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No. 1037 WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 2001 25p

INSIDE TODAY



Sports exclusive Is it the end of BUSA at Newcastle ?

Plus: Latest theatre, cinema and music. Pages 9 - 13

UNI STUDENTS IN LAP-DANCE CLUB PROTEST

Women's Officer fears new club could lure hard-up students into sex industry

By JENNIE LAWRENCE and SARA ARIFF

NEWCASTLE UNI students who oppose the opening of the city's first lap-dancing club have vowed to fight on after their occupation of the proposed site came to an end last week.

Women's Officer Carrie Sharman was amongst students who took part in a week-long squat at the city centre site.

The squatters had set up community based activities open to the general public.

But the group were evicted after a court order was served.

Work has now started on building the club, called For Your Eyes Only, at the former Manors Social Club in Carliol Square.

Carrie told *The Courier*: "The club is sexist and derogatory towards women.

"It will promote the laddish culture of the University, as well as taking advantage of student hardship".

The University has also entered the row. Lecturers fear that the club could lure penniless students into "a sexually-exploitative industry".

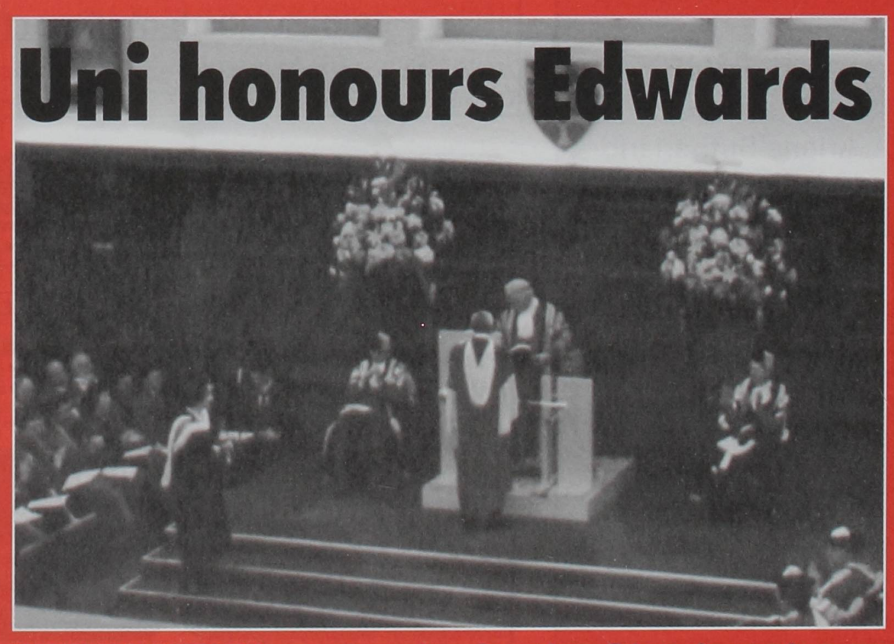
A survey of prostitutes in Leeds found that 60% are full-time students.

Continued on page 2.



SIT-IN... Carrie (right) with fellow supporters

Uni honours Edwards



OLYMPIC TRIPLE jump champion Jonathan Edwards receives an honorary degree from Newcastle Uni Chancellor Chris Patten in King's Hall. Full story on page 2.

The voice of Newcastle students since 1948

The Courier
courier.news@ncl.ac.uk

Union Society
King's Walk
Newcastle
NE1 8QB
tel: 0191 232 4050
fax: 0191 239 3991

Editor:
Dan Gregson

Deputy Editors:
Jacqui Butler
Lisa Nandy

News Editor:
Paul Crosthwaite

Sports Editor:
Chris Hurst

Music Editor:
Mike Seaton

Arts Editor:
Wyl Menmuir

Chief Reporters:
Jo Johnston
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Ann Clifford

Staff Reporters:
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Jake Lee
Natalie Bogusch
Louise Baty
Charlie Webb
James Garbett
Jennie Lawrence

Music Correspondents:
Tom Fenwick
Tom Horder

Advertising Manager:
Arlene Sutherland

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

The Courier is the independent newspaper of the Student Union at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Established in 1948, The Courier is published weekly during term time.

www.unionsociety.co.uk

Got a story?
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courier.news@ncl.ac.uk
or call us:
0191 232 4050

By JENNIE LAWRENCE and SARA ARIFF

Continued from page 1.

Carrie said: "When students are faced with mounting debts and poorly paid part-time work the sex industry appears to be a lucrative industry.

"However, it becomes a trap of exploitation which is hard to escape."

Protest groups are also worried that there may be an increase in attacks on women with drunken clients roaming the area.

Although the club has been given the dance and drinks licences needed, Carrie and her fellow protesters will still continue to rally against the club. "We want to increase public awareness," she said.

The group plan to lobby councillors for new legislation and to organise further campaigning once the club opens in November.

But some Newcastle students seem unconcerned by claims that the club poses a danger to them.

Hannah Scanlon, a first-year Religion and Philosophy student, said: "I don't see that there's anything wrong.

"It's the women's decision and they're adult enough to decide for themselves."

First-year Psychology student Steve Stewart added: "It's the women who exploit the men.

"They earn so much money that men are stupid if they want to pay."



DIDDLY SQUAT... one of the rooms inhabited by lap-dance club protesters

Stats reveal Geordie woe

By NATALIE BOGUSCH

Newcastle Uni's aims to increase the number of Geordies getting a degree have been hit by a set back, as a new survey reveals the shocking truth!

The 'Partner's programme' at Newcastle Uni has been working hard to up the number of students coming from the North East, by helping the locals realise their potential.

Despite their efforts, the figures just published by the office for National Statistics show that a mere 10% of Geordies have a degree or equivalent, compared with the national average at 15%.

Co-ordinator for Newcastle University's Partners programme, Lucy Blackhurst commented:

"The North East has one of the lowest progression rates from school to university for a number of reasons."

"I think there are particular barriers that people in the North East face."

Ms Blackhurst believes that a lack of tradition for further or higher education and unrealistic perceptions about the financial commitment a university education entails are mainly to blame.

She argued: "What we are trying to do is get people to see university as an investment in their future. A huge amount of work is being done across the region."

However, Ms Blackhurst remained cautious about the length of time it might take before any real improvements could be seen: "We are talking about changing cultures and it isn't a short term quick fix!"

***THE COURIER'S* Letters Editor, Gareth 'Gaz' Newhall, has died.**

Gaz passed away on 30 March after a long battle with cancer. He was 21.

Gaz was a vital part of *The Courier* team. Over his three years on the paper he turned his hand to music, arts and news.

And most recently, he was familiar to readers as the vitriolic voice of Newcastle students, 'Dear Gaz'.

Courier editor Dan Gregson said: "It is simply tragic. He is deeply missed around the office and university.

"It had been a long and difficult fight against cancer for Gaz and his courage is something we can all learn from. I think it has also made a few people think about how trivial things in life can be. It puts a lot of things into perspective."

Tribute - page 8.

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STOTTIE OF THE WEEK
Cottage Cheese

Two house in ball success shocker

MONOTONOUS

Uni game first of its kind

By OLIVIA RICHWALD

CASTLE LEAZES WILL be up for sale later this year, and students across the Uni will be given the opportunity to buy it and build a luxury hotel in its place.

Students will also be given the chance to buy the Robinson library, build houses in the Quad and find unlimited free parking in the University grounds.

These marvellous opportunities are being offered by board games gurus Winning Moves who have produced a Monopoly set based on the University campus.

Newcastle is the first University in the country to be given this honour and the makers are hoping that many of the Uni's students and alumni will cough up the £25 the game will cost.

When asked why Newcastle was chosen Mark Marriott, a former Newcastle student and Winning Moves designer, said: "Newcastle is a big university that breeds a sense of pride among its alumni. The game is a good idea and a nice souvenir.

"I also think it will come in handy for certain students to know what their department actually looked like."

The game is modelled on a journey through the University, starting with the reasonably priced Castle Leazes at £60 and ending at Kings Hall, which is on sale for a budget-busting £400.

Football fans will be able to purchase St James Park for only £200.

The game works on the same principle as traditional Monopoly, with a range of student based Chance and Community Chest cards.

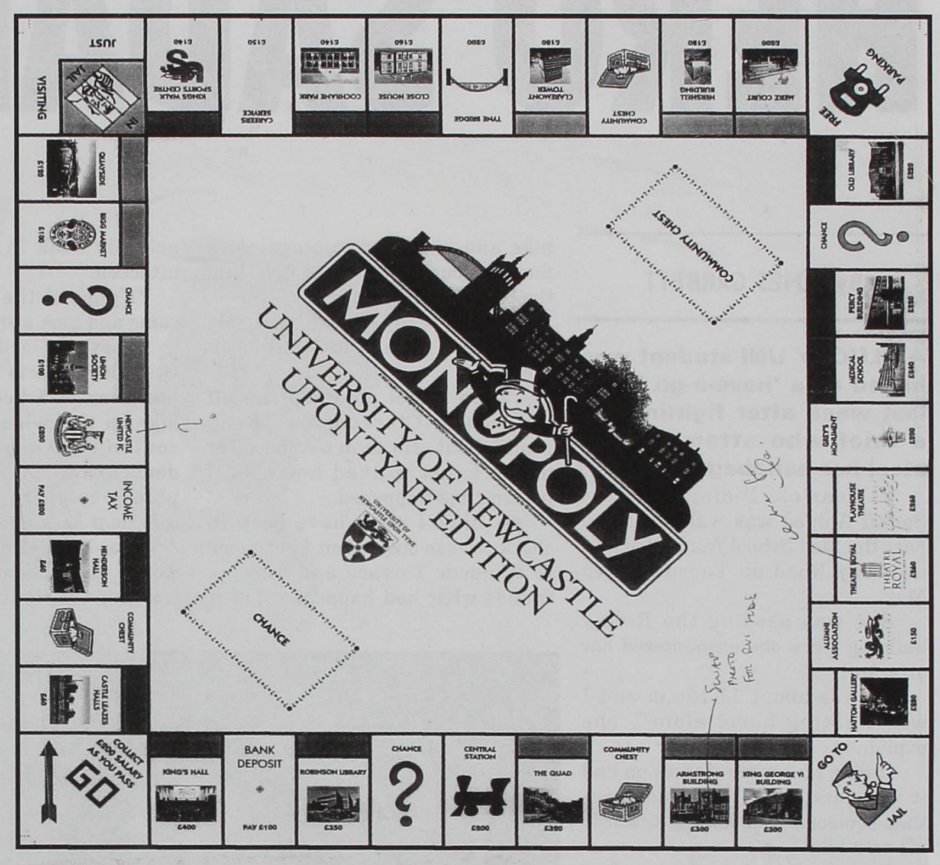
Players will have the Chance to "Spend an evening in the Mens bar - lose £30".

Despite paying homage to the University, the designers have failed to notice it would actually cost more to spend a week in Castle Leazes than to buy the place.

