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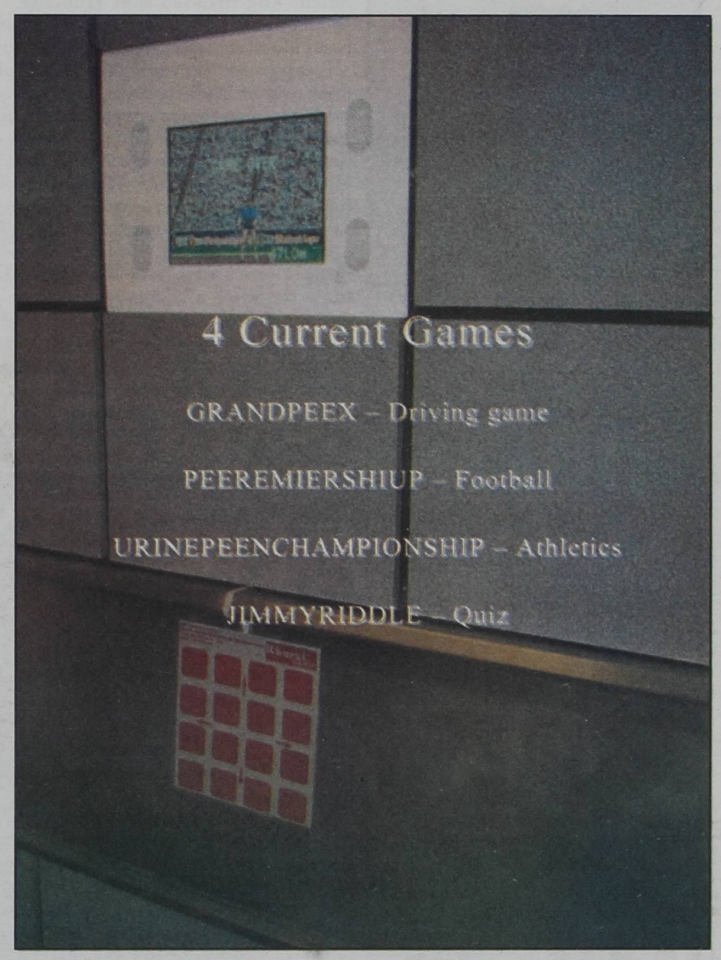
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You're Taking The Piss



By JAKE LEE
EDITOR

THE WORLD'S first ever computer game directed by urine has been installed in Newcastle Students Union toilets.

"It's a coup for The Union. We're all very excited about it!" exclaimed Gavin Clapp, the Union's Finance & Administration Officer.

"We saw a 30 minute demonstration of it and we were blown away. At first we thought it was a piss-take. But we love it" Clapp continued.

National media including TV stations are queuing up to film this unique game.

A sensor pad is attached to the steel urinal trough, which acts as input for a computer game displayed above on a monitor. Changing the direction of the spray will control objects on the screen, such as car in a racing car game.

The brains behind the machine is South African Steve Hall, director of Kharzi media, creators and patents of the machine. "I was standing at a trough one day chasing a fag end down one end. Everybody dribbles them up and down. Or you write your name with the spray."

"So I was thinking about how I could make it into a electronic game. I was talking to a friend who reckoned he could make a computer game out of it. 12 months later and it's now put together."

"It's the Tamagochi of the toilets. It won't last forever. But I've never had a negative response.

"Even just seeing it, and people are really interested. It's that phenomenal interest that got me to develop the product."

The Students Union was chosen thanks to its high footfall and its high concentration of students - the intended initial target market.

Kharzi Media believe there is no limit to the option available. "We can create games for successful Newcastle University clubs. To be honest, the only limit is the size of the bladder. We tell people they need good gland-eye coordination" said Hall.

The South African made product is currently only available to men.

"I have no concept of what women can do. Can they hit a target? According to The Full Monty, there's not reason why women can't play it" Hall cheekily told The Courier.

Laura Holbeck, Welfare Officer for the students Union reckoned: "It would be difficult for women as they'd have to be watching where they pee and the screen at the same time. But it would be fun to try!"

"It's just a bit of fun. And people should see it as that."

Interest was already running very high in The Union last week upon installation, despite a few teething software problems.

"It's good entertainment. It adds to the night out. It will make you laugh. There's not enough laughter in the world" Clapp told The Courier.

"This shows Newcastle University, students and The Union Society to be ahead of the game."

