

The Girlie Show girlie who tries so hard to shock us



SMOULDERING: Cawood, and below, with Cox and Williams

SARAH CAWOOD, the new presenter of Channel 4's outrageous *The Girlie Show*, is smoking cigarettes over breakfast and wearing a heavy dose of lipstick, fully made-up eyes, dyed red hair, purple, crushed velvet bell-bottoms and a black lace top.

It's 9.30am and she says she has never had breakfast this early before.

In keeping with *The Girlie Show*'s shocking reputation, Sarah, 24, revealed at the Press launch of the new series that she had pierced her nipple, had her first snog at 15, lost her virginity at 20 and harbours a fantasy to have sex in the rain.

She also divulged a penchant for white cotton underwear and responded prettily and publicly that she didn't give a s*** about such intimate details being shared with the nation.

In one interview, Sarah posed raunchily, sitting on a lavatory. She was smoking a cigarette, wearing boots and little else bar a smouldering look. Well, okay, she did have a tiny leather mini skirt and halter-neck top and looked as if she'd been clubbing all night, but you get the picture.

We meet in a fashionable brasserie in North London. Sarah, who also presents Nickelodeon and a new music and video show, *Video-teque*, already has an agent who won't let her do interviews at home. Very starchy, that.

She speaks at a breathless, "yoof broadcasting" pace, but with a cultivated, lazy street cred kind of accent and uses expressions such as "wicked", "in yer face", "bezzie friend" and "ain't". She also says: "My mother hates the way I talk now. She keeps telling me to speak properly."

Channel 4 has defied its critics by declaring that the new series of *The Girlie Show* will be as mischievous as the last.

The programme's other presenters are Sara Cox, who fantasises about tequila and frisbees, and lesbian Rachel Williams, who sucks her thumb and has a tattoo on her buttocks made by girlfriend Alice.

Sarah is replacing Clare Gorham, who left the series — after waxing a man's bottom and judging a sexy fireman's contest — claiming that she found it so humiliating that she'd go home crying.

"We can embarrass ourselves much more in the privacy of our

SHE has a pierced nipple, had her first kiss at 15 and fantasises about sex in the rain.

CAROLINE PHILLIPS finds out if Sarah Cawood, the new presenter of Channel 4's late-night youth programme, is as outrageous as she appears.

own homes," says Sarah. "I put a cup of tea in the fridge last week."

"The programme is fantastic. It epitomises what I'm about. It's about girls having fun, girls being together, girls being out together, girlied out of their minds. It's about having a laugh and not caring what anyone thinks, as long as you don't tread on anyone's toes or spill your drink on anyone."

Sarah pierced her stomach and wears pink cut glass in her navel. She pierced her left nipple two years ago, after her year's contract as a dancer in *Phantom Of The Opera* wasn't renewed.

"I was so peeved I wanted to shock them," explains Sarah, who was raised in Lincolnshire. "I went back to show them what I'd done. I pulled up my shirt and said, 'Look'. All the girls pulled faces and said, 'Ugh, gross'. I've taken it out now. But it was really painful for a long time and a lot of hassle, as piercing takes ages to heal."

Try as hard as she might to hide it, Sarah was a bright child. Grammar school-educated and the daughter of an ear, nose and throat

surgeon, she gained 10 GCSEs, mostly A and B grades. At 16, she left and went to the Royal Ballet School. "I used to skive off to go to sleep in the afternoon, then get dolled up and go to a rock club and stay up 'til three and have three hours sleep." She was kicked out after a year.

Despite her best efforts, other background details about Sarah are as outrageous as Cliff Richard.

YES, she started smoking aged 15 and has fallen over drunk a couple of times. Yes, she stays up all night and goes to clubs called the Big Kahunaburger. Yes, she goes to lots of gigs and has seen Liam — ooh, swoon — but she has never spoken to him because, apparently, "he's always 10 sheets to the wind".

But she's not a lesbian. "I never had the urge," she explains. Sarah doesn't really want to have sex in the rain, saying: "It's just a nice idea." And she doesn't even have a colourful past where her sex life is concerned.

"I was dead unpopular with the boys when I was at school," she



says. "I was far too busy dancing." In fact, her worst crime is to have eaten a packet of crisps in the supermarket before she reached the check-out.

The Girlie Show returns next Friday at 11.05pm for a second series, with a topless bungee jump over The Thames by curvy Christine Salata, who romanced Jack Nicholson.

Sarah, despite presenting a show that promises bra-busting entertainment, wouldn't do the same.

"Nah," she says, dragging on her cigarette. "I don't think my boobs

would stand up for it." Nor would she romance Jack. "Urgh, a bit old for me. I like 'em young."

The new series will also feature *Natural Born Gorillas*, a showcase for super-hairy men to show off their ape-like bodies. "I don't really like hairy men. But I'd like to see how hairy Liam is. Potentially, he looks very hairy."

WE ARE told by C4's publicity department that Sarah is all set to "high-kick some ass". She explains: "That's because I had to karate chop the camera. I was doing a link to the high-kicking nuns. They're karate-chopping nuns who are wicked and run a soup kitchen in Harlem and have learned karate to protect themselves. It's good because nuns aren't going to carry guns, are they?"

Sarah is convinced the cultural climate is set for *The Girlie Show*. *The Spice* magazine, a sort of *Girlie Show* on paper, has just been launched. *The Spice Girls* are on everyone's lips.

And, like the *Spice Girls*, *The Girlie Show* is about girlies doing exactly what they want.

The programme heralds a new era of babe power. This is feminism late Nineties-style. It's all about putting girls on top, about saying rude words, as well as about being engineers and astronauts.

This is feminism with glittery lipstick. And Sarah has embraced it with all the fervour and passion of an idealistic new convert.



GLOSS FINISH: Sarah paints a picture of a girl you wouldn't take home to mother

'My mother hates the way I talk. She keeps telling me to speak properly. And I can be really crazy — I put a cup of tea in the fridge last week'