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PORT TALBOT-BASED MODEL AMELIA THOMAS IS A REGULAR ON OUR SCREENS AT THE MOMENT THANKS TO HER PROGRESS IN REALITY TV SHOW BRITAIN'S NEXT TOP MODEL. AS THE SHOW NEARS ITS CLIMAX, CHERIE STRAWBRIDGE CAUGHT UP WITH HER DURING A SPECIAL PHOTO SHOOT COMMISSIONED BY SWANSEA LIFE.



Britain's Next  
**Top Model?**



The clothes for this shoot were supplied by Raggedy, a boutique owned by Hayley Trezise, a bold independent designer working in West Wales.

Her driving passion is to be creative, and her strong belief that fashion can be ecological, fairly-traded and fun, led her to create the fashion label Raggedy, where old, disheveled clothes are recycled with flair, creating one-off Quirky Couture for all occasions.

“She has a strong belief that fashion can be ecological.”

Featured in London Alternative Fashion Week 2009/10, she attends a variety of fashion shows and charitable events. She successfully stocks independent boutiques in Wales, runs recycled clothing workshops, as well as working on private commissions, from alternative bridal wear to revamping old clothes.

Do you think you've got what it takes to become Britain's Next Top Model? Based on the hit US reality TV show America's Next Top Model, the UK version, presented by Elle Macpherson, follows 14 hopefuls through their journey to becoming Britain's next 'top model'. Witness tears and tantrums as each girl attempts to fight her way to the top – there can only be one winner, after all.

In each episode one contestant is eliminated, though in rare cases a double elimination or no elimination is given by consensus of the judging panel. This year, the show ends with a live final where the public will choose their top model. Welsh fashion designer Julien MacDonald OBE graces the judging panel this year. However, he is not the only Welsh personality.

One of the contestants is Amelia Thomas, from Port Talbot. Amelia starred in the recent Fashion Addict show, put on by the Evening Post – the event where she first got an insight into her talents. On the back of that, she auditioned for Britain's Next Top Model. She was selected as the first finalist after impressing the judges at the

“People say it is nice to see a Welsh girl in the competition.”

boot camp. “Luckily, I got through to the Cardiff audition,” she says. “That was great, I really enjoyed it! But then came the London audition, which I hated. I said at that point that if I got through to the show I'd never do it. It just felt like they were pushing you the whole time. They wanted to tell what sort of person you were.”

Amelia did get through. She says she got a call from a researcher on the show to say that she had passed the phone interview and was through to boot camp. She deliberated, but eventually decided to take part.

“I knew what I was taking on; I knew it would be intense,” Amelia says. “It was a big decision because at the time I worked in the Welsh

Assembly with a good job and good income. That was the steady path. But I thought I may as well take the risk, even if I didn't win.”

She says the 25 girls were initially taken to a secret location. “When I got there I was overwhelmed by it all. We were there for a week and the girls' reactions were crazy. It was the first time we saw Elle Macpherson. We had a few interview stages and some eliminations. The final 14 girls then went to the house in Kingston, Surrey, which was next to Ronnie Wood's wife's house. Very rock and roll!”

Amelia says that with 14 girls in one house competing for the same title, tensions were naturally high. She describes herself as the

peacemaker. “I personally get on with everyone. There is camaraderie there. Certain girls had a game plan and that has come out. Sometimes it's like walking on egg shells, but I thrived on that at some points though.”

Contact with friends and family was strictly limited. For some of the girls this proved tough, but Amelia's says she coped better than most.

“It had to be that way; there is never any time,” she says. “We are up at five in the morning and then straight to the shoots on set which go on until the early hours. When we get back to the house there is always a fight for the showers with a house full of girls.

“We work on set seven days a week. There are two challenges a week, with two photo shoots and an elimination at the end. I suffer from nerves in there if I'm honest. The photo shoots you see on the show look like they take five minutes, whereas they actually take all day. I know good models have to get the shot, but we are pushed to the extreme of top modelling. It is a real test.”

As such, she says it is not as glamorous as it seems. “Everything in the show is done 20 times; the public don't see what it's really like,” she says. “There's no first-time reactions; it's very rehearsed and staged. Out of all the girls, my face tells the story like it is because I can't fake things. After each elimination we all get whisked off and separated from the judges. At the end of the day, it's a competition.”

But despite some drawbacks, Amelia has no regrets. “It has been the best experience. I went there purely for the experience because I already had the career. I've met gorgeous friends, and so many celebs. I've seen all that modelling can offer. I've done so many shoots and so many types of modelling. So far it has been amazing.”

She remains focused on getting further in the competition, which will climax towards the end of September. “I've had so much support from everyone at home, all my friends and family. My whole town has got behind me. They say it is nice to see a Welsh girl in the competition,” she says.



**Model**  
Amelia Kate Thomas (Britain's Next Top Model 2010 Contestant)

**Make-Up**  
Sascha Martini 07786 078 196

**Clothes By**  
Raggedy www.raggedyrags.co.uk

**Hair By**  
Brian Brown

**Photographers**  
Justin Harris 07971487 799 / Marta F Andres 07521 070 425

**Art Direction**  
Mccallion Brown www.mccallionbrown.co.uk

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