



glam SAM

Perhaps most noted as the 1980s queen of Page 3, life has taken some unusual turns for Chingford's Samantha Fox. Tim Saunders catches up on this Essex girl's career path

Until three years ago, former glamour model Samantha Fox shared her million pound detached mansion in North Chingford with partner Myra Stratton. In 2015 Myra, who was Sam's manager, lost her two-year battle with cancer, leaving Sam heartbroken and distraught.

Sam was always fearful of labelling herself gay, concerned about losing her male fanbase, but they started dating

in 2003 and had appeared together on an episode of *Celebrity Wife Swap*, where Sam was paired with comedian Freddie Starr, and Myra with his wife Donna.

"Our paths really should have crossed much sooner," says Sam of Myra. "It wasn't until I started shooting a film called *The Match* that I heard her name for the first time. Neil Morrissey, one of the other actors in the film, used to come over to chat with me during breaks in filming. On one occasion, I mentioned that I was looking for a new

manager. Neil must have given it some thought, because he came back to me a few days later and said, 'I know someone who could be great for you. Her name is Myra Stratton. She's a Sharon Osbourne type, but she decided she'd had enough of the music industry and she does various theatre productions now. She'd definitely suit you.'

Sam has always been plagued by stalkers and during her time in Chingford with Myra, the worst one started creeping around outside the house.

Sam explains: "One day, while



Sam with her beloved cat Talulah

I was at the gym, Myra heard someone rattling the lid of our bin. When she looked out of the window, she saw a homeless-looking man with long, straggly hair going through our rubbish bins. She called me to ask what she should do. 'Call the police!' I told her, and just as I said it, she saw the man pull on a pair of long, black rubber gloves and walk towards the side entrance. I rushed out of the gym and drove straight home.

"I knew that the man must have put on the gloves to break one of the windows, but thankfully the police managed to get there and arrest him before anything happened. Myra later told me that it was the same man

who had been writing me letters for two years, threatening to kill her so that he could be with me. She hadn't shown me any of the letters because she didn't want me to worry, but there was a whole stack of them. The police managed to work out that he'd come from a psychiatric hospital in France, where he'd been let out on day release. They sent him straight back, escorted by an

English police officer."

The late American singer David Cassidy also posed a problem for busty blonde Sam, who was the most photographed star of the 1980s, alongside Princess Diana and Margaret Thatcher. Her one-time idol made advances on her when she was 19, after asking her to appear in the music video for his single, *Romance*, in 1985.

At the same time as being a Page 3 stunner, Sam started singing and signed a deal with Jive Records. In 1986, her major hit *Touch Me* made her an international star. She found herself touring the world and partying alongside major celebrities, from Brian May and Freddie Mercury to Bon Jovi and the Pet Shop Boys. She has gone on to sell more than 30 million records.

"A record signing that sticks in my mind was at the Alders department store in Basildon," she recalls. "The entire shop was a throng of men and two fights broke out in the crowd. All I could hear were voices shouting, 'Samantha, Samantha, Sammeee, please





over here!' This was followed by a female voice over the tannoy saying, 'Calm down, calm down. Samantha Fox will be here for an hour, and you'll all get a signed picture'.

"Most things in my life really were hysterical around that point in time. The daily papers wrote about me practically every day. The craziest story of all, published in *The Sun*, had to be the one about Chris Tiney, a 25 year old who lived with his wife,

ABOVE: Sam with Myra during a trip to Canada

LEFT: Sam with the comedian Bobby Davro after winning Page Three Girl of the Year for the second year in a row

and she accepted that he had pictures of me all over the house. According to the article, he had even taken down two pictures of his wife to replace them with pictures of me. But when he tried to swap their wedding picture in their bedroom, she finally put her foot down."

In teenage magazines at this time, girls could vote on whether they would rather be Samantha Fox or Madonna. "I won every time," recalls Sam.

Sam regularly appears on ITV's *Loose Women* and starred in Channel 5's *Celebrity Big Brother* in 2016. She is currently dating Norwegian Linda Olsen, who has two sons, Noah and Adam.

Sam now splits her time between her family and playing up to 150 international live concerts each year. Over this summer she will perform in Italy, Poland and Romania. Then on August 25 Sam will sing live at the Hard Rock Café in Tenerife. After an autumn break, on December 1 she will share the stage of the Hala Torwar COS in Warsaw with Thomas Anders of Modern Talking. ♦

Find out more
Forever by Samantha Fox is published by Backbeat Books and is priced £18.99.

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