If any student fancies taking their lucky boot to Kings Hall, the game will be on sale at the graduation ceremonies in July.

The tribute will be available from mid June from the Union Shop and Museum of Antiquities. Winning Moves are also planning to set up a mail order system.

As good as all of this sounds, the designers have unfortunately made one glaring omission - they have failed to give the illustrious Courier a mention.



BLUEPRINT... The Courier managed to get hold of top secret draft of new Newcastle uni edition

Shock move as shoe tree axed

By CATHERINE BRUCE

STUDENTS were outraged when council killjoys chopped the branches off Heaton's legendary shoe tree.

Locals and students have thrown pairs of shoes into the famous tree in Heaton park for good luck for several years.

Some believe the tradition was started by boozy students celebrating the end of exams.

But the Council removed both the shoes AND the branches after they deemed it a health hazard, arguing that the shoes could fall off and hit passers by.

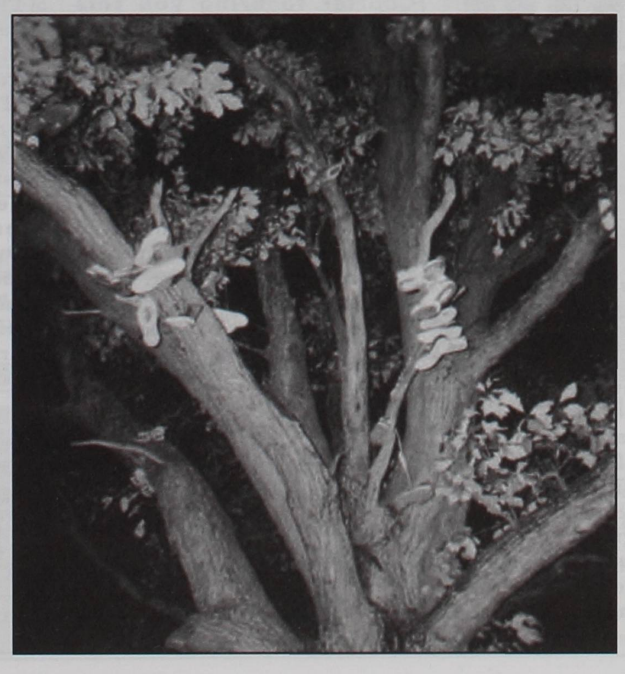
A Council spokesperson said "We have taken the shoes down for safety reasons. The view was taken that if a shoe hit someone they could take action."

Third-year Maths student Clare Rossi fumed: "The shoe tree was really cool - it was like a local tourist attraction."

She added, "I think they should have set up a shoe-watch to stop there being too many shoes that could have fallen on someone's head.

"Surely that's better than them chopping the branches off some poor defenceless tree just because some local loons decided to throw someone's shoes in it!"

But one Heaton resident was a little more dubious, "It's all a load of bullshit. Shoe tree my arse. I've never seen it."



It all started with a diary...

MAY 2001 WEEK 19

9 WEDNESDAY

Interviews (0 bad), application forms completed (0 v.bad), visits to Careers Service (5 mins, popped in to use loo on way to lecture)
Another late night with Kath, Jude and Andy discussing the trauma of being jobless and penniless with only 8 weeks till graduation. Andy had a brilliant brainwave! Suggested we should all go to the Newcastle Graduate Recruitment Fair on the 18th June. Will look at web site to find out who will be there www.careers.ncl.ac.uk/ngrf. Will get v.g. job and spend rest of Summer on holiday in manner of Geri Halliwell or other similar person with permanent tan. Note - must remember to pop into Careers Service and find out what to wear to v.important event.

10 THURSDAY

Calls from mother (1), interviews (0), application forms completed (0), visits to Careers Service (1 - hurrah!), alcohol units (15 v.bad), text messages (5 excellent)
Oh dear. Spent last night round Jude's with best intentions of completing application form for v.important job. Woke up feeling v.depressed with large hangover. Decided to pop in to Careers Service on advice of mother and was v.impressed. Found out about Insight into Management course. Will be important businesswoman in suit. Will e-mail Sue Plater s.m.plater@ncl.ac.uk to find out more about course and whether my department offers sponsorship. Hurrah! Have received e-mail from Sue and course is 15 pounds cheaper. Bargain, will sign up immediately.

11 FRIDAY

Interviews (1 v.g), application forms completed (1 v.g), visits to Careers Service (15 excellent), alcohol units (4), text messages (15) calls to mother (1), calls to Andy, Jude and Kath (15 in total)
Oh god, have v.important interview. Saw on www.careers.ncl.ac.uk/vacancies Have nothing to wear. Must look like professional person in suit. Think big pants are best option, more professional. Have been in Careers Service all day. Will go to next Clued up on Interviews session (see www.careers.ncl.ac.uk for details). Spoke to v.nice Information Officer who showed me lots of stuff about interview preparation and technique. Hurrah! Am no longer penniless, unemployed singleton.

The Careers Service...Hurrah!

HAVE-A-GO HERO SADAFF

By JAMES GARBETT

A PLUCKY UNI student was hailed as a 'have-a-go hero' last week after fighting off a thief who attempted to steal her handbag.

21 year-old Biology student Sadaff Ahmed was walking home past the Med School from a friend's in Ricky Road on Tuesday 17th May.

She was passing the Ridley building when she encountered her attacker.

"It was about 11:15p.m and I was walking home alone", she explained.

"I didn't have my glasses on and it was dark, but I could make out that someone was coming towards me on a bike.

"I just assumed it was a student and didn't think anything of it, but then he reached out and grabbed for my bag.

"It had all my coursework in, as well as my purse, phone, and all my files - there was no way he was getting it!

"Somehow I kept hold of it and tried to make a run for it, but before I could he jumped off his bike and pinned me up against a fence, shouting at me to give him the bag.

"I was really scared but I told him to piss off and kicked him in the balls.

"Then he let go and I ran off towards Claremont Road roundabout. He didn't come after me so I just walked home as if nothing had happened.

"I think I must have been in shock. It was only when I got home to Windsor Terrace and told my friends what had happened that it actually sunk in that I had been attacked.

"I phoned the police and they came and took a statement.

"They told me they had received two other reports from women who had been attacked by a man on a bike on the same day. Although I couldn't give a very accurate description they said they had plenty to go on, and they were confident he would be caught.

"To be honest, I probably wouldn't do the same again but it was just a natural reaction."



Grad ball fever hits Newcastle

By ANNA POLLITT

THERE WAS mayhem in the Union last week as students clambered to buy tickets for the annual graduation ball, which sold out in record time.

Hundreds of students were left disappointed when the £30 tickets sold out at 1.30p.m. last Tuesday.

With 3000 finalists and only 900 tickets there was a tense atmosphere as the queue grew longer. Some students bought more than ten tickets each.

Communications Officer Ian Kitchen, who is organising the ball, defended the event.

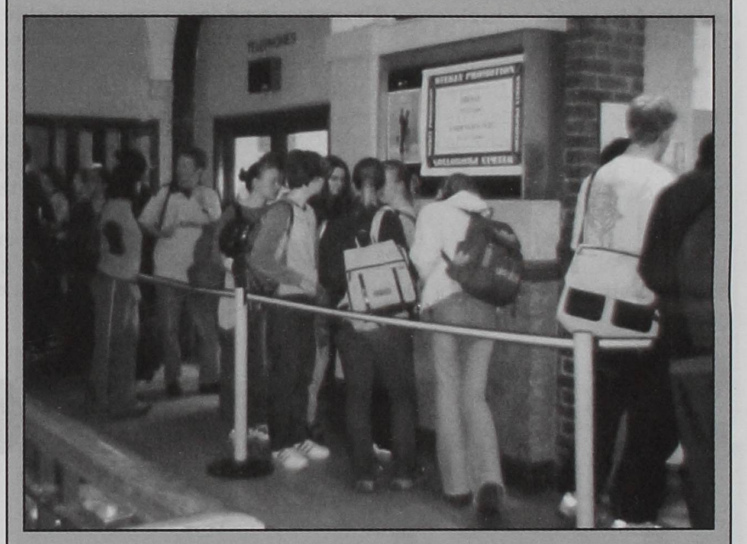
He told The Courier: "There wasn't a venue between Leeds and Edinburgh big enough to fit the 3000 finalists.

He added: "Students know the tables will be set for 10 so they simply get a friend to buy all the tickets at once."

The ball is being held at St James Park. Entertainment has not yet been confirmed, but the rumour that 'Hearsay' will be performing is untrue, as the £12,000 fee for a 20 minute set would have pushed ticket prices sky-high.

A jazz orchestra has been booked and organisers are currently looking for a soul band.

St James' Park are awaiting confirmation of a 4 a.m. finish.



Student slapped with driving ban

By CATHERINE BRUCE

A POSH student has been slapped with a ban for driving the morning after a drunken binge with friends.

First-year Agriculture student Alexander Cook was convicted of drink driving during the Easter holidays.

He had gone drinking on a Monday night in January and spent the night at Castle Leazes.

Despite his drunken binge the fresher, who lives in Jesmond, drove from the hall of residence into the city centre in the landrover bought for him by his father, a rich Durham businessman.

Cook claimed in court that he had pulled over on Vine Street near Munchies II once he realised he was still over the limit.

He testified that he had sat in his car for over an hour with the steering lock on.

Cook's lawyer argued that the agric didn't intend driving back to his Jesmond flat but was waiting to meet his friend for breakfast at Munchies II, a fast-food place popular with students, before going to a 10am lecture.

The defending lawyer also told Newcastle magistrates court that the 19 year-old would rather have left his landrover on a single yellow line and risk stumping up money for a parking fine than carry on driving under the influence of alcohol.

The prosecution dismissed Cook's story as "a fiction" and "a fairytale".

Cook was arrested as he sat in his car on 16 January and was breathalysed on the scene.

Despite the hapless student's excuses he was found guilty of drink driving, fined £100 and ordered to pay £118 costs.

He was also given 10 penalty points on his driver's licence As he already had three points he was banned from driving for 6 months.

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There's a slack handful of you lucky punters out there who've managed to get tickets to the great end of year bash that is the Annual Graduation Ball.

To kick off the Grad Ball there will be a drinks reception from 5.30pm in Global. Each ticket holder will receive a free mini bottle of Freixenet at the reception and the Mens Bar will also be open for those wishing to have another drink before moving to St. James' Park.

Dinner at St. James' will be held from 7.30pm. Please don't be late. You will also need to present your ticket at the door in order to gain entrance to the Ball.

As for the Table plan, please read the information at the bottom of the page to find out more.

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Important Grad Ball Information

For those who have tickets for the Grad Ball, it's not quite all over yet. On Thursday 10th May at 12 noon a table plan will be posted in the Union on the notice board opposite Reception at the entrance to the Mens Bar. It is your responsibility to write your name and ticket number on the plan to ensure you are seated with your friends at the ball. There are only 10 seats per table so please don't try and add and 11th person.

