



● *Blonde Kim—in a slinky black dress.*

SEX-CHANGE STRIP STAR

SEEDY SOHO, in London's West End, reaches an all-time low tomorrow. The new star "attraction" at a strip club will be Kim Hughes, a shapely blonde, who was once a railway porter called Jim.

The same Jim Hughes who became the first person in Britain to have a sex-change operation—which can cost anything from £500 to £2,500—on the National Health.

Kim—her full name is now Kimberley Elizabeth Belvedere Hughes—talked yesterday about her new career at the White Monkey Club in Gerrard-street, Soho.

"I feel that this way I will be able to prove to the world that I really am a woman," she said.

As Kim talked in a West End cocktail bar, there were admiring glances from many of the men customers.

"I am not at all ashamed of taking my clothes off," said 25-year-old Kim. "I feel I have really found a place in the world at last.

"I know I have a body I can be proud of, and one that men will admire."

Kim tried for years to persuade doctors that she needed a sex-change operation. But it was only after she was found suffering from an overdose of drugs that specialists agreed.

She had three operations, the last of which was in May.

'Life was hell'

"From the age of 13, I knew I was not the same as other boys," said Kim.

"Life was hell. But not everyone accepts me—even the other strippers at the White Monkey."

Kim has found romance, too. She revealed that she is due to become engaged to a junior executive with a textile firm in Croydon. "His name is Mike, and we are very much in love," she said.

The manager of the White Monkey, Johnny de Maine, said: "This will be the greatest thing the strip clubs ever saw—just the thing to bring in the crowds.

"In this business, it is one long search to find a new gimmick, and this is an honest one.

"And don't get the wrong idea. Kim's act is artistic. There is nothing smutty about it."

Then Mr. de Maine told of the difficulties the Soho strip clubs have been having. Five have closed down, he said.

But it was with pride that he added: "A good management can always find a way to stay at the top."