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What the bloomin' heck is going on?

Our showbiz correspondent Mrs Frankowitz dishes up this week's celebrity gossip *Page 23*

HOW I FELL FOR MY 'PEACHES COHEN'

She had a turbulent childhood following her mother's death, but Peaches Geldof – who tragically died on Monday at the age of 25 – looked to be finally settling down after tying the knot with a nice Jewish boy and celebrating the arrival of two beautiful sons. In 2012, ahead of the birth of their first child Astala, the *Jewish News*' **Sharon Feinstein** chatted to Tom Cohen about impending fatherhood and marrying into the unconventional Geldof family...

The day Thomas Cohen was meant to be having his barmitzvah, he was partying with friends at the Hard Rock Café. Peaches Geldof's future husband, and rocker in arty band S.C.U.M, Thomas ventured even further to confess he did not have a brit. "My granddad always used to joke, around my 13th birthday, that he was going to get a letter knife and cut it off," Thomas says affectionately. "My mum never wanted me to have the snip, so I'm sorry to say I have mine intact – and my baby won't have one either. I'm still waiting for my barmitzvah if anyone wants to throw one!"

None of this turning away from tradition means that Thomas Cohen doesn't feel Jewish. Indeed, he is deeply proud of his background.

When asked what sort of father he would be to his and Peaches' future child, he said: "A Jewish father!"

In an exclusive interview with the *Jewish News*, this charming young man spoke about his background, love for Peaches and introduction to the unconventional Geldof family.

"Peaches Cohen sounds good, doesn't it," he said, beaming. "I don't know whether we'll have a traditional Jewish wedding, but my parents did and I am proud of that. My grandfather was knighted for social work and he set up one of the first rehabilitation centres, so my parents could have got married in St Paul's. But obviously they had a shul wedding instead."

Thomas fell in love with Peaches the first night they spent together, and soon afterwards she told him she'd just discovered that she was also Jewish! He went out and bought her a Magen David to celebrate – the

first present he ever gave her – and she hasn't taken it off since.

The long-haired singer added: "I knew Peaches for a few years and she was always so much more exciting and amazing than any girl I'd ever known. From the moment we went out with each other I was sure I didn't want to spend a day away from her really for the rest of my life. She's funny, and clever and open. We have a huge love for each other. We haven't looked back since that first night. We are very loved up. Love and being loving is one of the most important things in life. My love for her isn't about flowers and romantic dinners. It's more about looking after her and being responsive when she doesn't seem happy."

When Peaches first announced she was Jewish, Thomas was somewhat sceptical, but now he sees her as a typical Jewish woman. "She only discovered last year that her grandmother is Jewish, but when she said, 'I'm Jewish, Tom', I said, 'Yeah, really?' But now it makes sense. She seems very much like a Jewish woman in the way she thinks and behaves. I went to Covent Garden antique market and bought her a Magen David, from an Orthodox Jew there."

Their child, a boy named Astala Dylan Willow, was born in 2012. Perhaps one day he will have a barmitzvah, as the couple want to bring him up as a Jew.

Thomas says: "Being Jewish was always a part of us. My grandparents come from East London, and are much more religious. Their parents were from Eastern Europe and were on a boat set for America and ended up in England because it took a wrong turn.



"My parents met on a kibbutz in Israel. I didn't have a religious upbringing but being Jewish was definitely a big part of my childhood and a big part of who I am. I'm very proud to be Jewish. Part of my creativity is from being Jewish, the eccentricity of some Jewish musicians really connects with me. When I find out someone is Jewish I think, 'Oh yeah, you're part of my group'."

"My maternal grandparents were Cohens as well and changed their name during the war. My grandfather chose the name 'Conn', after his favourite Tottenham Hotspur footballer at the time! Then a Conn married a Cohen (my dad) and we became Cohens all over again!"

Peaches' dad, Sir Bob Geldof, has welcomed Thomas and his family into the Battersea home with open arms. Thomas smiles: "Bob's thrilled that we're getting married and having a baby. Hopefully he thinks I'll be a wonderful son-in-law!"

"The Geldofs are from different fields and backgrounds to my parents, but they have a similar outlook. I was nervous to meet Peaches' dad, but not because he's 'Sir Bob' – just because he's my girlfriend's dad. The first time we met he showed me clips from a music video he filmed in Spain with Alan McGee and Rhys Ifans. He gets shot at the end of the video. It broke the ice and helped to bond us. I suppose he also saw me as a fellow musician as well, which was good."

"I instantly felt accepted, comfortable and happy. Her sisters are all amazing and have been super supportive, including Tiger. My parents were invited to dinner with Bob and his partner at Battersea, so the families could get to know each other.



Above: Peaches and Tom pictured in 2011. Left: pregnant with her first son. Inset: Police at Peaches' Kent home on Monday following her tragic death

Our puppy, Parper, wasn't house trained yet and neither was the puppy at the Geldof's Battersea home. So the meal was dominated by dogs pooing around the place! It was quite funny really. Not a stiff evening at all. The food and atmosphere was good and really relaxed."

Tom concludes: "It's felt very natural joining the Geldof family. We see

them as much as we can – all the sisters – and Peaches makes such an effort with my family. Bob can see how in love we are, and that's good enough for him. I think that's what he was focused on.

"Not about me or my family or where I come from, but how much I love his daughter and how much we love each other."