If you are Vegetarian or Vegan, please tick the box marked "v" on the plan. The Vegetarian meal is suitable for Vegans.

The table plan will be taken down as soon as it is complete or on Thursday 31st May, whichever is sooner. The full table plan will be posted in the Union on the same notice board shortly after. If after the plan is published you have any problems, please contact the Communications Officer on (0191) 2393916 or comm.union@ncl.ac.uk

PRETTY BOY DUNC GOOD

By ANN CLIFFORD

A NEWCASTLE student has won a year long modelling contract after triumphing in The Face of 2001 competition held in the North East.

Computing Science student Duncan Raeside also won £125 worth of clothes vouchers and £1,000 worth of holiday vouchers after the final heat at Baha.

Duncan told *The Courier*: "I was out on my birthday in April and went for a couple of drinks on the Quayside.

"Metro Radio were wandering round taking snapshots. I filled in a form and didn't really think about it after that.

"Three weeks later I got a call saying I'd got through to the final."

The final judging process involved an interview and dancing on the Baha stage.

"By that stage I was pretty pissed," admitted Duncan. "It's all a bit of a blur. I was pretty oblivious to it."

Judges included representatives from Tucci, Firetrap, model agency Assassin and competition organisers Metro Radio.

Duncan's celebrations upon hearing the result were so enthusiastic that bouncers ejected him from the club after he sprayed champagne in the VIP area.

A Metro Radio representative had to persuade Baha staff to let him back into the club.

"I wasn't expecting to win at all," Duncan said.

Duncan has now been invited to a meeting with Assassin in London and says he will "see what they've got to say".

Although he hasn't got any definite plans after graduation, he is not considering modelling as a full time future career.



'Sweat on' study by Uni

By OLIVIA RICHWALD

RACY UNI BOFFINS will be scouring the Toon this month for 300 women who want to get turned on by sniffing men's sweaty T-shirts.

The hapless volunteers will be part of a sexual attraction experiment, hoping to determine if taking the contraceptive pill influences women to pick unsuitable men.

According to the Psychology department, women are attracted to men whose smell is significantly different to their own as this indicates genetic difference, and hence healthier babies.

They believe the contraceptive pill may mask this smell, encouraging girls to choose genetically similar partners. This can lead to fertility problems in the future.

The Psychology department will be asking the volunteers to smell men's dirty T-shirts and rate them for their sexiness, intensity of smell and whether that particular body odour reminds them of their current or past boyfriends.

Dr Craig Robert, a researcher from the department, said: "Our bodies allows us to smell out whether someone is compatible, which is really amazing, but the pill could change this ability."

When a woman is taking the pill, the body behaves as if she were pregnant, and the boffins think that as a result the women will choose genetically similar men.

Dr Robert said: "We think that the switch towards preferring genetically similar men is because it may be advantageous to be near kin at this time as they may help rear and protect the baby."

The experiment is hoping to determine just how much pill use and pregnancy affect a woman's odour preference.

Experts are concerned that if this belief is proved true, use of the pill by young women may be affecting fertility rates throughout the world.

Dr Roberts warned: "In the short term, a woman may go on the pill or come off and suddenly not want to be with their partner anymore.

In the long term, this may cause problems in fertility between a couple and an increased number of miscarriages."

The researchers are especially interested to hear from women who are thinking about going on the pill or are trying to get pregnant. Contact craig.roberts@ncl.ac.uk for details.

'hello, I'm on my mobile!'

COURIER NEWS pages try to stay free of opinion - we just report what's happening which we hope is of interest of you.

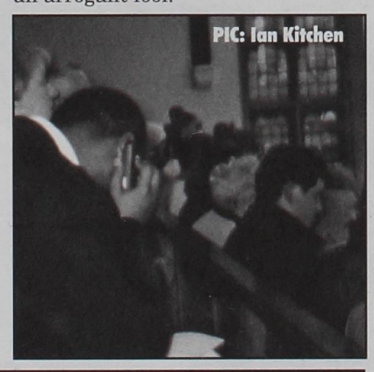
But this time, we've got a little rant to sound off.

Basically the problem is a bit Dom Jolly-esque, except that it goes beyond being funny.

Whilst the Courier ed. was reporting on the honourary degree being handed out to local champ Jon Edwards, some bloke was more interested in talking to a mate. Not someone next to him you understand, but to someone on his MOBILE. Twice.

Without being offensive it is difficult to comment on what everyone around him thought of this little move.

If the culprit is reading this, can it just be said that you are, at best, an arrogant fool.


PIC: Ian Kitchen

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'I'm 22, I don't even smoke. So how come I've got cancer?'

By CHARLIE WEBB

I'M 22, I don't live near Sellafield, or a mobile phone mast, or a foot and mouth funeral pyre. I don't even smoke. So how did I get cancer?

I first noticed that something was up in the final week of last term. My left testicle became hard and doubled in size.

After a week of fretting, I nervously trudged to the doctors. Thinking that it was most likely to be an infection (God forbid) the doctor prescribed a course of antibiotics and instructed me to see my GP when I returned home for Easter.

Within a week of returning home I had undergone surgery to remove the testicle, and two weeks after this, was prescribed a six-week course of chemotherapy.

During this process my life had changed utterly. My finals, which I had imagined would now be consuming my life, have become meaningless. My summer's goal has changed from graduating with a cheeky 2:1, and trying to find a job, to staying alive.

Don't get me wrong, my chance of a total cure is very good - 90% or so - but that still leaves a decent possibility that cancer will kill me, and sooner rather than later.

When I first found the lump my knowledge of testicular cancer was decidedly limited as, so far, it has not been covered on Hollyoaks.

Testicular cancer is a rare form of cancer; there are an average of 1,500 new cases diagnosed each year in the UK. However, over the last 35-40 years its incidence rate has doubled.

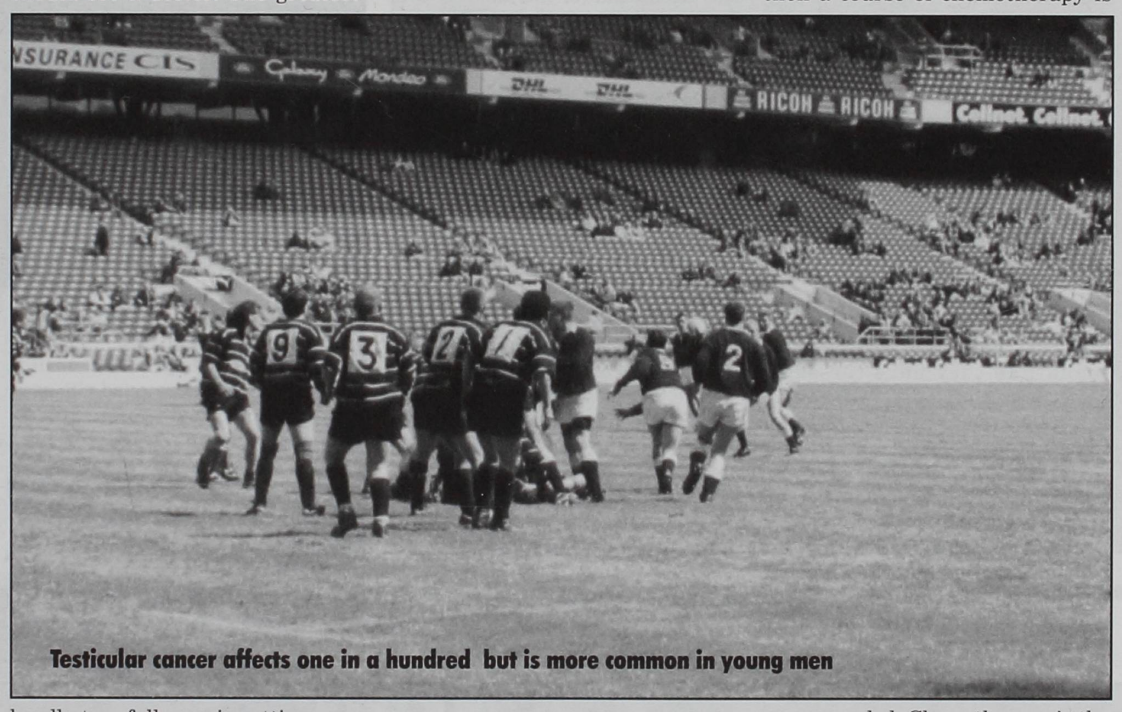
Although it is rare it is the most common form of cancer in men aged 15-35. Its causes are unknown. Caucasians are more likely to get it than Hispanics and much more likely than Blacks and Asians.

The symptoms include the growth of a painless lump on the testicle, a hardening or change in size of the testicle, or pain in the testicle.

The good news is that it is one of the most curable forms of cancer - 90% of men are cured and this rises to 99% if it is caught really early.

This means that it is vital for men to examine their testicles regularly, and properly, and that anyone concerned that they might be showing symptoms of the cancer should see a doctor. The greatest hurdle to a full cure is getting men to their GPs in the first place.

"99% of testicular cancer is cured if it's caught really early"



Testicular cancer affects one in a hundred but is more common in young men

Treatment revolves around a tried and tested (and extremely successful) protocol. The first stage in treating a testicular tumour is to remove the whole testicle. The reason for this is that most testicular tumours are cancerous and to perform a biopsy merely increases the chance that the cancer will spread.

The removal of the testicle does not impair fertility; the remaining testis compensates, and is perfectly adequate for a healthy and productive sex life.

"it is the most common form of cancer in men aged 15-35"

The second stage of treatment is to study the tumour to see whether it's cancerous and whether it's likely to have spread. The detection of secondary growths is also aided by the use of CT scans, which can usually show up cancerous tumours in the rest of the body.

If secondary tumours are detected or thought likely to occur then a course of chemotherapy is recommended. Chemotherapy is the use of cancer killing drugs. Although usually very effective, it carries with it unpleasant side effects.

As already mentioned my prognosis is very positive. According to the CT scan my cancer has not spread. Unfortunately the biopsy and blood tests show that cancer particles are in my blood.

According to the doctor there is a 40% chance of my developing a secondary tumour if I don't have chemotherapy. With it there is a 3% chance. By the time you read this, my chemo will have already started.

To be honest with you it is the prospect of chemotherapy that most frightens me. It affects different people in different ways but at its best it's unpleasant, and at its worst it is bad news.

The notion that over the next six weeks I'm probably going to be in pain, tired, miserable and suffer from ulcers, easily bruised skin, and hair loss fills me with dread.

I suppose that one should always try and look to the positive.

"By the time you read this, my chemo will already have started"

My GP says that if you are going to get a cancer - and I recently read that one in every four of us will - then this is the cancer to get.

Now that's all well and good, but it hardly makes up for the fact that my sister is beside herself with worry, my mother is crying, and I am scared.

