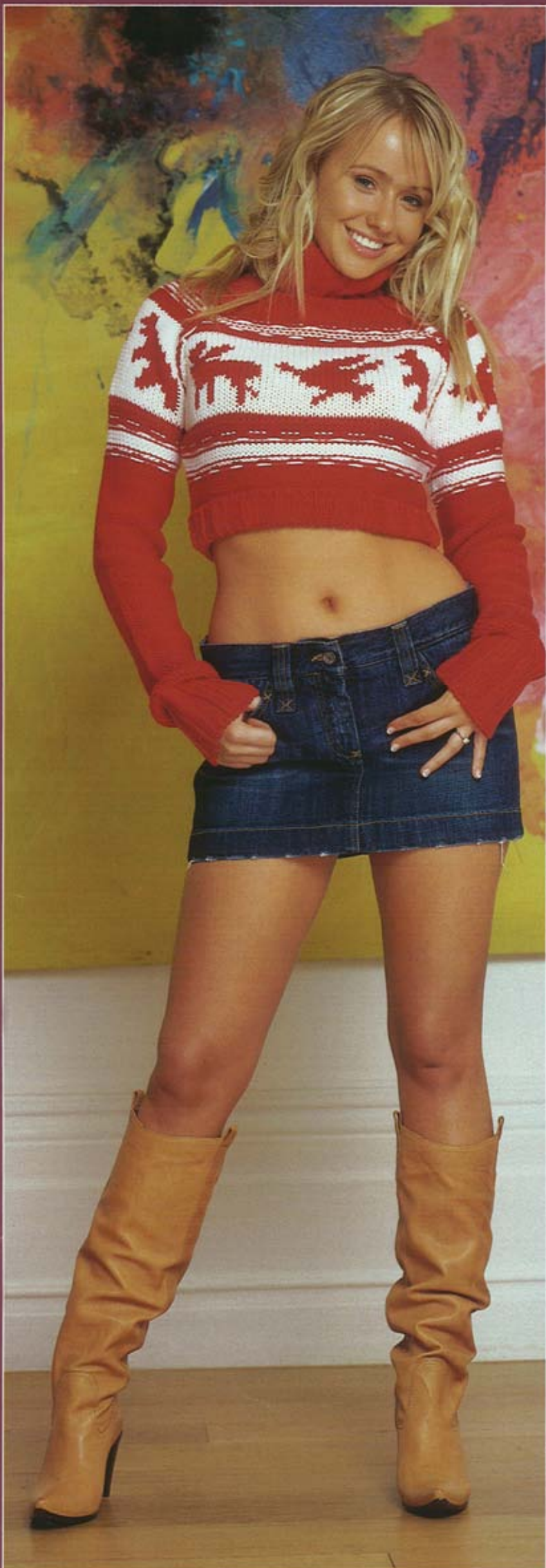
What's the most difficult scene you've had to play so far?

There were a couple which were really horrible. The time when I was told that I'd lost my baby, I tried >

'If I read that someone thinks that Katie - or me - is sexy then I'm flattered'



Above: Sammy looks fabulous in this Chloé dress, £1,050; and shoes, £329, by Christian Louboutin. Earrings, £3,750, and bracelet, £7,500, both by Boodle & Dunthorne. Her svelte figure is courtesy of WeightWatchers and her own willpower! Sammy admits she has to watch what she eats but says losing the excess was quite easy. 'It didn't say I had to give up all the foods I love - I could still have the occasional McDonald's!'



Above: This outfit would certainly raise a few eyebrows at the Woolpack! Sweater, £225, by DSquared; skirt, £199, by Dolce & Gabbana at Wade Smith; and boots £210, by L'Autre Chose



Above: Sammy was offered a recording contract aged 14, but turned it down for *Emmerdale*. She still loves the soap. Jacket, £520, jeans, £140, and T-shirt, £86, all by DSquared at Cricket

to imagine myself in that situation and it was awful, I cried so much I couldn't stop even when the cameras finished rolling. Then when Andy found out about the affair between me and Robert and we ended up fighting in the kitchen, that was really bad too – all the hurt and emotion made me feel raw. But I'm glad I played those scenes.

On a lighter note, what's your idea of a good night out?

I love going to the cinema and trying out new restaurants, but Nando's is still my favourite. I love their veggie pitta with cheese and chips. Yum!

What about clubbing and wine bars?

Well, I do love dancing, but I don't like the taste of wine or beer, I'm more of an alcopops girl! I enjoy nights out with the girls – there's a group of us from the show who like to get together and have a real laugh. Verity Rushworth [Donna], Lucy Pargeter [Chastity], Amy Nuttall [Chloe] and Julia Mallam [Dawn] – we totally switch off from work and concentrate on having a good time.

You've just turned 19. In which direction do you see your career going?

When I was younger I wanted to be a dancer – every day after school I used to

go to a dance, drama and singing academy in Bolton, and I learned every type of dance and performed all the big musical numbers on stage. But then I was offered a recording deal at 14, and would have taken it if I hadn't landed the role in *Emmerdale*. It was my first major acting job. So in the future, it would be lovely to do a big musical, because that's what I've trained for [Sammy once appeared on *Celebrity Stars In Their Eyes* as Christina Aguilera]. But I don't regret turning down the record contract. I love acting and I have learnt so much from *Emmerdale* and made a lot of good mates. I really feel like I've landed on my feet. **OK!**

'I've learnt so much from *Emmerdale*. I really feel like I've landed on my feet'

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