

# Kerry's made up

Kerry Nicholson was a stockbroker in a previous life before retraining as a TV and film make-up artist, working on TV dramas *Wire in the Blood* and *Place of Execution*. Katharine Capocci finds out more.

It's easy to pick out make-up artist Kerry Nicholson in the café where we are meeting for a chat. She's the one looking perfectly made up - flawless foundation, soft blusher and eyeshadow beautifully applied, all accentuating her best features, of course.

It's nothing less what you'd expect, though, since the face Kerry presents to the world, more so than the rest of us, is a reflection of her living as a TV and film make-up artist.

Although two minutes later she does confess she's wearing rather more under-eye concealer than usual, to cover the ravages of a busy weekend.

"I was on a hen weekend in Manchester so I probably have more make-up on than usual to cover the tiredness!" explains Kerry, 31, who lives with husband Will and their large basset hound Crombie in Corbridge, Northumberland.

The preliminaries out of the way, we are soon down to the nitty gritty of talking gory TV make-up and how to make authentic-looking laceration injuries.

Apparently a mix of stage blood, which is edible, and mashed up banana works very well, creating just the desired gruesome effect!

Kerry's job as a make-up artist is eclectic, if nothing else. Although she has the exciting aspect of TV and stage make-up to her career, she has recently diversified with more mainstream make-up tuition, parties and corporate events, offered through her new business, *The Perfect Base*.

Her life as a make-up artist has seen her work in TV on prime-time dramas, among them *Wire in the Blood* and *Place of Execution*, both of which were filmed in the



North East. Kerry's husband Will is an associate producer for ITV's *Wire in the Blood*, which stars Geordie actor Robson Green as criminal psychologist Dr Tony Hill.

For those of us not au fait with the workings of TV, Kerry explains: "Will does the day-to-day running of the show, the crewing and making sure everybody is in the right place at the right time."

Kerry, who hails from Glasgow, had an interesting route into the world of make-up, starting her working life as a stockbroker in Edinburgh.

"I met Will when I was at university in Newcastle, where I studied computers. I fell into stockbroking in Edinburgh after university. I worked on the private client side of it, then moved to Glasgow doing institutional brokering as an investment analyst."

"I decided to retrain, it just wasn't for me. It wasn't what I wanted to do forever."

Kerry enrolled on a four-month course on TV, film and stage make-up at Shepperton Studios in London at the age of 27.

"Shepperton's a huge complex. They do a lot of films there and adverts, and it gives a real feel for the industry."

"*Wire in the Blood* gave me my first break as a trainee make-up artist on series five. I ended up doing the last two series, five and six."

"It was really interesting because it was special effects make-up as well as day-to-day make-up, looking after actors Emma Handy and Mark Letheren, who play the supporting police officers in the series."

"I helped out on some of the more gory bits too, working with the make-up designer. That's my favourite bit of TV, the make-up and special effects."

Kerry also had her work cut out helping to make up 80 extras for

## Bloody passion proves a hit

court scenes in the tense three-part drama *Place of Execution*.

The drama, which aired on ITV last year, was filmed at Simonsburn, Northumberland, and starred Juliet Stevenson and Greg Wise.

"Half of it was set in the transitional time from the '50s to '60s, so that was my first period drama. One morning we had to make up 80 background supporting artists for a court scene in '60s style. We started at 5am doing make-up and hair. Because it was a transitional time from the '50s to '60s the look was more natural, not eye flicks and beehives."