A HANDS ON GUIDE TO SELF-EXAMINATION

You should perform these steps regularly. A thorough examination may be easier after a warm bath or shower as the scrotal skin relaxes.

Most lumps found on the testicles are benign but any changes in size, shape or weight should be checked by your GP.

Support the scrotum in the palm of your hand and become familiar with the size and weight of each testicle.

Examine each testicle by rolling it between your fingers and thumb. Press gently to feel for lumps, swellings, or changes in firmness.

Remember each testicle has an epididymis at the top which carries sperm to the penis. Don't panic if you feel this - it's normal.

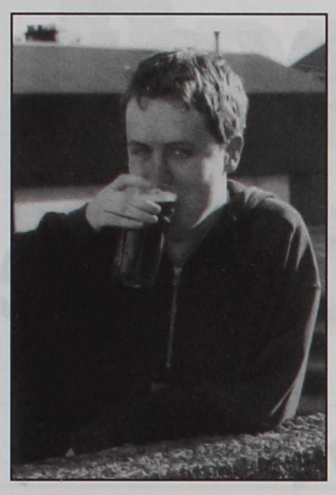
For more info check out **www.icr.ac.uk/everyman**

The Masked Monkey

Setting the world to rights on your behalf

One thing the Masked Monkey hasn't has a rant about this year (and there ain't that many things left) is mobile phones.
But the problem isn't mobile phones, it's the fools that use 'em. There are times and places and a graduation ceremony isn't one of them.
Why? Are you so insecure that you had to prove to a roomful of graduands that you had friends by yapping on your phone to someone?
No, you're probably not. You're probably just very stupid and don't care about a roomful of people who spent the last three years working their asses off. The Monkey (with a bit of luck) graduates this year. Turn up to it's ceremony with your phone and there's gonna be monkey trouble.

Check out all the latest sports results on pages 14 to 16



Over Easter, much loved Courier Letters Editor Gaz Newhall passed away, after losing his brave fight against cancer. He was 21.

Gaz joined The Courier in 1998, and immediately established himself as one of our most outrageous writers.

A top quality hack, his genius lay in an ability to translate his opinionated and witty as fuck social conscience onto the page without making any allowances for whether his audience agreed with him or not (they usually did).

It is with Gaz's honesty in mind that I'm avoiding the usual, "he was sensitive, kind, caring, considerate" spiel that clutters many an obituary. While all these adjectives are true to Gaz, they are used so liberally that to repeat them here would obscure the man's own uniqueness.

Gaz would also have hated being put on such a pedestal because of his death - read his hilarious hatchet job on Elvis below and you'll catch my drift.

When I joined The Courier as Music Editor in 1999, I had no idea who Gaz Newhall was.

After our first drink together in the Mens Bars a week or so later, I counted him as a friend.

This owed a lot to the fact that what you saw was what you got.

With an incredibly sharp mind and an encyclopaedic knowledge of music, you'd half expect him to be an arrogant muso type.

Yet Gaz was into music because he was into people - for him, like his hero John Lennon, the two were halves of a whole.

The reference to Lennon reminds me of a long-running, 'Pulp Fiction'-esque debate I had with Gaz over whether Paul or John was the better Beatle.

While I sided with Macca, Gaz was insistent on Lennon.

I eventually gave up the debate when I realised he'd never give in - when Gaz made his mind up, he very rarely changed it.

For this was a man who debated just for the sheer joy of it - his flatmates recently told me that they once argued with him for over three hours, because he claimed that the phrase "fuckoff" was all one word!

As you can see, he was right.

Everyone at The Courier misses Gaz terribly, because he was real.

Yet while his death is an awful tragedy, being morbid about it here would be so humourless, so unfaithful to the spirit in which he lived his life.

So we've compiled a selection of Gaz's best moments, headed by an hilarious, utterly disrespectful Elvis feature which holds its place in Courier legend.

Go on, piss yourselves - it's what he would have wanted.

MIKE SEATON

KING IS NOT DEAD

ELVIS 2000 (INTERACTIVE)

@ TELEWEST ARENA

TONIGHT ELVIS PRESLEY hits the toon for an intimate one-night stand at the Arena, celebrating the new millennium with his first ever tour of the British Isles.

No, it's not some fat lookalike singing along to a dodgy karoke backing tape, it's the REAL THING:

Tonight will be the result of years of intensive scientific research. American boffins have been trying for years to ressurect past idols and bring them back to life for increased profits.

Failed attempts include the Rolling Stones' Ronnie Wood (as seen at the Brits) and Johnny Rotten.

And if Elvis has a slightly dangerous look in his eyes during the gig, don't worry - it's just the drugs kicking in.

Bearing this in mind (and for the safety of the audience), Elvis' image will be projected live onto large video screens at both sides of the stage. The king himself will be crooning direct from his backstage haven of barbituates, cheeseburgers and under-age sex.

Meanwhile, on stage you will be kept entertained by a group of Elvis' past bandmates. They span his whole career as an artist, but all sound like they have the same father, two thumbs between them and webbed feet. "Inbred hicks", I think, is the phrase.

Isn't this whole interactive concept a bit unsavoury?

It's a bit like getting Hitler to read 'Mein Kampf' to you at bedtime, while General Pinochet plays on the pan-pipes softly in the background to soothe you into submission.

All very bit bizarre, given all this brave new world, Y2K bullshit, that we choose to accept as an idol a singing Bernard Manning who has been dead (or has he?) for over twenty years.

As a real legend, Chuck D, once said: "Elvis was a hero to most, but he never meant shit to me, most of my heroes ain't never appeared on no stamp."

Lets face facts. Elvis was shit.

The only people who like his music are shit-kickers with dubious gene pools and sad old ladies from Bournemouth.

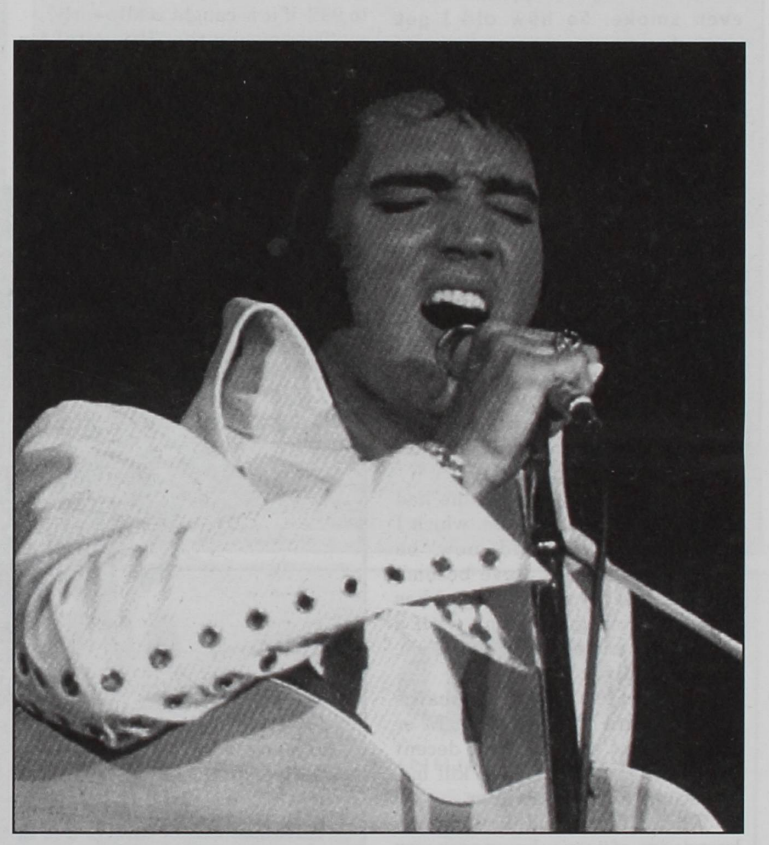
The guy was a fat, redneck, right-wing fucker with absolutely no soul. He even shopped John Lennon to the CIA for daringto tell people to open their minds.

The legend that remains Elvis is alive and almost well in Newcastle for one night only.

Can somebody pass me my Colt. 45 before he gets away?

Highly recommended.

GAZ NEWHALL



BUZZCOCKS

SPIRAL SCRATCH EP (MUTE)

This is not new material (thankfully) from the original Manc assassins, but slightly suspect re-issues of a dodgy quality demo tape from way back in 1976.

Normally I'd be dead against this sort of blatant money-grabbing opportunitism, but I'll forgive this one.

Lets face facts, most punk was crap, but the Buzzcocks were always something a bit special. What other punk band would have written epics about unrequited love one day and and an anthem about wanking addiction the next.

Certainly not the fucking Sex Pistols.

By GAZ NEWHALL

YO LA TENGO:

AND THEN NOTHING TURNED ITSELF INSIDE-OUT (MATADOR)

Don't be put off by the awfully bad name and the painful underground kudos, this is the most melodic album I've heard all year.

Atmospheric, introspective, cool as fuck. This album demands everyone's attention.

If they managed to get their heads out of their collective arses and played the industry a bit, getting outside of their underground clique, they'd be massive.

Its a shame for them that they're so comfortable with the idea of inaccesibility, there's genuine beauty in this record. Lovely.

By GAZ NEWHALL

MUSE

Muscle Museam (Mushroom Records)

Muse sound like the bastard offspring product of a menage-a-trois between Radiohead, Gene and bad American Punk, raised in deepest darkest Russia on a strict diet of vodka and balalaikas.

Ok if you like that sort of thing.

By GAZ NEWHALL

BROADCAST:

BROADCAST (WARP)

Warp Records prove there's more to the Sheffield dance scene than fatcat trance superclubs.

But you might also argue that they're prone to releasing any old shit. Like this.

It's not that Broadcast are bad as such, it's just that hijacking Stereolab's record collection and studio equipment is hardly inspired.

They probably think they're really leftfield- they're not, they're ARSE.

By GAZ NEWHALL

Rock the Joint

Elbow Interview

'QUITE often you don't want to meet you heroes, because they're going to let you down.' Pete Turner, bassist from Manchester five-piece Elbow is referring to autograph hunters and he's also very wrong.

Elbow couldn't let you down - polite, funny and generous-spirited. They're also very patient, which is handy because The Courier's nerves are in a bigger state than Nebraska. If Nebraska is a state - which I'm not entirely clear on. 'Do the interview later when you're pissed,' offers Pete comfortingly at the end.

But that's just what they're like as people. As a band they create music that is elegant, epic and plain heartbreaking. 'Elbow's not really about it's members - "Hey look at me with my guitar!" - it's about the noise we make,' Guy Garvey, lyricist and singer, points out, 'You feel like if you stopped the song would carry on without you. You feel like you're clinging onto the back of it'.

Elbow went through a now famous ten-year struggle to get where they are now with a debut album 'Asleep in the Back' out on May 7th and a single 'Red' currently in the charts. They don't really feel the pressure though: 'We've done it not, haven't we? We've finished it. There's no going back and we wouldn't if we could. We're dead proud of it. It was torturous getting there, but the final stages were fantastic'. Guy describes the album as 'very kind of sketchbooky, very sort of scrapbooky'. NME feel that it 'might be album of the year'.

