

"I'D LOVE TO COME HOME TO A wife & children"

He's many women's secret crush, but David Walliams, 36, admits he just can't play it cool with the ladies

Everything's going so well for you. Can you believe your luck?

"Sometimes I need to pinch myself. Ten years ago, Matt Lucas and I played our first gig and we were delighted that even seven people paid to see us, because we were nobodies. So it's good to remember how lucky we are and how grateful we should be for our success."

Do you have the dream home life, too?

"I have the dream house, but I live there on my own. For it to be a home, I'd love a wife and some children, but I'd have to steal them, as I don't have real ones."

How is your love life, by the way?

"Disastrous – it's been a long time since I had a girlfriend. It's been weird, though, because I went on a tour that lasted 18 months and now I'm working in America on our HBO series, so the idea of starting a relationship seems like the wrong thing to do. When will I physically see that person?"

You do get papped with lots of women...

"I'm friends with lots of girls, so people assume I'm dating them. For instance, Natalie Imbruglia and I are friends. Her husband lives in Australia and I'm also friendly with him, but sometimes I'm free and she's free so we go out to dinner together, and that's all it is. I think the papers know that's all it is, but it just looks better to write, 'Ooh, David Walliams was seen leaving the restaurant with so-and-so.'"

Are you into the whole casual-dating, one-night stand thing?

"No, I'm much happier when I'm in a relationship. But I'm quite lucky to have glamorous female friends like Natalie

DAVID'S STAR BIO

AGE: 36

ROMANTIC HISTORY: He's dated Patsy Kensit, Lisa Snowdon and Abi Titmuss and has been spotted with Suranne Jones, Caroline Aherne, Geri Halliwell and Jayne Middlemiss. Phew!

WHAT YOU WON'T FIND ON HIS CV: A guest appearance on *EastEnders* in 2003.

WHY WE LOVE HIM: He raised half a million pounds for Comic Relief by swimming the English Channel, even though less than 10% of people who attempt it succeed.

CATCH HIM NEXT IN: *Capturing Maryon* BBC2.

and Denise Van Outen who I can go out with for the evening, peck on the cheek and go home. It's an asset to any man's life to have really close female friends."

Do they give you girlfriend advice?

"Yes, I had dinner with Natalie the other night and she gave me advice about a girl I like and it was really useful. She kept saying, 'Oh, you didn't do that, did you? You didn't say that?' It turns out that, from a woman's perspective, I'd done all the wrong things. I'd basically been too keen, but I just can't play it cool. If I like someone, I can't play games. What's the point?"

Have you ever dated someone your friends didn't like?

"Oh yeah, but your friends only tell you they didn't like them when you split up. They're

just being protective of you because they're there for the long-term, while relationships aren't always. You don't usually choose who you fall for, though, but it would be a lot easier if you did. Some people almost have a power over you."

What are you like as a boyfriend?

"I like the idea of being an English gentleman – for example, opening doors or, if I've had a nice evening with someone, sending flowers. But I do that for friends, too. I have a strong sense of manners and treating people properly."

Do you ever take tips from women's magazines about relationships?

"I'm quite interested in what they say. It's usually different to what I've imagined as a man. Men are quite scientific about it >

DAVID'S LADIES...

Clockwise from left: Hugging Kate Moss at the Comic Relief Gala in 2006; with Lisa Snowdon in 2005; with ex-squeeze Patsy Kensit in 2006; out with good friend Denise Van Outen in 2006; pecking Natalie Imbruglia goodbye in 2006; with old flame Abi Titmuss in 2004; cosyng up to Dannii Minogue in 2005



all, while women are freer, and more spiritual and emotional. Women are much more unknowable, but I love that."

Do you think you can gauge why someone is attracted to you?

"I don't really think about it too much. You can just feel when there's a connection between you, but it's quite a rare thing when you both actually fancy each other. Normally I fancy them but they don't fancy me."

Can you tell if a girl is using you?

"If you're happy with someone just sitting in front of the telly, eating pizza and watching *Big Brother*, then that's fine. But if you're *only* having a good time with that person when you're out at some glamorous event, it's probably not a relationship that's going to last. In your heart, you know when you feel really happy and relaxed."

Do you ever feel you're being critiqued when you have sex with someone new?

"No, and I haven't really had many kiss-and-tells. I'm not the same as, say, Robbie Williams. I think people would like to read about someone sleeping with him – but I'm not sure they'd want to read about someone having sex with me."

How do you think your Channel swim last year changed you?

"I came into Dover and there were all these people waiting for me, cheering. I felt like 'the man of the moment' and it was all just very exciting. I'd achieved what I wanted to achieve. I got off the boat and was given a round of applause. It was just lovely."

You were in great shape for the swim. Do you hate anything about your body now?

"No, you're on a hiding to nothing if you start worrying like that. [Deadpan] Actually,

my penis is too large, but I try not to let that affect me."

How do your mum and dad deal with your fame?

"I try to include my family as much as possible. I've taken my mum, Kathleen, to the BAFTAs three times and she's actually got quite a big crush on James Nesbitt. He once sang *Take Me Home, Kathleen* to her. James always remembers her and makes her feel very special, but I think my mum and dad just enjoy being a part of it. They're both retired and it's given them a new lease of life. You want the approval of your parents and to make them proud. Last year, Mum wrote in my Christmas card, 'Thanks for all the joy you've given us this year.'"

Have you ever been tongue-tied when you've met a celebrity?

"I recently sat next to Liz Hurley at dinner and I was quite tongue-tied then, just because she's so very pretty. She was nice, too. And I met Helena Christensen at a party in New York and the same thing happened. She's so beautiful."

And you've had Sunday lunch at Richard and Judy's?

"Yes! Richard swears quite a lot, which is really surprising because he doesn't really ever swear on TV. You think, 'Oh my God, I've just heard Richard Madeley say f***!' He also doesn't shave when he's off work and is quite sexy when you see him with stubble."

You've turned all thespian and are starring in *Capturing Mary* with

legendary actress Dame Maggie Smith [best known recently as Professor Minerva McGonagall in the *Harry Potter* films]. How was that?

"Maggie's a national institution – she has a very special place in people's affections. I only had one scene with her, but I feel if I died tomorrow then at least I can say I did a scene with Dame Maggie Smith!"

OK, so let's talk *Little Britain*. Who came up with the hilarious ad-libbed bit in the live show where Matt teases you about your sexuality?

"We both just thought it would be a fun thing to do. It's a little treat for the audience when we move away from the script a bit. So Matt liked to tease me by saying I was actually gay [laughs]."

Not that he's got any special insight! Have you been enjoying *The Sun's* gay-ometer?

"[Smiles] Yes, it's good for me to be able to keep track of where my sexuality is at by reading a newspaper."

Do guys come onto you?

"No, not ever. It's really disappointing!"

Pick a moment this year when you were truly happy...
 "I've got a nephew, Eddie, who's one, and I went to his birthday party. Just seeing his delight and making him happy, pushing him on the swing and singing little songs to him – I don't think you can ever be any happier than that." ☺

• *Capturing Mary* is on BBC2 from early November.

“ACTUALLY, MY PENIS IS TOO LARGE, BUT I TRY NOT TO LET THAT AFFECT ME”