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TOP UP FEES IMMINENT

Students set to suffer as government proposes £15 000 fees

By Rebekah Reid

THE GLOOMY prospect of the introduction of top-up tuition fees now seems likely after fresh talks in parliament last week.

The proposal became a topic of heated discussion after Margaret Hodge, the higher education minister, publicly stressed that universities are "in crisis" when it comes to funding.

According to Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education, the capital investment needed to assist under-funded universities lies at approximately £5.3 billion, although some academics have quoted an even higher sum.

Ms Hodge also remarked that there is "no such thing as a free lunch" and insisted that students should accept this. She claims that 'individual contributions' would be an answer to the financial pressures universities face.

If the government does give the proposal the go ahead, then prestigious universities will be allowed to demand higher tuition fees from their students; in some cases this could amount to £15,000 a year. Once again, it will be the middle class who feel the major blow as they are too rich to be exempt from fees, yet will be too poor to cover the extra costs. At present, statistics reveal that 75 per cent of university students come from middle class backgrounds.

There is also fear that additional costs would increase student debt considerably. According to a survey, carried out by Natwest earlier this year, being able to pay off debt is already a major concern for the 40 per cent of students who took part in the study. Mr Clarke has responded to these fears by arguing:

> **"Many young people don't think twice about taking out a loan out buy a car or holiday".**

"Many young people do not think twice about taking out a loan or credit to buy a car or a holiday." He added:

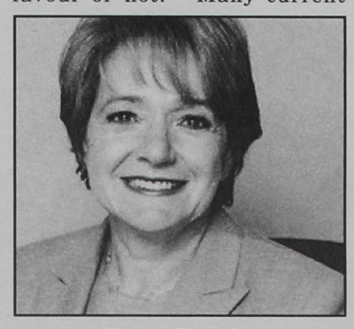
"But a holiday or a car are depreciating assets, unlike education which gives you a start in life."

Mr Clarke has also suggested that an alternative to top-up fees could be some form of 'graduate tax' where students pay for the cost of higher education after leaving university. The tax would then depend on the income of an individual student. The idea is based on an approach used in Australia's higher education scheme although some ministers have stressed that funding for universities is needed immediately.

Although Newcastle University is one of the elite Russell Group members, it has clearly opposed the idea of top-up fees.

A spokesperson for the University, as stated in the Courier a fortnight ago, commented that the University refused to sign a Russell Group agreement in favour of top-up fees as the topic raises many issues:

"As a university, we decided to wait and see what the Government is proposing in its white paper, before stating whether we are in favour or not." Many current Newcastle students also oppose top-up fees. Second year Environmental Biology student Jenny Howarth reacted by saying:



Margaret Hodge: Elitist?

"I think it totally discriminates against families who struggle financially anyway. I would find it difficult to find the extra money." Sarah Butters, a second year architect student commented:

"The whole education thing that Tony Blair got into parliament with seems to have been thrown out of the window." She added:

"I don't know if I'd be able to afford uni if there were top-up fees. I think it's going to affect my younger sister."

Opposition towards top-up fees has also been apparent in parliament where more than 60 Labour MPs have signed a Commons motion which demands proposals for increased tuition fees are rejected.

Claire Short, International Development Secretary, was the first cabinet minister to publicly declare her resistance to top-up fees.

In an interview with the Guardian on Monday she remarked: "It's a really bad idea; I'm totally against it." She added that the result would be two-tier universities:

"The rich would pay extra fees and go to the elitist universities rather like the US."

Wednesday 4th December
NUS National Demo to oppose Top-Up Fees - LONDON

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Contact Laura Holback (Welfare Officer)
welfare.union@ncl.ac.uk

DEBTS: NOT A DETERRENT

By REBEKAH REID

THE HIGHER Education Minister, Margaret Hodge, has astonishingly claimed earlier this month, that it is not debt but the 'lack of aspiration' that deters students from going to university.

In a conference on 15th November, the minister was keen to emphasise that debt did not create a barricade to higher education. The president of The National Union of Students, Mandy Telford, has reacted to this claim 'with amazement' saying:

"I am amazed that the minister actually has such a poor understanding of the real problems in higher education." She added:

"Since fees were introduced and grants abolished by this government there has been a 9.5% drop in applications in students from the two lowest socio-economic groups."