But if the album is the culmination of a ten-year odyssey of personal experience and determination, where will the music go from here? 'I don't think the next album's going to be anywhere near as painful, because everything's all right, isn't it? Some of it will be about meeting people, seeing places, new experiences and the other part is going to be about missing home and being tired'.

Being tired is another characteristic of Elbow that I forgot to mention. Fresh from supporting the Black Crowes in Austin, Texas and the Manics at Manchester's Apollo they are currently on a lengthy UK tour. Guy's writing a tour diary for Get Rhythm and so far he believes it will go 'Fucking knackered, fucking knackered, fucking knackered, she's nice, fucking knackered'. Pete feels the need for more emphasis: 'Just shagged, man'.

Elbow are like a present from guitar music apologising for how crap it's been recently. There's no posturing, no weak tunes and no rest for the five poor bastards behind it all.

EMILY YOSSARIAN



Bring the Ruckus

MARK B & BLADE

@UNION

RUDE BOY Alert! Mark B & Blade have arrived at the Union with a massive entourage of nasty-looking men.

Not only this, but in every shady corner of the bassment is a crew of rough-looking Geordie skinheads. I only manage to keep defecation at bay, by remembering that this is not a gangland battle in the making, but a British HipHop Ruckus in the flesh.

Mark B and Blade are part of a new groundswell that threatens, once again, to break UK rap into the mainstream. Their claim to fame- A top 50 single. Yeah, well done boys, I can feel Westlife shaking in their boots.

Seriously though, their popularity is such that for the second time ever, Force has been moved to the dark & dingy basement to cope with the hordes of ruffians that have accumulated to check the British HipHop sound.

Or do they just want to thieve from the wealthy (!) student masses? Some wizard decision-maker has decided that there's no need for a cloakroom tonight, despite the hundreds of ticket-holders. The net result of this is that myself and 50 or so other unfortunates have our carefully-hidden coats nicked. I know this is the rufff world of rap, but still, there are lessons to be learnt. a) Never trust NUSU to make sound decisions. b) Never, ever trust a room full of Geordie skinheads wearing 'Naff Co 54' tops - I know who you are, punks.

Sorry, that's enough bitterness. Let's get back to the reason why most of us paid £7 to be here tonight. Following some adrenaline-fuelled speed-HipHop from DJ Hype Man, the crowd is up-the-front, and ready for business. Mark B and Blade smash onto the stage, bouncing around like Kangaroos on amphetamine. Joined by guest MCs, Blade furnishes us with lashings and lashings of serious lyrical stylings while Mark B cuts the rocks on his turntables.

All the treats a fan would expect are there from their wicked album 'The Unknown'. This is the first time for donkeys years Newcastle has seen 'live' rap on a big stage, and you can tell. Where normally everyone tends to be groovin' and bustin' all those moves you would associate with the rap scene, tonight, the crowd is actually doing mental moshing to the sounds of the duo's tunes like set-opener, 'From the World Lab'.

Every so often, Blade halts proceedings to educate his followers about the strugglings of UK HipHop, mixed with a touch of 'peace, love and unity' philosophy. All this from a bloke who once got expelled from school for holding-up his head master with a plastic gun!

They finish the set with renditions of their 'chart-topping' single, 'The Unknown'. "Now you know the name" chants Blade. I know this'll sound more like we're 'having it' at Gatecrasher, but at this point the crowd goes BALISTIC. No, that doesn't mean that everyone gets out their 'T.U.N.E' banners and glowsticks, but it does mean that there is an encore of remixes of the forthcoming single, 'Ya Don't See the Signs'.

One of the mixes is by some bloke from hard rock legends, Feeder. To be honest, I think it's wack, but everyone else appears to be enjoying the rap-metal vibes. By tapping into this well-established Rage Against the Machine template, Mark B & Blade may well get the success they crave for.

'We are the unknown!' - Not any more lads.

HARRY WALKER



REVIEWS ALBUMS...

MICHAEL FRANTI & SPEARHEAD:

STAY HUMAN (PARLOPHONE)

THE next chapter in protest music. But Franti's not going to sit cross-legged, lovingly cradling an acoustic guitar and singing passionately about trees.

Nope he's going to be pretty darn funky about it, verging lightly between hip-hop, soul, R'n'B and even a little bit of disco.

But, and it's a big but, every song sandwiches a mock radio station broadcast about a fictional woman on death row. This makes me uncomfortable.

They've even got Woody Harrelson posing as an awkward-sounding governor trying to justify the lethal infection. Such brash politicising undermines an album where the strength of conviction lies in the strength of the music.

EMILY YOSSARIAN

THE DIVINE COMEDY

BAD AMBASSADOR (PARLOPHONE)

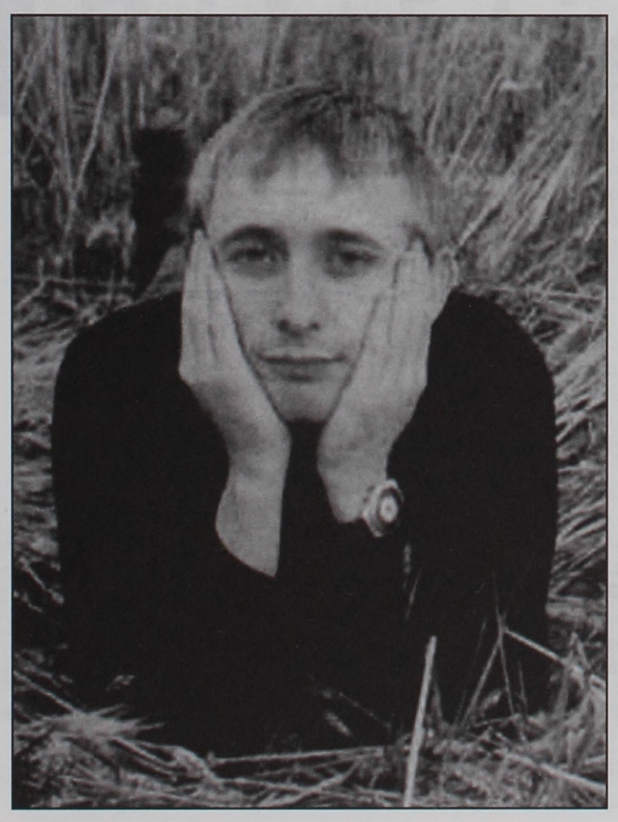
If you liked The Divine Comedy before, then you'll probably like 'Bad Ambassador' because they don't seem to have changed their sound. It's less comical perhaps, but still quite grand - ooh, suits you, sir!

But the bad rhymes are a big let down: "I'm not the Pope and I don't want to be the Archbishop of Canterbury...".

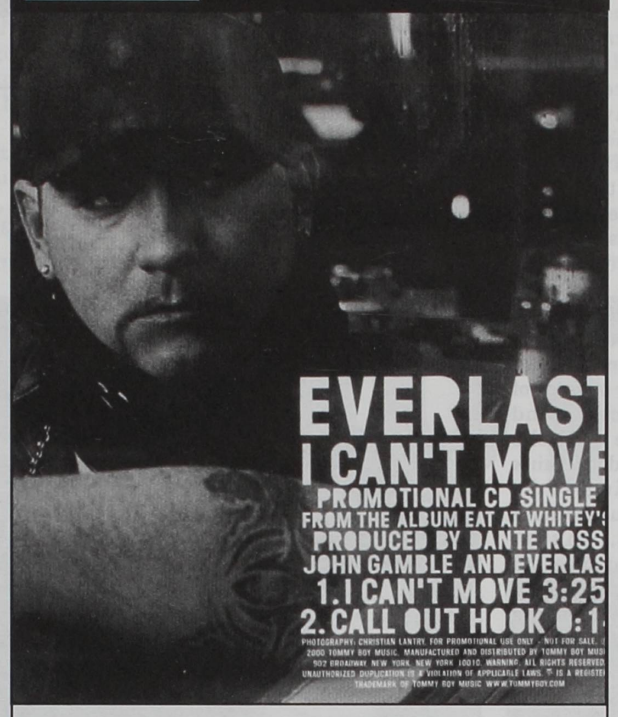
They've decided to release two Cds and a limited edition 7", full of live tracks and covers, but maybe this one is just for the true fans.

And the verdict is: guilty, of attempting to keep up with the Coldplay genre of today.

FI CLARK



PIE-LIGHT OF THE WEEK



EVERLAST:

I CAN'T MOVE (TOMMY BOY)

'AH'M not scared, but Ah can't move' - I have absolutely no idea what he's singing about and why he keeps saying how not scared he is if he's really not scared. If you see what I mean.

This psychological puzzle aside - I think it might have something to do with sex, mind - you can't help but be won over by this gruff hip-hopper.

Sweetly bluesy, slightly freaky with licks of keyboard and strings, overlaid with a strong acoustic guitar. And it's not whining, which is a comfort for those of us who have had Eminem overplay. This separates the men from the boys.

EMILY YOSSARIAN

ARMSTRONG

HOT WATER MUSIC (CLEARSPOT)

THIS Danish five-piece band have created music that is so experimental it's scary.

The diverse sound of the album starts with 'Any Other Time', a tune that should have been in a classic 70's horror movie, then the tunes transform into a dark and spooky Aphex Twinesque Massive Attack in 'Caught in My Own Light'.

The sound maintains this haunting and intense ambience throughout- this is not for the cheese-hearted! The vocals definitely have a P.J. Harvey wannabe depth, but the lyrics appear to be made up as she goes along and make no sense at all.

If you make it to track 10, 'Cold Running River', firstly-well done and secondly its upbeat and much happier tone is completely out of place! It seems as if Armstrong have spent too much time at the mixing desk, and not enough time in daylight. This is Aphex Twin under water - I guess you mean Hot Water Music? ... My head hurts!!!!

FI CLARK

SINGLES..

EVERCLEAR:

WHEN IT ALL GOES WRONG AGAIN (CAPITOL)

LET'S have a look at this press release. Right. 'Get's back to rock roots'. Hmmm, interesting. 'Get back to hard rockin' basics'. If you say so.

'The track plays over the end credits of recently released film release (a recently released release - get out of here!) Antitrust staring (sic) acclaimed actor Tim Robbins'. Well knock me down and pull me up a chair. Tim Robbins?? What's he doing in this PR? I'll tell you why. Because as soon as you've said 'Well, it's a rock song', you've really run out of anything to say about this offering.

I would suggest 'turgid', 'uninspired' and 'relentlessly shit', but I don't think that's what PR's were designed for. No pies for you, sweethearts.

EMILY YOSSARIAN



ANASTACIA

COWBOYS & KISSES (EPIC/ DAYLIGHT)

HAVING recently guested on Jools Holland's BBC2 programme and also co-written this song, Anastacia is making a name for herself as the girl with 'that voice'.

