

AS SHE RELEASES HER KIDS' CLOTHING RANGE

# 'IT'S JUST HARD, ISN'T IT? BUT CHERYL'S DOING GREAT'

**KIMBERLEY WALSH TELLS OK!'S KIRSTY HATCHER ABOUT SUPPORTING HER NEWLY SINGLE PAL CHERYL TWEEDY AND HOW THEIR SONS ARE 'TWINNING'**

**S**he's starred in West End musicals, was runner-up in *Strictly Come Dancing*, and recently made her TV drama debut in Channel 4's *Ackley Bridge*. Now former *Girls Aloud* star Kimberley Walsh has turned her hand to children's clothing, creating her own collection for three to 12 year olds called Kimba Kids – based on the nickname given to her by close pal Cheryl Tweedy.

The 36 year old has remained especially close to former band mates Cheryl and Nicola Roberts, and the trio recently celebrated Cheryl's 35th birthday together – just a day before her split from Liam Payne was announced.

Here, Kimberley – who is mum to Bobby, three, and Cole, 19 months, with her husband Justin Scott – tells OK! how she's supporting Cheryl, returning to the stage and whether there'll be a *Girls Aloud* reunion...

**You're currently starring in *Ackley Bridge*. Would you like to do more acting?**

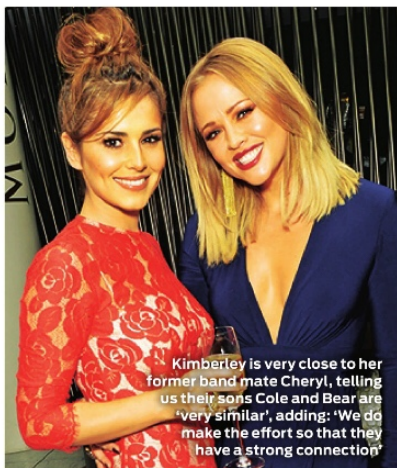
I would. It's been nice doing something gritty. I've got a few more episodes at the end of the series, so we'll see.

**Tell us about performing at London's Brasserie Zédel later this month...**

I just love being on stage and I loved the West End, but it's too much to go into any long contract at this stage when Cole is still so young. So I thought, I can just do a week-long residency and enjoy singing again and get my confidence back up. It's really exciting doing all the *Girls Aloud* stuff. It makes me feel a little bit nostalgic.

**Will it feel weird performing without the girls?**

I think it will feel quite exposed and full on, because it's an intimate venue. Obviously if the girls were there I'd be like, I'm fine, but they will be there in spirit. They're on it, saying: 'When can we come?' I'm saying: 'I'm a little bit nervous, let me get some shows out the way and then come



Kimberley is very close to her former band mate Cheryl, telling us their sons Cole and Bear are 'very similar', adding: 'We do make the effort so that they have a strong connection'

when I'm settled in! Maybe they'll feel like getting up on stage...

**Cheryl flew to New York to watch Nicola perform recently, didn't she?**

I know! It was so lovely that she went out there. It's always nice to have them in the audience, as you know they've got your back.

**Have you been supporting Cheryl recently following her split from Liam Payne?**

Yeah, of course. I mean, she's doing great but I guess it's just hard, isn't it? When you have a baby your whole being and your whole world changes. And for her having a relationship in the public eye just makes it even harder, and his career obviously takes him out of the country for long periods, so it's hard. But she's doing great.

**Were you given any advice in *Girls Aloud***

**about how to deal with having your private life in the public eye?**

I don't think you can teach somebody that, really. It's something that comes with practice and getting a thick skin. We all learnt a lot through being in the group but obviously some people get a lot more attention that way than others, and of course it's hard. I've been quite lucky. But it's just the way it is; it's something out of your control.

**Did you have a good night out for Cheryl's birthday?**

We did. We just went for dinner and it was really nice and chilled with close friends, which I actually prefer as you get to catch up a bit more! We had a proper girlie catch-up. She's good.

**How often do you two and Nicola get together?**

We do tend to get together quite a lot as Nicola and Cheryl are working on music together; the other day they were recording near my house and they called in after. For me and Cheryl, it's just working around the kids and their nap times. They are genuinely part of the family and we can never go too long without catching up.

**There were reports that the band were back in touch in April. Is there going to be a reunion?**

We're kind of all in touch all the time, but it's just one of those things that'll happen if all the stars align at the same time and everybody feels that it's what they want to do. Everyone is busy dealing with their own stuff. I'm in a place where I'm happy doing what I'm doing, but obviously I adore the girls so if there was something that was going to happen, I'd be up for it.

**What inspired your range, Kimba Kids?**

I felt that there was a bit of a lack of variety, particularly for boys, with fun prints and brighter colours. They tend to play it quite safe. As a mum, I only like to dress my boys in comfortable clothes and so the range is based on lots of comfortable fabrics and affordable prices. The whole business is very much a family affair because I created Kimba Kids with my brother Adam.

**Have you got Bobby into the collection?**

Yes, I took him along to a few of the shoots and he did get in a few pictures! Cole is a bit small for it but I managed to get him one jumper and he seemed to like it. He's fussy, so I'm going to take that as a good sign!



Kimberley is mum to Cole and Bobby with her husband Justin Scott



**Have you given Cheryl some bits for Bear?**

She asked me the other day so I'm going to get some bits made up for Cole and Bear as they're the same size, which is good. We've still got a year to wait for them to be big enough for the collection, but then they can be twinning, which will be cute.

**'WE'RE GOING THROUGH A WHOLE OTHER CHAPTER OF OUR LIVES TOGETHER'**

**Are Cole and Bear at similar stages then?**

They're both walking and saying odd words. They're very similar. They've just started to have a real interest in each other. They pass each other bits of food and go to hug each other if one of them is upset. Cheryl and I do try and get the kids together. I wish we could do it more but it's hard with both our schedules. But we do make the effort so that they have a strong connection, because when you're friends you just want your kids to be friends [laughs]!

**That must be lovely for you both...**

Yeah, it's crazy to think that 16 years ago we started in a band together and now we're going through a whole other chapter of our lives together. It's really nice we're going through the same stage. **OK!**

KIMBA KIDS IS AVAILABLE FROM WWW.NEXT.CO.UK/S/OFF/BRAND-KIMBAKIDS FROM THURSDAY.

KIMBERLEY WILL BE PLAYING AT BRASSERIE ZÉDEL IN JULY. SEE WWW.BRASSERIEZÉDEL.COM/LIVE-AT-ZÉDEL/KIMBERLEY-WALSH-JULY-2018.

TWITTER.COM/KIRSTY\_HATCHER PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK



Above: As well as launching her kids' range (right), Kimberley is playing Claire Butterworth on *Ackley Bridge* and returning to the stage for a singing residency in London