

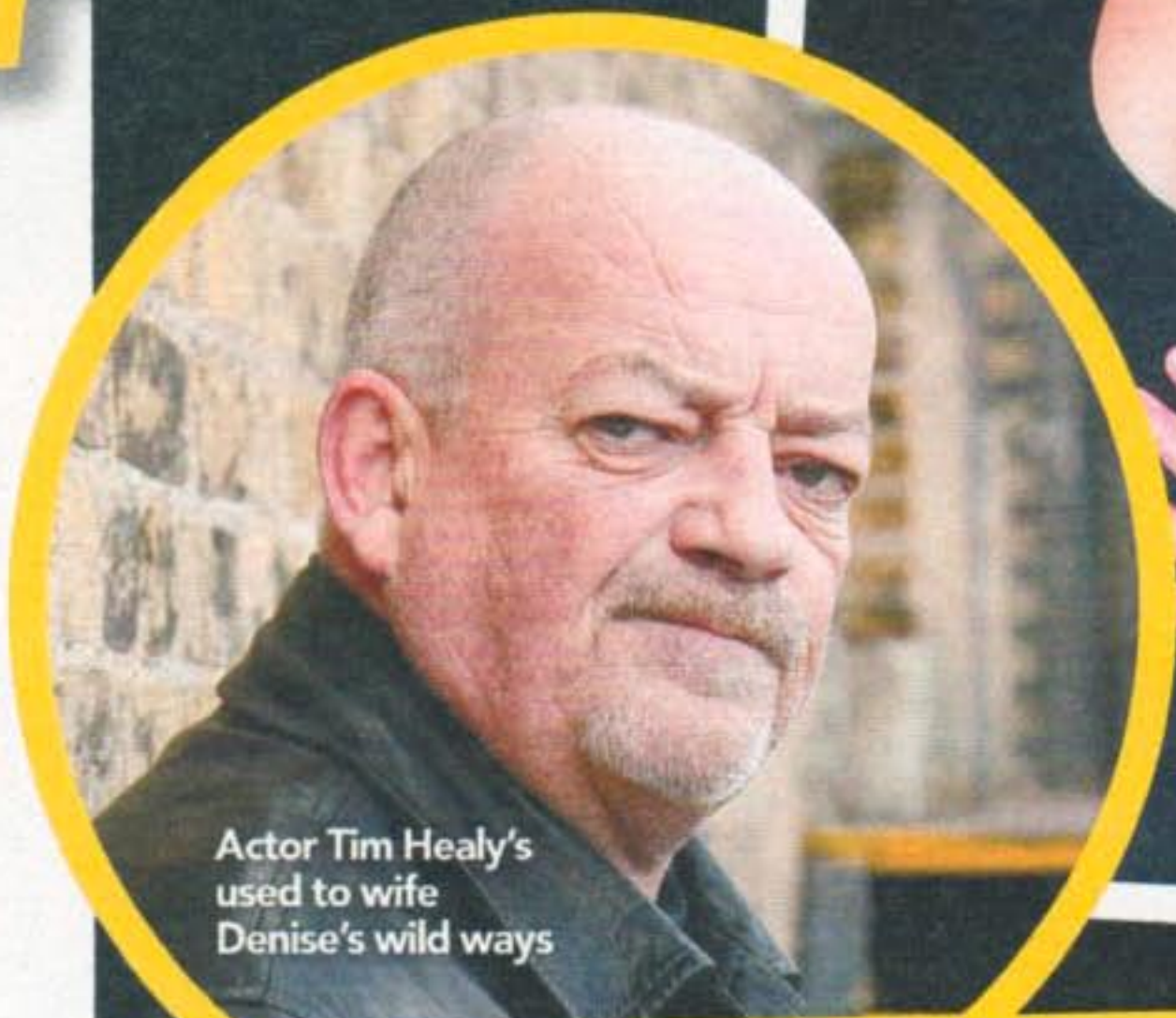
# best BITS

## COVER STORY

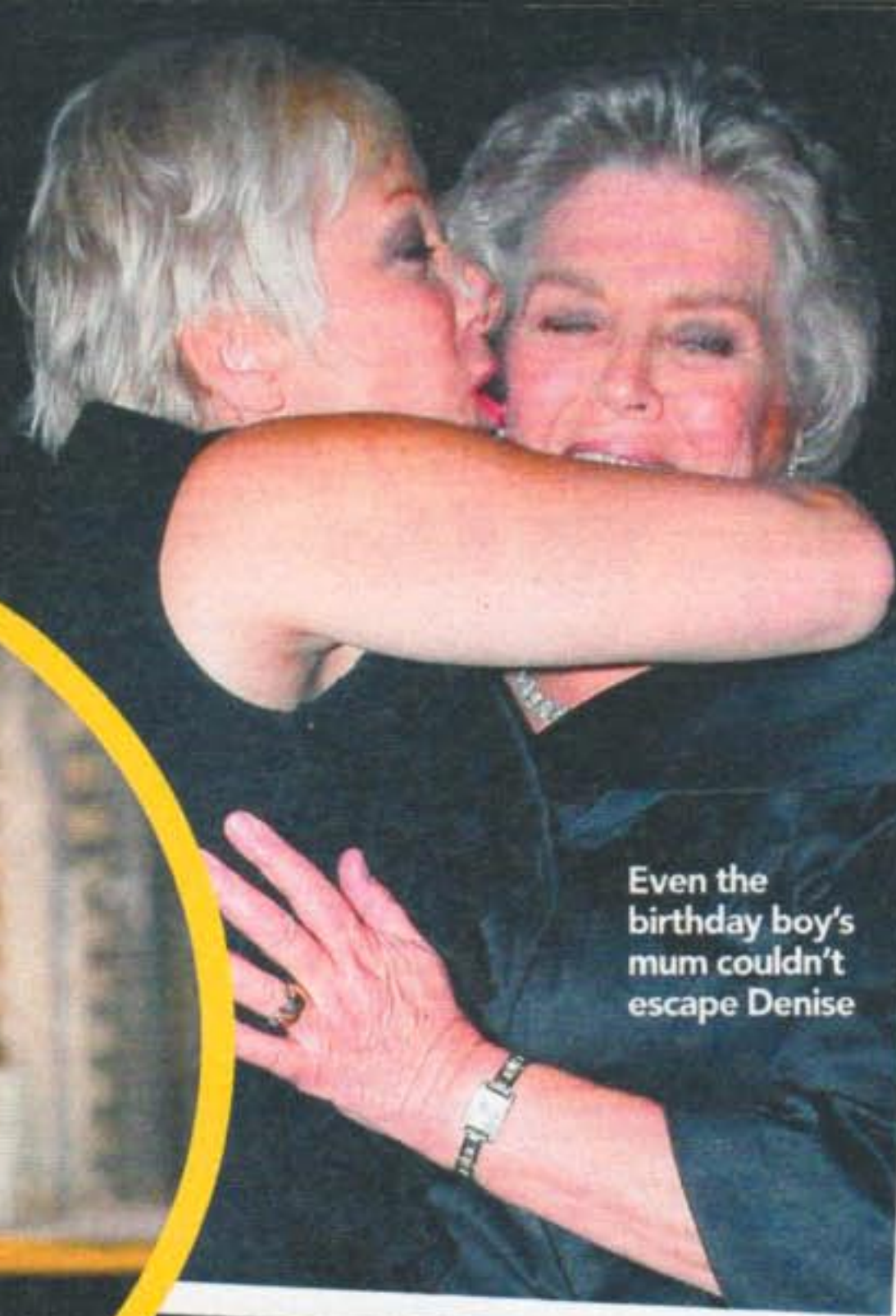
### So what did go on, Denise?

It was my really good friend Gary Cockerill's 40th birthday at Blake's hotel in London. It was a fairly civilised sit-down dinner, but with free-flowing Champagne. We came out of dinner and there were a million paps because Katie Price was there. They were disappointed because she had a right mard on for some reason. She wasn't performing like she normally does. We were merry, but not hammered, so were larking about.

The girls in the supposed lesbian-love-sandwich picture are my best friend Pam Sharrock and a friend of Gary's, Kirsty Shaw.



Actor Tim Healy's used to wife Denise's wild ways



Even the birthday boy's mum couldn't escape Denise

# 'IF TIM WAS GOIN

# TO DIVORCE ME

# HAVE DONE IT BY

We all saw those pictures of Denise Welch behaving  
exclusive interview she tells us just what happened

### Who's the older woman you are grappling with?

That's Gary's mum. I texted Gary to apologise, but she was as much up for a laugh as anybody. She was joining in, even if it looks in the picture like she's horrified. I really wasn't trying to force myself on Gary's mother!