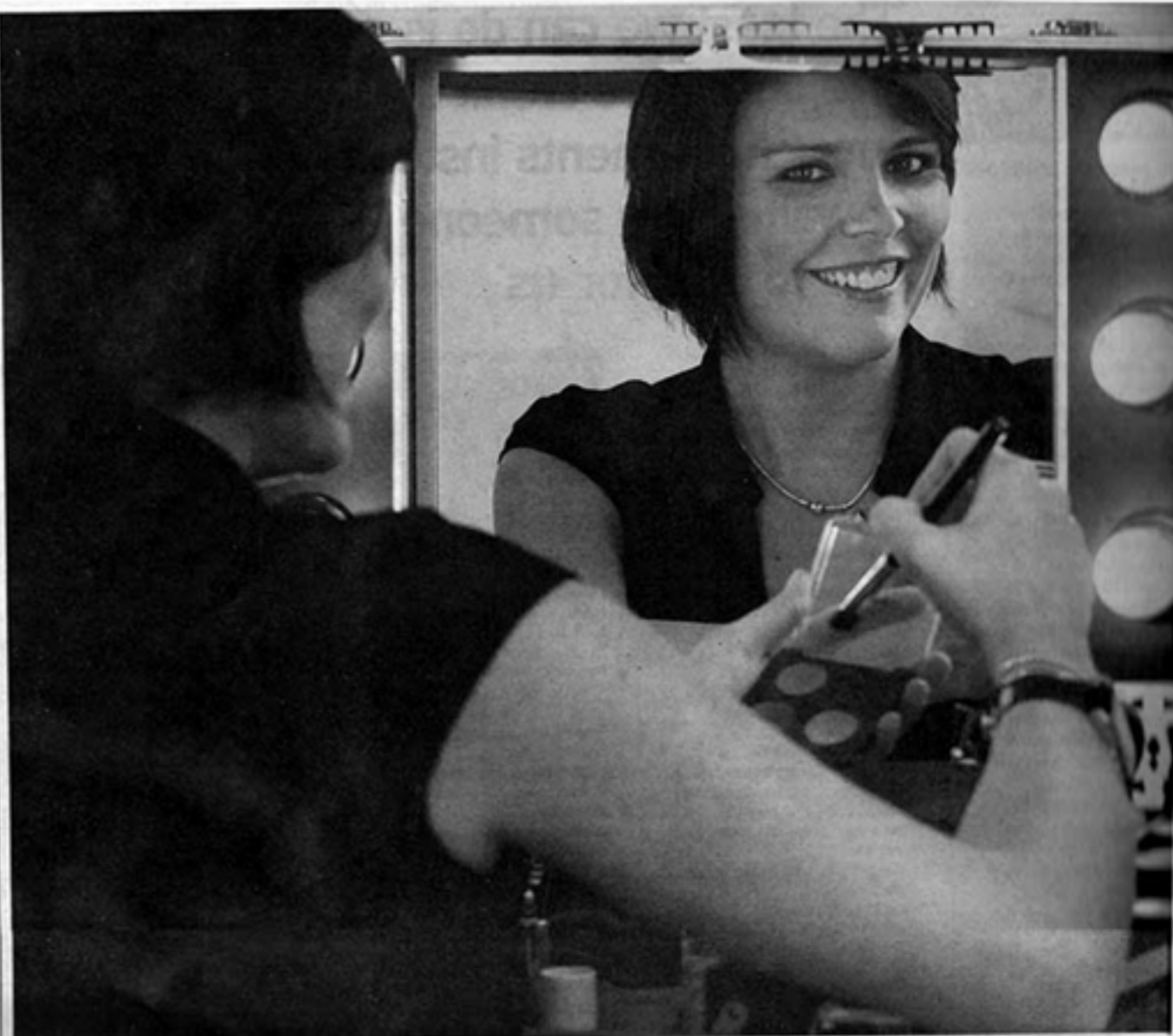
"All the ladies wore hats to court and had simple French rolls in their hair. We had to pale people's complexions down, because they didn't go on holidays abroad like today, and apply natural looking lipstick."

"People didn't have highlights in their hair in those days so we had to tone down hair colour."

From one extreme to the other, Kerry also worked on the make-up for a special musicals edition of BBC's *Songs of Praise*, filmed at Sunderland Empire just before Christmas.

Kerry made up artists, some of whom included West End stars Steve Balsamo and Keith Jack, who was runner-up in the *Any Dream Will Do* TV series.

"I really do enjoy it. Every day is



different," says Kerry, who admits she's more in touch with her creative side now she's changed careers.

Kerry set up her business, *The Perfect Base*, a couple of months ago, offering make-up tuition, and aimed at overcoming the fear factor ordinary folk have of getting their make-up all wrong.

"So many people I meet say they are terrified when they walk into a department store. My aim is to teach people in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. I do one-to-one lessons, wedding make-up, corporate events and parties, that sort of thing."

"I go to people's houses in the evening with my make-up station, complete with lights! Women can have a glass of wine - it's learning in a fun way."

"Having your make-up done and giving you a polished look can really boost your self-esteem. It's very satisfying making up a woman - you can see the confidence when they leave knowing they look their best."

Kerry adds: "I have no regrets changing career. You definitely meet more interesting people than being a city analyst!"

For more details, go online at [www.theperfectbase.co.uk](http://www.theperfectbase.co.uk)

Kerry also offers Tween Movie Makeovers for children's parties, where youngsters can dress up as their favourite movie stars. Find more on [www.tweenmoviemakeovers.com](http://www.tweenmoviemakeovers.com)



**DIVERSE** As well as doing wedding make-up, above, Kerry also worked on TV series like the popular North East-based *Wire in the Blood*, top. Main picture, Kerry with her make-up station, which she takes on client visits.