

EXCLUSIVE

# 'I hate watching myself on TV!'

**SAM WOMACK'S** due back in **EASTENDERS** as **RONNIE** any day now... and she's been making movies while she's been away!

**C**ONSIDERING SAMANTHA WOMACK has been on TV for more than 20 years now, you'd think she'd be more than comfortable watching herself on the box. But she's not... 'I absolutely loathe it,' she tells *Soaplife*. 'I don't even find it easy to watch people I know on-screen. It's like I'm being an audience of myself, and that feels a bit narcissistic.' In addition to playing Ronnie in *EastEnders* and Tanya in Sky 1's *Mount Pleasant*, Sam can also be seen on the big screen, too! We can't wait to hear more...

**You're a movie star, Sam!**

Er... not exactly. Although I am appearing in a couple of new films.

**Can you tell us about them?**

I'm in Matthew Vaughan's latest film, *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, which hasn't been released here yet. It's based on a comic book and tells the story of a veteran secret agent, who leads a young guy called Eggsy into the world of espionage.

**What character do you play?**

Eggsy's mum. It's a really solid script with lots of action. Eggsy's a bit of an oikey, young James Bond. The cast is amazing - Colin Firth, Samuel L Jackson, Michael Caine...

**Sounds great... What's the other film?**

It's called *One Night in Istanbul*. It's a screen adaptation of the hit play about the exploits of a group of Liverpool football fans at the 2005 European Cup Final in Istanbul. In addition





**'It's great to be able to play lighter, less twisted roles'**

**'Nigel [centre] is fantastic... Our first scenes together were physical, full-on bed scenes - but we got through it!'**



**Family woman: Sam with daughter Lili-Rose**

to the footy action, it's also a bit of a rom-com. It was a great project for me as I'm a mad Liverpool fan. My husband, Mark, is in the film, too.

**How did you find the time to make a couple of films?**

I did them during the time out I had from

*EastEnders*. I love playing Ronnie, but she's such a dark and complex character. It does get tiring. It's great to be able to take time out to play different, lighter, less twisted roles. I'm very grateful to *EastEnders* that I'm able to do that.

**Characters like the man-eating Tanya in *Mount Pleasant*?**

Absolutely! Tanya's not such a predator in this series, though. She's been finding her old ways of getting gratification through coming on to men isn't working any more. She's not as manipulative as she was. I have such a laugh working on *Mount Pleasant*. We all do. I spend a lot of time between takes making up inappropriate lyrics to well-known songs!

**What's it like working with *EastEnders* ex Nigel Harman, who plays your husband, Bradley, in *Mount Pleasant*?**

I felt like I already knew him when we started working together. We have lots of mutual friends and it felt like we'd done a few jobs together - like *EastEnders*, where we tail-ended each other. Our first scenes together were straight in there. Physical, full-on bed scenes! It was challenging, but we got through it.

**Did you manage to see Nigel as Simon Cowell in the musical *You Can't Sing* before it closed?**

I was just about to go when it ended. I saw him play Simon at the National TV Awards, though. That was incredible. He just came on and launched into it. There was no introduction or anything. He was incredibly camp and I thought: 'What are you doing?!' It was only later that it became apparent. He must have had balls of steel to do that



**Sam stars in football film *One Night in Istanbul*... 'I'm a mad Liverpool fan!'**

and I'd have loved to see him at the London Palladium.

**You're very much a family woman... How do you cope with working away from home, Mark and your two kids?**

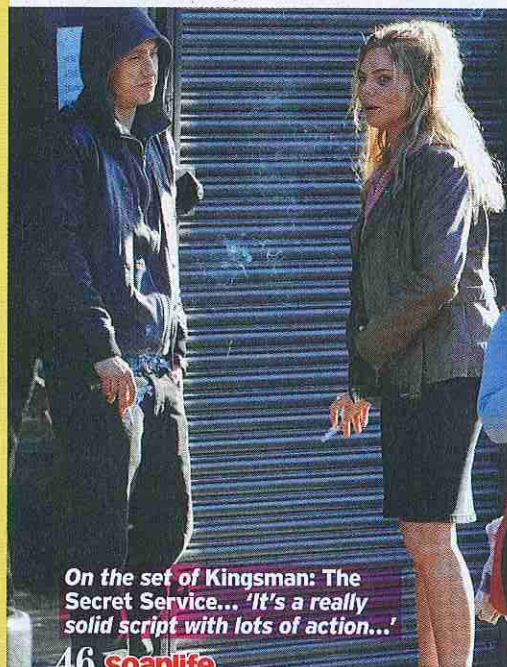
With *Mount Pleasant*, for instance, I'm 'lucky' with the scheduling. Generally, I'll have a few days on set in Manchester, then a day or two back at home. It's nice having a foot in my own kitchen, so to speak. When I was touring the UK in *South Pacific* a couple of years ago, Mark was the primary carer. But the year before that, he was very busy so the kids spent more time with me. I think it's healthy to mix things up like that.

**What do you like doing when you're not working?**

Recently, I seem to have entered a whole new equine way of life! There's a paddock at the back of our land at home in Bedfordshire, and we've rescued a couple of ponies that had been abandoned. One had been very badly treated, but she's coming along nicely. It's a whole new world and I'm loving it, even though it's costing a fortune. Everyone professes to be a horse whisperer and suddenly I know about 20 of them! ●



**With *Enders*' Jack... 'I love playing Ronnie,' says Sam**



**On the set of *Kingsman: The Secret Service*... 'It's a really solid script with lots of action...'**