



RINGING THE CHANGES: South Cave designer Nicola Walgate, left, with Sarah Shepherdson, has launched an online costume jewellery company called Dainty Damsel. She is also expecting a baby.

Picture: Peter Harbour

Busy year in store with new business and new baby, too

Expectant mum launches online costume jewellery shop

WITH a new business and a baby on the way, 2011 is going to be a busy year for Nicola Walgate.

The South Cave-based designer has set up online costume jewellery business Dainty Damsel.

She sells her jewellery online and already has 16 stockists across northern England and Scotland, including The Wardrobe in Hedon, Crave in Hessele and Bohemia in Newland Avenue, west Hull.

Ms Walgate launched the company in March after taking a year out to study jewellery design and metal work.

In the final stages of setting up the company in January, she found out she was pregnant.

But that did not stop her from ploughing ahead.

She said: "I had been planning Dainty Damsel for so

InShort

South Cave-based designer Nicola Walgate has launched an online costume jewellery business, Dainty Damsel, which caters for all ages.

by **Miranda Prynne**
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long. I was at the point of no return because I had already committed to a number of manufacturers.

"I did have a fleeting moment of panic about it, but when I thought rationally, I knew it would be fine.

"I am sure it has all happened for a reason."

Ms Walgate previously worked for Topshop parent company Arcadia for 20 years, starting as a sales assistant and ending up area

visual manager, overseeing numerous shops.

In 2005, she left Arcadia to set up Crave boutique in Hessele, which she ran for four years.

This career in fashion sparked her interest in costume jewellery.

She said: "You can essentially change a really simple outfit just by accessorising.

"And unlike clothes, which don't suit certain figures, jewellery is something everyone can wear."

In 2009, she decided to sell Crave and take a year out to study jewellery design at Hull College, with the aim of setting up a web-based retail business.

She said: "I wanted to move into online sales and I thought jewellery would lend itself to that.

"Unlike clothes, which you sometimes need to try on, jewellery is easier to judge

from a picture."

While studying, Ms Walgate carried out a lot of her own online research and travelled to the Middle East to source manufacturers.

Dainty Damsel began designing her four current collections in October last year.

The 70 designs were sent out for production in January and returned ready for sale in March.

Dainty Damsel jewellery uses Czech crystal and nickel and lead-free metal.

Ms Walgate describes it as "statement jewellery" for all ages.

She said: "My jewellery has to be different to anything else that you might see on the high street.

"I look at what the trends are going to be for the coming season and what the colours are going to be and use that as a starting point."