Second year Town Planning student Sam Grant told the Courier:

"I can see both points of view. Some people won't go to university because they can't be bothered or prefer to start earning a decent salary straight away." He added:

"On the other hand, I have a lot of friends back home who can't afford to go to uni or are put off by the amount of debt they would have."

Ms Telford has also argued that proposed tuition top-up fees, currently an issue of controversy in parliament, would be "disastrous" for poorer students. She has vowed that NUS would continue to lobby government over the fees until its financial report is published. The long-awaited government review of student and university finance is to be unveiled in January when a solution to the controversial tuition fees dilemma will be revealed.

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Lecturers protest over bigwig housing

By SALLY SCOTT and CLAIRE DEEGAN

RECENT PROTESTS in London have again brought to light the problems of mercenary Vice-Chancellors in Universities throughout the country.

Lecturers have staged a one-day strike in response to the 'grace and favour' homes idea which ensures vice-chancellors plush and expensive residences, whilst overlooking the lecturers demands for a simple pay-rise.

The AUT (Association of University Teachers) staged this demonstration to highlight their distress at the 'waste' of millions, spent on these particular VC's. They aim to oppose the proposal to 'freeze' the London weighting allowance for academics for 10 years.

Seven colleges have been named for giving VC's property costing over £1million, one of which being Imperial College, London, the institution from which Newcastle University's own vice-chancellor, Christopher Edwards, came from.

This issue is particularly close to home here in Newcastle, as a consequence of this. Edwards has appeared several times in the Courier, providing us with much front-page material.

Former articles involve the V-C's 33% pay increase to £155,000, his proposal of transfering his offices to the Armstrong building, and his refusal of the half a million pound house provided, in favour of a £700,000 alternative.



Edwards: Housing Row

It seems Edwards is clearly used to this sort of lifestyle, as are many of the VC's. A University source at Imperial justifies the expense claiming that "you have to offer them [the VC's] an attractive package" in order to attract people of a certain "calibre". But can we justify such expenditure when most lecturers are unsatisfied with their living allowances?

Whilst Edwards is perhaps only asking for the same perks as his contemporaries in the south, surely the 'wealth' should be distributed more evenly through the system, something it seems the protest will help to highlight.

Sally Hunt, the general secretary of the AUT thinks that we would be "amazed" to hear that those who deny the university staff more money, are actually those who benefit from this 'grace and favour' scheme.

RADIO AWARD STOLEN BY DJ

NSR DJ gate crashes prestigious awards stage and becomes a winner

By PETE COATES

THE STUDENT Radio awards descended into madness last week when Newcastle Student Radio DJ Dave Chapman graced the stage to accept an award- that wasn't his.

NSR had not been nominated for any awards at the annual ceremony held at Goldsmiths College, London. However Dave decided that this was not going to stop him getting a piece of the action.

When triumphant station GU2, from the University of Surrey were announced as the Student Radio Station of the Year, Dave jumped from his chair and ran towards the stage. Dave joined the GU2 team, as they accepted the prestigious award from Radio 1 DJ Emma B and joined in the celebrations, hugging, kissing and shaking hands with everyone on stage and saving the biggest kiss for Emma B, who congratulated him for his lunacy.

When last year's GU2 Station Manager finished his acceptance speech, Dave took the microphone and in a fitting tribute to his long time hero, Radio 1 Hip Hop DJ Tim Westwood, announced "This is a shout out to the Big Dogg on a Thursday Night!".

Dave received a standing ovation from most of the crowd as he left the stage while student station GU2 were left looking confused. However, despite Dave gatecrashing their party, they appeared to see the funny side.

NSR Station Manager Gemma Dillon said: "This year's Student Radio Awards was full of people who took themselves a bit too seriously. Although NSR has a very professional attitude we also like to have fun and enjoy ourselves both on air and at events like the Student Radio awards."

"Dave's prank was funny and it showed the other stations that despite the fact we weren't nominated for anything we can still have a laugh".

Later at the aftershow party held at Goldsmith's college Dave met Tim Westwood who had earlier presented an award for the best specialist music show. Westwood applauded Dave's playful attitude, gave him a big hug and told him he had found the whole stunt hilarious.

When asked why he had performed such a madcap stunt, Dave replied: "I've been to three Student Radio Award ceremonies now and we have never won anything, so this time I decided it was about time we did."

"The best station category was my best chance as I could cause a bit more chaos and I am confident that despite the result NSR are definitely the best student radio station in the country".