This is a nice, easy-going tune, but then again it's also easily boring. It's just an excuse for her to show off her powerful and distinctive vocals.

But in the end - cool voice, nice tat, boring song.

FI CLARK



PLAY TIME

Playhouse Preview

IF YOU can find time in your busy revision schedule (as if you have one?) to get yourself down to the Playhouse then I'd advise you to do just that.

May offers an abundance of corking theatre for your enjoyment from the nice ladies and gentlemen of the Northern Stage ensemble.



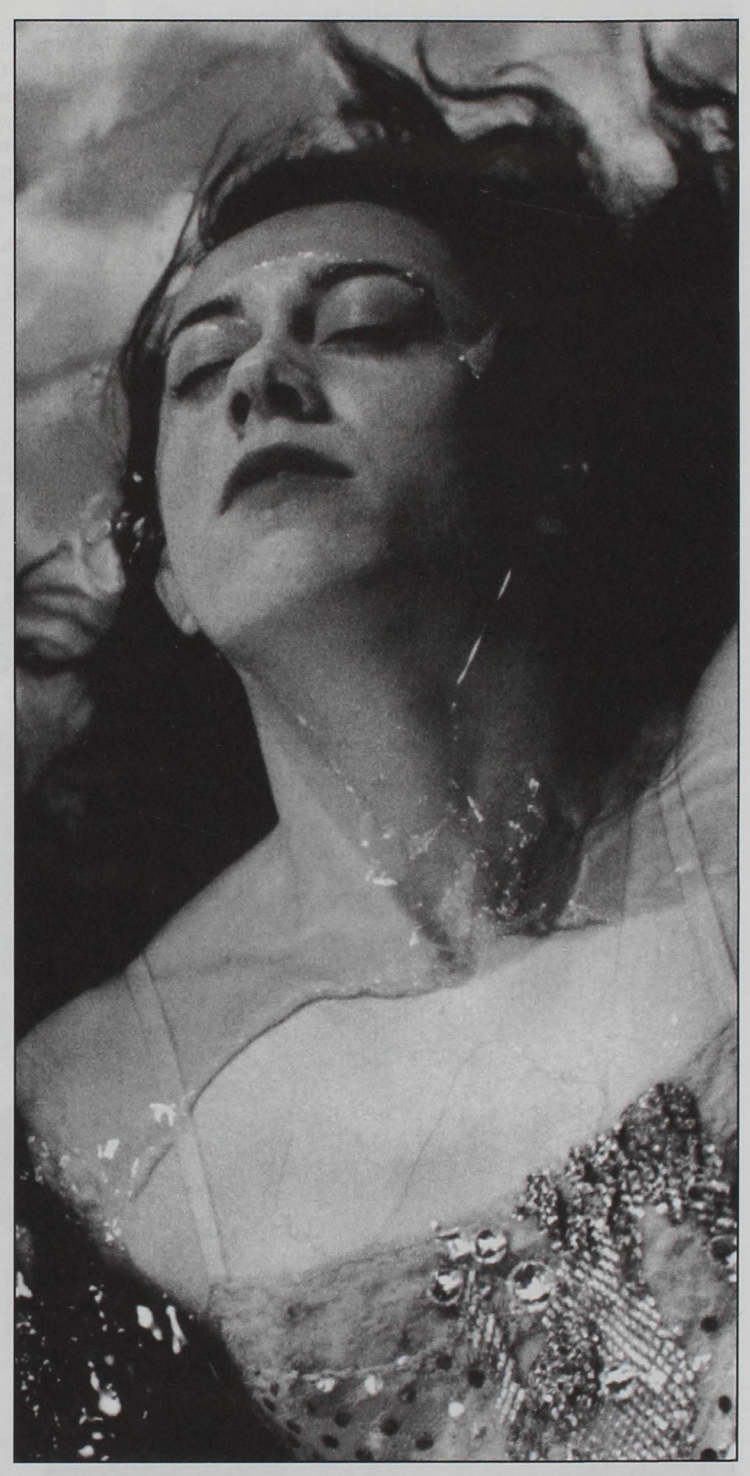
Running from the 11th May is Angela Carter's The Tiger's Bride, a rather twisted version of the fairy tale Beauty and the Beast. But don't be expecting a kid's play, Angela Carter's fairytales tend to be a little on the gruesome side. A tale of primal desires, and fantasy this is definitely an adult fairy tale, probably not one to take the kids to.

From still Brock Productions comes Jonzi D's Aeroplane man, a true story of a black man's spiritual journey, from East London all over the world.

Jonzi D's blend of rap, poetry and emceeing comes highly acclaimed, and Aeroplane Man is a fusion of dance, lyrics and live breakbeats. Hip hop and theatre blended at its best from May 18 and 19.

If this isn't enough for you, there's also a production of Pushkin's Boris Godunov from the 9th to 12th May, the Candoco Dance Company, Touch 2001, an experimental music and video performance featuring Bioshphere, Hazard and Christian Fennesz.

So there you are, now you're in the know you can get to some top class theatre and dance in breaks from that revision you're supposed to be doing.



Bill Bryson take note: it is crap

Notes From A Small Island

Playhouse

BILL BRYSON'S travel books are OK, I suppose - if you've got nothing better to do.

But putting them on the stage is just an act of supreme stupidity. What theatrical potential Notes From A Small Island had (assuming it had any to begin with) was massacred by having a pompous get with a ridiculously false American accent playing Bryson in this one-man absolute failure.

Examining the British from an American perspective is all very well- smart witticisms about the British obsession with tea is what makes Bryson appealing.

But hearing the same witticisms regurgitated on stage doesn't make them any more funny. In fact it does the exact opposite - one of the reasons Bill Bryson's novels and newspaper columns work is that you can actually imagine the exchanges that occur.

Having it on stage robs the audience of this - and one man acting the part of several people (literally running from one side of the stage to the other talking to himself) is amusing for five minutes, but is definitely not good theatre.

And what makes it worse is people were actually laughing! Someone should write a book about people who go to watch crap plays and laugh at jokes that are meant to be funny, but blatantly fall flat (it's like middle-aged ponces who laugh uproariously at Shakespeare's comedies in the bits that are supposed to be funny even when they aren't).

There are just some things in life that shouldn't really be attempted, such as eating razorblades and play-fighting with tigers.

Now trying to put the exploits of Bryson on stage is by no means as dangerous but is similarly foolhardy.

I only hope that old Billy boy himself didn't have the mispleasure of having to sit through this contrived drivel.

Needless to say I didn't make it back for the second half of this godawful, and in places actually painful, play.

Well, I feel better now I've got that off my chest.

Win Go-Karting for you and two friends

FT.com
FINANCIAL TIMES

YOU and two of your friends could be racing off for a day's go-karting at Top Gear Karting thanks to this fantastic competition brought to you by The Courier and FT.com.

The Financial Times website keeps you up to date with the latest news, offers you the best analysis and the biggest picture as it provides information not only on current affairs but entertainment, sport and travel.

FT.yourmoney.com allows you to take control of your money by finding the right bank account, credit card and online shopping deals for students.

So quick, log onto FT.com and find the answer to the following question:

What are the 8 main sections in FT.yourmoney.com?

Hand your answers into The Courier office before 16th May and you could be the lucky winner!

Arts pages in association with ODEON
FANATICAL ABOUT FILM

WE'VE HAD THE TAT

Erotica Island

Out Now for the PC

EROTICA ISLAND is a puzzle adventure game of the same ilk as Monkey Island for the Amega. Except Erotica Island is more of a 'Spank your Monkey Island' game.

You play the part of Reggie Rich unfortunately dragged away from his private yacht 'The Bell End'. Reggie finds himself stranded on a desert island inhabited by women with names such as Lotta Cleavage, Uma Buttocks and Felicity Felatio - a good start by anyone's standards.

The idea of the game is to lay all the women on the island in an attempt to impress Randy Muffin who has the only boat off the island - the simple ideas are always the best.

By completing various tasks and finding clues you turn Reggie from a pasty white, under-endowed dickhead into a fully fledged porno star. As the game continues you build up a backlog of all your porny exploits from your various conquests, to be played back in your very own sex cinema.

Reggie is guided by a narrator Naughty Nina, who interrupts every so often to call you a sad wanker or laugh at your futile attempts to chat up the hookers.

The game comes complete with its own pack of Erotica Island Emergency Tissues which Reggie advises you to use at intervals during the gameplay- a detail almost as funny as the game itself.

An authentic porno soundtrack and a set of the dodgiest accents this side of Highlander combine to make this possibly the most amusing game I've ever played.

I gave this to the boys in my flat, and couldn't drag them away from my computer. It's unlikely you'll find this too taxing- we completed the game in one sitting, but I can't fault it for amusement value.

Plenty of boobs and porny action - one for the boys.

Maybe.

Lotta Wins Beauty Contest!



Stunning sex shop owner, Lotta Cleavage has today won 1st prize in the island beauty contest. The first prize was a years free entry to the Erotica-Island Casino. Runners up prizes included, free sunbed sessions at 'Gym and Tonic', the islands only health club. Entries came from all round the world.



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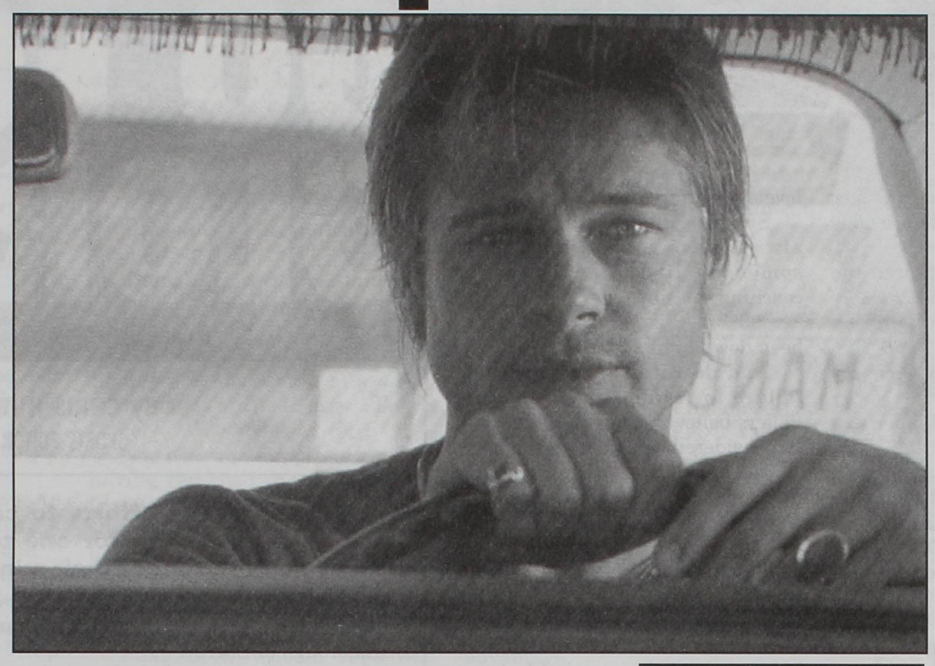
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Arts pages in association with ODEON
FANATICAL ABOUT FILM

Oh Tequila!