### And the topless guy?

The topless bloke was supplied by Gary. If Gary has a party he always lays on a bit of eye-candy for the girls and the boys. He was helping us get a car and he swept me off my feet for a joke. I don't get nasty with a drink, but you'd think from some of the comments I've read that I'd killed somebody.

### Do you think it's possible to have a good party without drinking alcohol?

When I wasn't drinking there were nights when I went out and

still ended up having a good time. But I don't know many who drink that wouldn't say they have a better time when alcohol's involved.

### Do you worry you're not as much fun without a drink?

I know I'm not! Everybody that I go out with is a drinker. I'm not saying they drink to excess, but if you're with them and you're not drinking, it's very boring.

### Do you think you'll ever change?

The only time I'd really check my behaviour is if I was aggressive

and tried to pick a fight when I'd had a drink. That's what would upset me – if I saw a photo of me with my finger in someone's face.

### What did your husband Tim think of the pictures?

One columnist wrote, *Tim Healy won't speak to her again this side of Christmas*. Of course he will. She obviously doesn't know anything about my marriage. If Tim was going to divorce me every time I said something on *Loose Women* or did something in the papers, I think he would

have done it a long time ago. When I phoned Tim, he said, "Oh God, what were you doing? Who were you with?" So I told him. He just went, "For God's sake, man, why when you knew the paps were there?" I said, I don't know. We were just having a giggle.

### What do you say to people who think you shouldn't be behaving this way when you're 50?

Why? I want to know why you should get over doing things like getting wasted and kissing your mates. I don't see why as you get



# G HE'D NOW'

badly again. In our  
on that night...

older you should start acting like this model of decorum. I don't get it. OK, maybe I shouldn't. Maybe I'm in the wrong. But these are all my close friends in these pictures. I haven't just plucked some random blondes off the street.

**What did your eldest son Matthew say about it?**  
Matthew was rehearsing with his band the next day and when I spoke to him they were absolutely crying with laughter – especially at the quote where Katie Price had allegedly said to a friend of

mine, "I don't want to be papped with Denise because I saw her last week falling down outside the *TV Quick Awards*". I thought, f\*\*\*\*\* hell, pot and kettle!

Matthew said to me, "It's a badge of honour when Katie Price doesn't want to be papped with you." I don't know what was wrong with her at Gary's do. She was just in a really big mood.

**Do you worry about what the mums at Louis' school think?**

Yes, I suppose I do. But I can't think that any of them would think the photos were not funny because people know what I'm like. If people don't know what I'm like I accept that they're going to have a completely different opinion of me.

**What was it that made you stop drinking for two years?**

The reason that I stopped, as everybody knows, was that I suffered from severe clinical

depression for 20 years and I felt that my drinking might be compounding my depression. Unfortunately, when I stopped drinking the depression didn't stop. What's happened now is that since I've been on the right treatment – which is a hormone treatment – my episodes have become few and far between.

I'm not trying to excuse my behaviour, but after suffering from that for 20 years I don't think it's too much to ask for people not to give me a hard time about getting a little bit drunk with my friends at a party. It's not like I'm on *Loose Women* going, "Ooh, no, I don't like a drink and I hate people who drink," and then I go and get plastered.

**Are your fans supporting you?**

"Yes, the true *Loose Women* fans like me. I know I'm a bit like Marmite – some people really like me and some can't stand me. I can't help that. I don't set out to upset anybody. I don't say things to offend. I just like a good time now and again. Sometimes I like to let my hair down. And I think I deserve a good time. I work 14-hour days, I do a lot for other people and for my charities, and I never ever let anyone down at work. I wouldn't be able to win a Best Actress award if I wasn't doing my job properly.

Tim was really proud of me for getting that award. He despairs of me sometimes, but he's also proud and that's why our marriage has lasted. It's all very

well these comments of 'long-suffering Tim', but he's 57 years old. He's a shrewd, canny guy. If he didn't want to hang around, he wouldn't.

His mates will tease him about this, but they'll say, "I bet you wish you'd been involved in the love sandwich!"



Friends Pam and Kirsty sandwich Denise (above), before she moved on to 'topless man' (right)