Sexpert found

Lucky Newcastle student wins dream job of testing new range of condoms

By WILL SHOUBRIDGE and ELLIE THOMAS

PLUCKED FROM over 10,000 randy hopefuls to become a paid condom tester, Newcastle student Dave Chapman, 3rd year law student has got his dream job. He will be rigorously testing the entire range of condomi condoms.

Dave who "applied for a laugh" simply filled in an internet based application form "as honestly as possible." This came about after an article in The Courier. Although vague about his specific responses he did admit to The Courier he wrote "the most unusual place I've had sex was in an igloo." He also eluded to fantasies involving fruit and Kylie Minogue. Pop stars, food and igloos made a winning combination for the judges, and he was promptly picked.

After sex, the testing process involves a 'pleasure control form' being completed. Dave explained that "a blow by blow account is not required. I won't be leaping out of bed to fill it in immediately".

The main motivation for applying was the £300 for product evaluation." Dave believes it may be the start of something big; "It's already been mentioned on page three of the Sun and I will be appearing on Ruby Wax later this week."

However Dave does not think he will become a safe sex icon. "It's not like there will be pictures of me on the side of condom packets" he assured The Courier.

The young stallion will be testing the products on his fiance who appears unconcerned about the proceedings. When told of his success she did tell him "Nothing you do surprises me." Dave does not anticipate "sex more often" but said that he believes " hopefully we will be testing each one more than once".

Answering queries about whether he will be able to perform every inch of the requirement, he shot back with "I have no worries in any shape or form."





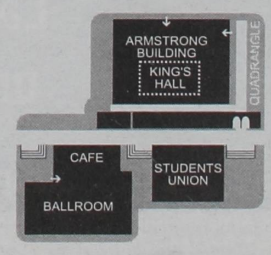
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Jinxed Minibus bumps again

By BEN DUCKWORTH

THE SEEMINGLY cursed Union minibus has again had a crash. This time, the bus, surely the most unlucky in Newcastle, was shunted into by a Ford Fiesta at a set of traffic lights.

This is the third accident to befall the minibus since September and again it wasn't the Union's fault.

Luckily this time the damage is only superficial and the minibus is still road-worthy.

It is still fulfilling its role as the SCAN minibus by day and the safety bus by night.

Gavin Clapp, the Union's Finance and Admin Officer explained what happened: "The people that drive the minibus for the Union have to do a test before they are allowed to carry passengers."

"This is done internally by the guy who runs the second-hand book shop who is a qualified minibus instructor."

"It was on one of these tests that the accident happened."

"They were pulling away from a set of traffic lights when a small car ran into the back."

"The other car was ok but the minibus had a cracked bumper."

"It was the other driver's fault completely."

"We're still using it because it's only the bumper that was damaged and we'll put it into the garage when we have a chance."

It is not known whether the people of Newcastle hold something against the Union minibus and feel the need to crash into it every time they see it, or whether it is just unlucky.

Whichever way, the Union is hoping it can remain dent-free for the rest of the year.

Patten head hunted by LSE?

By NOOR EL-SHUNNAR

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY's Chancellor, EU Commissioner and former Tory chairman, Chris Patten, is in the midst of rumours surrounding a reported 'head hunting' bid by the London School of Economics.

LSE is looking for someone to fill the position of Professor Anthony Giddens, its current director, who is due to step down next summer after serving six and a half years in the job.

Mr Patten's name is one of a long and distinguished list that has emerged from academic sources, who are allegedly revealing those being lined up to be interviewed for the position.

Mr Patten's office, however, seeming eager to quash the gossip, have been quick to issue a denial regarding the matter.

A spokeswoman stated that: "It is not true he is running for the LSE job."

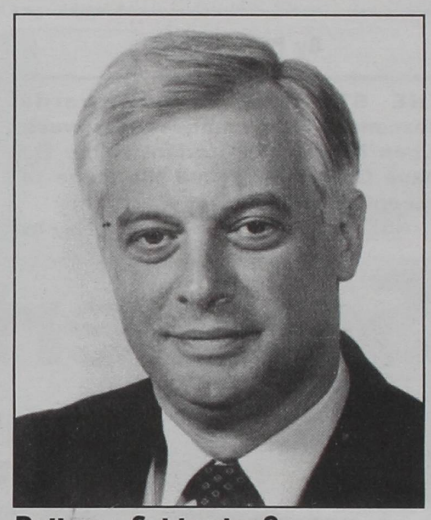
"He has more than a full time job being the EU's external relations commissioner and isn't seeking any additional work at the moment and has every intention of staying until the end of his term".