The Mexican

Out Now



THE MAJOR question that has cropped up surrounding this picture has been: is it big enough for both of them?

'Them' being Julia Roberts and Brad Pitt. They are without doubt two of the biggest Hollywood draws (and I don't mean pants) in the business and it was always possible that the film was just not gonna be big enough to handle both egos.

To the film and Director's credit if there is a problem with the film, which there is and I'll come to that shortly, it is not really because of clashing egos as such.

This is primarily due to the fact that for 80 per cent of the film, the two do not appear together. Saying that, when they do appear together, there is not the chemistry that one might have hoped for and obviously this is to the detriment of the movie at large. But it is not here where the problem lies.

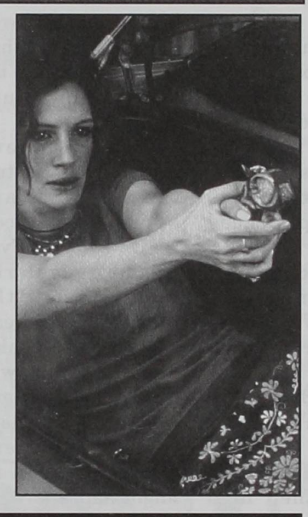
To put the film in a wider context, the budget was reported to be around the $15 million mark. Bearing in mind that Pitt and Roberts would normally be demanding in excess of this figure each, it is clear that it is a low budget independent picture trying to be exactly that.

Personally however, I tend to believe that successful low budget indies are successful because they do not necessarily set out on the premise of trying to be a successful 'low budget indie' in terms of genre. Follow?

I think The Mexican tries just a little too hard, and because of this comes across as being somewhat contrived.

Despite this, it is still a decent film with solid performances from the stars. But a great performance from James Gondolfini in his first major movie role since his award winning effort as Tony Soprano, makes the film far more watchable and enjoyable.

In terms of 'what's it all about then?'- well I'd rather leave that for you to find out because over-all it is worth a look.



Web of Deception

Along Came a Spider

Out Now

THE THIRD in a series of thrillers, Along Came A Spider is an average follow-up to the average Kiss The Girls (I never saw this film so can't really comment- but from what I gather it was a poorer quality version of the awesome, but rather sick Seven)

Morgan Freeman plays a familiar role for him, a detective-psychologist complete with suit and string vest in this reasonably good kidnap thriller- hmm sounds a little like many a Freeman thriller?

This film has many elements of many different thrillers in it- an elaborate kidnap, a kidnapper antagonising the hardworking, world weary detective, tension between Cross (Freeman) and the F.B.I chief- it feels like someone went through the elements of as many thrillers as possible and put them all together, which makes the movie feel a little disjointed to say the least. In fact it wouldn't be unfair to say that the holes in the plot are as large as those in a sloane's favourite jumper.

Freeman holds the movie together with his usual skill and class, and his character Cross is a well thought out, well acted creation worthy of a better plot. But on the whole, you'd probably be better renting Seven, if you can stomach it.



CINEMA SHORTS

NO BULLSHIT, A SIMPLE WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT AT THE CINEMA THIS WEEK:

One Night at McCool's

Silly, witty and very funny. Michael Douglas plays the sleazy but cool criminal in this clever, fast moving comedy. There are plenty of twists and turns to keep you on the edge of your seat and with Liv Tyler playing the part of sexy femme fatale, this film is a must see, especially for the boys. Tarantino it ain't, laugh out loud funny it certainly is.
In a word: Ridiculous

Tailor of Panama

Based on a popular John Le Carré novel, we see Pierce Brosnan as an MI6 spy. Except this time he genuinely couldn't give a toss about anyone else and is in the business of, with the aid of an indebted tailor, creating a fictitious uprising from the 'silent opposition' in Panama. The result being that the British and American governments send plenty of cash over to help secure the Canal in their favour.
It's a quirky movie and not everyone will like it, but those who do may want to watch it again!
In a word: Different

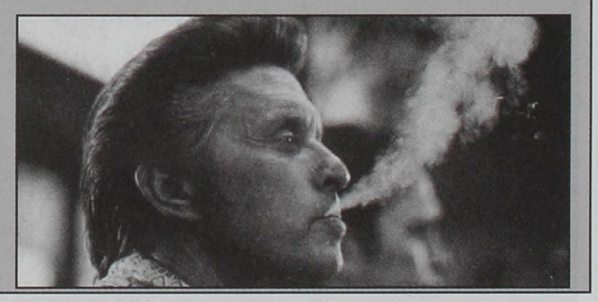
Captain Corelli's Mandolin

There's been plenty of hype surrounding this one but it doesn't live up to any of it. For those who've read the book there is no doubt that they will find Nic Cage has been hopelessly miscast. The story is fairly obvious (he's a captain and plays the mandolin) and may be worth a look. But the key could be to not read the book.
In a word: Poor

And don't miss this one...

Bridget Jones's Diary

Don't let the floppy haired one put you off - this is light entertainment at it's best. Renée Zellweger is spot on as Bridget Jones and Hugh Grant's efforts can't really be faulted - he's actually very funny. You've heard everything there is by now...
In a word: Chick-Flick



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BEATEN

By COURIER SPORTS STAFF

NEWCASTLE'S footballers have failed in their bid to regain the BUSA Cup.

The Royal Blues hopes of repeating their final success last March were dashed when an efficient Bath side defeated Newcastle 2-0 in the semi-finals.

And the result gave Newcastle's first team its first defeat in BUSA competition in over two years.

After two previous attempts to play the fixture were foiled due to adverse weather conditions, the match was finally played at Loughborough.

But this decision was only made at the last minute and many of the team felt their pre-match preparations were seriously disrupted.

And it hadn't helped that BUSA scheduling of the fixture in the Easter holidays meant Alan Brown's team hadn't trained together for three weeks.

But captain Rick Sellers also thought that his team should take some of the blame for what in truth was a poor performance.

"In truth we just didn't turn up on the day.

"Bath were a good, well organised side but were no better than teams like Crewe and Alsager who we had beaten in the previous round.

"Although they only scored the second goal late on, we didn't really create anything throughout the game and we deserved to lose.

"To go out in that way was very disappointing."

Newcastle's football skipper was also left regretting the fact that inspirational coach Alan Brown was unable to make it to the game.

Sellers said: "It was a real shame that Alan couldn't make it, as it is always really good to have him on the sideline shouting instructions to us and telling us where we are going wrong."

So although the side still have their local league campaign to finish, Sellers wanted to pay tribute to some of the side who have put together so many memorable performances.

He said: "This has been a talented side and we are going to lose some good and experienced players.

"Greg Rock has just completed his sixth year of playing BUSA football while Jamie Whitworth seems to have been around for about 20 years.

"People like Mark Batty and Ben Chesters have also been exceptional as well."

So without these talents can the Royal Blues maintain their high levels of performance?

Sellers said: "I think that you always have got a chance when somebody like Alan Brown is coaching the side.

"99% of this team's success has been down to him."

And despite the Royal Blues failure to regain the BUSA Cup, Sellers believes that this season can be considered a success.

He said: "I would definitely consider that this season has been a success.

"If you had told people at the club at the end of last year that we would reach the semi-finals of the BUSA Cup and do as well as we have in the Northern Alliance league then we would have definitely taken that."

And what are the chances of the side possibly winning BUSA next season?

Sellers believes there are a number of talented individuals in the side who can the make the basis of a very good team.

He said: "We've had about four freshers regularly playing first-team football this season and they've all done really.

"We've also taken the chance to blood a few new players in our recent local league matches and everybody has played well."

And with Alan Brown still in charge you can never tell what might happen.

GOLFERS GO FOR GLORY!

By CHRIS HURST
SPORTS EDITOR

WHILE most team's efforts to capture BUSA glory are just a fading memory, for one team silverware is very much at the forefront of their mind.

Newcastle's golfers comfortable defeat of Strathclyde University last Wednesday has set up an intriguing quarterfinal clash with either Loughborough or Surrey.

And there is a real chance that the Royal Blues could be becoming the only Newcastle team to win a BUSA competition this season.

And Uni skipper Mark Traynor has been delighted with how everything has gone so far this season.

He said: "It's been a really good performance up to now.

"We have been missing a few players due to academic commitments, but I feel that there is a really good team spirit in the squad."

And with so much financial support going to the university golfers, as well as the university being able to boast it's own golf course it's not surprising to find the team is doing so well.

Traynor said: "The bursaries scheme has an important part to play. I wouldn't have come to Newcastle University if it hadn't been for the scheme.

The team also has their own coach who corrects technical faults on a weekly basis.

And the sides were also lucky enough to benefit from a training camp in Spain over the Easter holidays.

The eight golf bursaries went to the Costa del Sol, along with their coach for a weeklong session of intensive training.

But why is Newcastle so interested in golf?

Traynor said: "I'm not one hundred percent sure myself to be honest.

"I think that Graham Rayner is really into the sport, so that probably is a big factor."

And with the side just one game away from finals weekend, with the semi's and final played over consecutive days, can the team go all the way to BUSA glory.

Traynor said: "I think that we have got a good chance.

"The next round will be a very hard match though.

Hurst's Word

Sport's Ed puts the wrongs of Uni sports to right...

■ So Newcastle are involved in top levels talk to establish an elite performance legue for university sport.

That is just what university sport in this country needs.

For years people have been complaining that Britain doesn't have an institute of sport like Australia.

But an elite performance league could easily facilitate academies to be set up at universities across the country.

In county cricket this season we have already seen more university centres of excellence gaining valuable experience against other counties.

Tennis also has a number of scholarship universities around the country.

And Northumbria, is just one of a number of universities which has established extremely strong links with their local rugby club.

If we are ever to rule the world in sport again, Britain needs to use university sport as a stepping stone to professional competition.

Surely an elite performance league is only the start of this.

And everybody at Newcastle University can be proud of the fact that we are involved in the initial stages of such a league.

And with Durham and Northumbria also set to be involved in the league, the north-east can still boast that it is a top breeding ground for the sports stars of the future.

■ It is exciting that SKY television could possibly become involved in televising the elite performance league.

As somebody who has visited North America for the past four summers I am always amazed at the interest that people take in college sports.

For example at Yale University, the Yale Bowl, the venue for American Football matches, has a capacity of almost 70,000.

While people in Britain will never become as interested in university sport, apart from the rugby and rowing matches between Oxford and Cambridge, there is no doubt there will be more interest than ever before if a new league does take shape.

This can only be beneficial for university sports chiefs around the country in their efforts to secure more funding for their teams.

■ On the subject of sponsors, congratulations to Accenture.

Not only do the company sponsor these pages, but they also sponsor Newcastle University's ladies hockey club.

And as the ladies kit currently bears Accenture's old company name, they have given a new kit to all club members.

If only all companies were as generous as Acceture when it comes to sponsoring university sports teams.

■ Finally, can I encourage you to vote in *The Courier* sports awards.

There have been many memorable moments this season and many outstanding performances.

Get your votes in as soon as possible and have your say on who should win our awards.

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Kia's to a great Year

By CHRIS HURST
SPORTS EDITOR

WHEN you watch sport on the television it is quite easy to think that you could do better.

And when it comes to watching university sport it's even easier to believe you could easily compete at this level, especially when playing against women.

But then I took on the women's squash team.

Admittedly, when it comes to sport I am better at making a racket at matches than using one.

But I was left thoroughly exhausted by two crushing defeats against two of the women's squash teams leading stars, Lyndsey Wood and Bekki Jeffries.

No matter what shot I played, I always seemed to be on the defensive with balls caressed towards the side walls or savagely hit past my despairing body.

Even their mishits seemed to always go for winners.

In truth I was delighted just to get a point from the matches that I played.

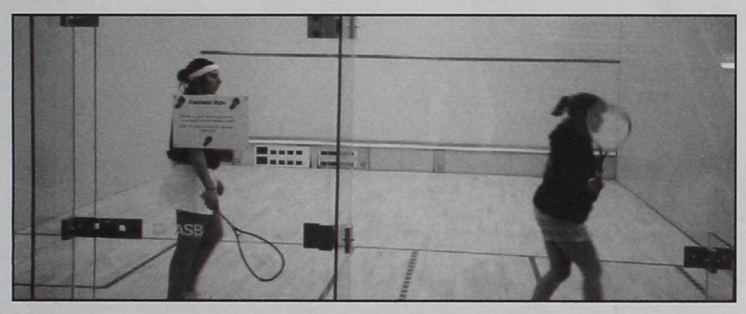
Thankfully, a further humbling was averted as the team's number one Kia Paasivirta declined an invitation to play.

But was she scared of a defeat at the hands of *The Courier's* Sports Editor?

No. Kia was simply exhausted having returned the previous day from the European Team Championships, in which she helped Finland come a respectable 12th.

To me, that seemed more than a reasonable excuse.

Paasivirta, who in 1999 was ranked as high as 42 in the world, admits she has been impressed by the standard of university squash.



WOOD YOU BELIEVE IT...Lyndsey Wood in action at Final

Not only does she appear for the university ladies team, but she also makes appearances for the men's side as well.

But Paasivirta admitted that she does find it hard to maintain her world ranking, which is now 78, and balance her studies.

The Finnish star said: "It's not that easy. If you want to do well in sport you have to concentrate and do so much training and I also want to do well in my studies.

"It's hard to find a balance - I'm always thinking should I study or play more squash? It's always difficult to decide but at the moment I want to do my studies."

Jen Little, women's squash captain, is obviously delighted to have such an outstanding talent in their ranks.

"Obviously having Kia's a great advantage.

"Watching her go on court is amazing. She hasn't lost a match all year.

"A lot of universities do have at least one good county or regional player.

"It's good to have Kia there knowing that she will always win."

But Little has been delighted with the whole team and how their season has gone.

She said: "All the team's turned up to training, they have all been totally dedicated and the team spirit has been great.

"Everybody has put in the time to go to the matches, especially the London ones, which means general hassle if you have got a lot of work on."



FINALISTS...Newcastle University's successful squash team

Even by spending only an hour with the team is clear that the side are not just team-mates but also the best of friends, with the girls comparing notes on who was going to wear what for the Athletic Union ball.

And Little believes that it is team spirit that has carried the team on to great heights.

She said: "It's not to say all our players are not really good, as they are all top-class players, but team spirit does help a lot.

"We all get on really well and all play well together, and we all go the gym together as well."

But was Little disappointed not to capture some silverware, having got as far as the final against Aberdeen?

"It was disappointing, but they deserved to win.

"It was close though which I suppose makes it more bearable."

And Little was certain that the side can do better next season.

"We are in the championship next year and we watched a few games at the Finals weekend and it looks as if we might be able to do really well."

So it looks like the side could be handing out a few heavy defeats to their opposition next season.

It looks like I might be in good company.

The Courier 2000-2001 SPORTS AWARDS

Vote now for the stars of the season

After another fine year of sport at Newcastle, it's time to nominate who YOU think deserve the prestigious Courier awards.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

LAST year the men's football team clinched this award following their BUSA Cup triumph.

This year, Rick Sellers side who were defeated in the semi-final of the BUSA Cup, the swimming club and the men's hockey first team may feature.

MAN OF THE YEAR

JAMIE Whitworth won this award last year following outstanding performances at centre-back for the football side.

Several members of the football squad must fancy their chances again, but will face some stiff competition.

WOMAN OF THE YEAR

British ski champion Laura Westmacott claimed this award last year.

Squash star Kia Paasivirta, rower Ros Carslake, tennis skipper and BUSA finalist Lynsey Davison and swimmer Louise Roberts fight for the award.

MOST IMPROVED TEAM

ED Pinguey's volleyball side won this award last year following their BUSA Shield success.

Men's hockey, who reached the Quarter Finals of BUSA, and the women's squash team are among the favourites this time around to win this award.

Drop your nominations into the Courier office, or e-mail them to courier.news@ncl.ac.uk

Rowers sink arch rivals

By COURIER SPORTS STAFF

THE SENIOR men's first eight finished a fantastic 44th in the annual men's head of the river race.

To finish in the top fifty is generally considered to be the sign of a top university crew, and the Newcastle eight achieved that whilst also beating traditional rivals Durham and Bristol.

Men's Head of the river took place over the reverse of the Boat race course in blustery early spring conditions .

Over 420 crews entered, which included four crews from Newcastle, two senior eights and two novice eights.

The first eight, stroked by ex Scottish schoolboy international Gregor Horn, rowed well for the first half of the 7.5 km race.

But they endured a slightly slow patch by Hammersmith bridge, but after being well coxed by Rachel Lund they came back strongly and struck for home about a kilometre out.

This result confirmed the feeling that this could be one of the fastest crews seen at Newcastle for some time, with the boat containing three Newcastle Veterans, Julian Bury, Ian Stubbs and Andrew Stubbs.

Also rowing were ex schoolboy internationals Will Poole and Alex Jackson and completing the eight were two of last years successful novices, Will Dodsworth and Felix Marsh.

The Novice men's first 8 continued to add to the impression that they are potentially one of the fastest novice crews in the country.

Although their fitness has never been in doubt, their technique has improved markedly in recent weeks, thanks largely to the excellent coaching of Phillippe Genotte and Sam Mercer.

Disadvantaged by a heavy boat and a low starting position the eight, stroked by Simon Todd, they powered down the course to finish a very creditable 200th.

They even pipped the senior men's second eight by two seconds.

One slight down point was the fact that Durham Novices won the Novice category beating our eight by 31 seconds.

But Newcastle's traditional strength over shorter races should see that gap closed substantially over the months leading up to the Boat race on the 2nd June.

courier sport

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WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 2001

BUSA BEST FORGOTTEN

Elite performance league threat

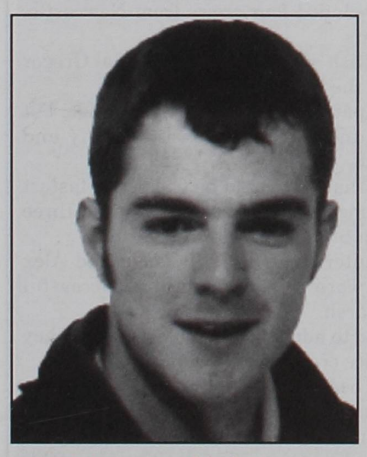
By CHRIS HURST
SPORTS EDITOR

NEWCASTLE'S sports chiefs have been involved in controversial plans to set up an elite performance league.

And having been invited to attend secret talks with a number of other top sporting universities, it is conceivable Newcastle could be playing in a new university league by September 2002.

Profile

AU Chief Ben Stanbury said: "A number of top institutions feel BUSA isn't providing them with the competition that they require and that BUSA isnít attracting the profile or sponsorship that they would hope to achieve at their particular university.



IN TALKS...AU Chief Stanbury

"The top universities have been round the table to discuss how this situation can be rectified.

"The Directors of Sport at the various universities have got together and decided to look into this.

"An initial meeting was set up at Loughborough University in order to allow discussions to take place."

Champion

It is believed that any new elite performance league would entail the top universities playing in each other on a home and away basis in a variety of sports in order to create an overall university champion.

Efforts to create an elite performance league can be viewed as an attempt to "Americanise" university sport in this country, with major college sport matches in the States attracting TV coverage and acting as a development ground for professional sport.

Rumours

Indeed it is believed that SKY television could become involved in covering a new league, although Ben Stanbury was keen to play down these rumours.

He said: "It has been discussed. I don't think there has been an official approach by SKY.

"It's early days yet, nothing has been agreed but there is a chance that SKY could be interested as there is a large number of students, parents and alumni who would wish to watch such a programme."

It is obviously a huge honour for Newcastle to be invited to consider the future of University sport and confirms its position as one of the major powers in University sport.

Stanbury said: "It's exciting that we've been involved since the very first stages. We obviously aim to be a top ten university in terms of performance.

"It is nice to know that places like Loughborough and Birmingham consider us to be one of the top institutions."

It is not yet certain whether the new league will take place inside or outside the existing BUSA structure.

Stanbury said: "There is talk of pulling this league out of the BUSA structure. That is something which they might consider, if BUSA didn't want to go ahead with this."

But the AU Chief was unsure whether leaving BUSA would be a good idea.

Enjoyed

"Although people have complaints about BUSA, it has been a good organisation and I've certainly enjoyed my experiences with them.

"It would be nice to find a way to integrate it into the BUSA structure."

It is not yet sure when a final decision to go ahead with a new elite performance league would be made.

And Stanbury was unwilling to confirm whether Newcastle was in favour of a new performance league being created.

"It's up to Athletic Union members to decide.

"It's why we have an AGM and all students will be allowed to have their say."

The s-winners

By COURIER SPORTS STAFF

THE swimming club claimed a surprise victory in the team of the year awards at Sunday's Athletic Union Ball.

But many felt it was a deserved victory for the club which performed outstandingly in both the BUSA long course and short course nationals.

The men's hockey first team, who came second in the Northern Premier Division and reached the Quarter-Finals of the Cup, also received an award for their achievements.

They were awarded the most improved team of the year award.

And Rick Sellers' men's football club picked up club of the year.

The first team reached the semi-finals of the BUSA Cup and all teams performed commendably throughout the season.

Rob Powell picked up administrator of the year, in recognition of his efforts to establish the rugby-league club as one of the top sports team at the university.

Powell was a deserved recipient of the award as he brilliantly organised the two Challenge Cup matches earlier in the season.



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