Mr Patten is contractually bound to complete his five year term in Brussels, which will expire inthe summer of 2004.

The London School of Economics is keeping a tight lid on the matter, having refused to officially issue a list of names, stating only that the candidate chosen by a professional selection committee will be presented to LSE's court of Governors in March.

The University Press Office added: "Any approach, or otherwise, to Mr Patten by another organization would be a matter personal to him.

"The Chancellorship of the University is a position which Mr Patten holds in extremely high regard, and in the event that something should arise which might affect it, he would of course enter into full consultation with the University".



Pattern...Set to stay?

Uni students donate more

By SARAH BAINES

NEWCASTLE'S 'MARROW' group was awarded the title of the best group in the country for donor recruitment. Marrow is the student part of the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust; there are groups all over the country.

The award is a fantastic achievement, the result of the hard work and dedication of Newcastle's Marrow.

But the success is of course also due to the donors who gave their bone marrow to people who need it.

A spokesperson from Marrow said: "Thousands of people die each year from leukaemia and related diseases because suitable donors cannot be found".

To continue saving lives they need many more people to be on a bone marrow donation register.

"Students are the ideal population being mostly young, fit and healthy".

In order for Marrow to continue to be the best and make Newcastle proud, they need new donors all the time, especially males and people from ethnic minorities, who are under-represented.

Marrow hold clinics where you can find out more information about them and a small blood sample may be taken. (There is NO taking of bone marrow involved at this stage!).

This year they are hoping to run clinics for each subject and in the halls of residence, so to do your bit, look out for these clinics where you can get on to Anthony Nolan's Bone Marrow donation register, and have the chance to really make a difference to someone's life.

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Jerome Starkey

A letter from America

There are some distinct benefits to having 21 as the legal age at which a person can consume alcohol.

I said that dissent was frowned upon when I first got here, and then wrote about a protest trip to D.C. I remember complaining about the absence of alcohol during freshers week and now I am celebrating the law that has it that way. Those of you kind enough to read my articles each week might think me rather fickle.

Let me assure you, I remain perplexed by the personal liberties which I find restricted in the land of the free – and drinking is one of them.

"Eighteen is old enough to vote but three years too young to sip a Budweiser"

Eighteen is old enough to vote, drive, die in battle, and own a gun, but three years too young to sip a Budweiser in one of America's charming bars. (Perhaps bad beer is one reason the law goes unchanged).

However, any 18-year-old can come to America and be annoyed because they cannot drink.

It takes three-months studying abroad and a whole night of thinking what to write about to come up with some benefits of this state of affairs.

We have all heard that Americans are friendly, and my experience has borne that to be true. However my experience of most English people is that they are just as amiable after a few drinks.

"Accustomed as I am to a cheeky few"

Most American undergraduates spend three of their four-year degrees too young to legally drink. Just as in England, many of them find ways of overcoming these restrictions. However, the rigour with which bouncers check IDs, and the frequency with which the police raid the bars has meant that many simply find alternative entertainment.

Last weekend I found myself at an opera Friday night and a sketch show Saturday, both of which were packed out.

This invariably means that much of the courting ritual has to be endured in sobriety. Accustomed as I am to a cheeky few, it took a little getting used to. However, it explained why our American cousins often seem so eloquent in our company.

I read somewhere last year that English adolescents were forgetting how to woo one another. This surprised me given that every one of my housemates at the time was engaged, in all but name. However, as

"Over here, dating does not mean bumping into each other on the Boat"

successful as their relationships were, all of them were spawned in a drunken haze.

Over here, dating does not mean bumping into each other on the Boat. You cannot just ask for someone's number when you wake up in their room. If you want to play the game, then the number itself is the first hurdle.

That done, then what better than a night at the opera?

I never really purposed to discover what fun ways there are to spend an evening in Newcastle without drink or television (philistine me). But I am nonetheless astounded by the facilities over here. The theatre in which I saw the opera was one of four stages in the University's performing arts centre, which was built at an original cost of $21 million in 1969. The University's football stadium, funded by donations, holds 69,000 people, and the Assembly Hall, home venue of the basketball team has hosted, in the last year alone, the likes of Aerosmith, Janet Jackson and Cher.

'Jerome Starkey is a Newcastle undergraduate on a one-semester exchange at the University of Illinois. E-mail: jstarkey@uiuc.edu'

Bec Says aprons are cool

Domestic goddess or fashion icon? Well you can be both at the same time; the key element is the apron. I think aprons are wasted in the kitchen. So swap their home from the broom cupboard to the clothes cupboard.

They should be worn by girls (and boys – but I'll deal with you later…) out on the town. You can find the greatest designs - I have a Hello Kitty one, and my granddad wears a nude female body apron (admittedly he hasn't quite started wearing it out of the kitchen, but I'm working on him).

Think about it - good for food spillage, hiding breasts that are too big or too small, pockets for wallets and lipstick at night-clubs, drying hands on if you are too impatient for a hand dryer.

Aprons are very easy to make, so why not allow the creative spirit inside you to fun free?

I haven't forgotten you blokes; if pinnis aren't your style, then the carpenter's apron or tool belt is cool. There must be space for at least three pints in the pockets. Oh, and unless you want to look like a German porn star, wear a pair of trousers underneath……

The best shops to go to for aprons are toy shops, cooking shops or tool shops. The mainstream fashion stores still haven't caught on, but it's just a matter of time.



Usual suspects keep the papers busy

Parr's Snips

The week in 400 words



Chris Parr

'The name's Parr. Chris Parr.' Sorry- please excuse me, but I've always rather fancied myself as a suave tuxedo-clad one-man crime-fighting machine, and this week seems to be the ideal time to indulge in a little fantasy as the nation's media once again goes Bond mad.

I have to say I have never quite seen the appeal of the films themselves, and to me it seems very worrying that a quick flick through this week's broad-sheets should reveal so much column space dedicated to 007.

Even the Queen has got in on the act at the film's premier. It would appear that "one likes one's hot chocolate shaken, not stirred." Has there really been no other news this week except the blasted fire strike?

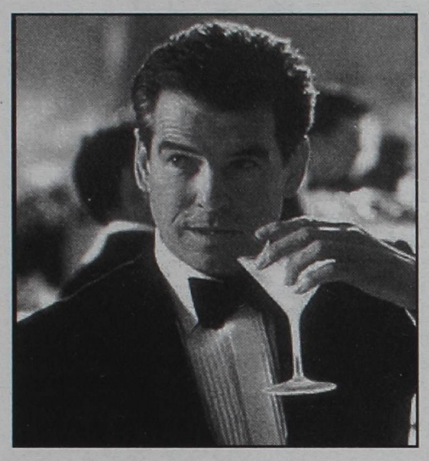
Well, there were a few panicky moments as I searched vigorously for anything that even vaguely resembled news in a highly uneventful week, and if it wasn't for the Royals then this could have been a thoroughly brief column indeed. Fortunately we were blessed with a story straight from the archives of 'Horse and Hound,' or Princess Anne and her dog as they are more commonly known. The Princess pleaded guilty to claims that her dog had bitten two children at Windsor Great Park on April 1st. If you ask me, the warning signs were clear- an English bull terrier known as 'Dotty' does not sound the most relaxed of pets to me.

Finally, it's coming up to the end of the semester, and no doubt those essay deadlines are slowly creeping up on the horizon. Well, despite the stark warnings no doubt issued by your department, plagiarism appears to me to be the way forward. With the Christmas market looming, authors across the world have already cottoned on to this time-saving tip. In Russia, an enterprising chappy by the name of Dimitri Yemets has published a book entitled 'Tanya Grotter and her Magical Double Bass.' No prizes for guessing that JK Rowling's legal team were quick to question the origins of the book and its tales of a 10-year-old wizard who goes to wizard school.

Meanwhile, and I struggle to keep a straight face as I type this, in China a book entitled "Harry Potter and Leopard-Walk-Up-To-Dragon" appeared in stores bearing Rowling's name. Needless to say, I would recommend a little more subtlety in any plagiarism undertaken. Having said that my first novel entitled 'The Lord of the Kings' is currently being published, and I do recommend it highly.

REVIEWS

cinema



DIE ANOTHER DAY

BACK FOR the fourth time is Pierce Brosnan playing the womanising secret agent James Bond in a film which has been described as one and a half Bond movies in one.

Die Another Day is action filled from start to finish, jam-packed with some spectacular scenes of Bond in his usual knife-edge situations. One of the more impressive is that which sees our favourite secret agent surfing down to the beaches of North Korea. Filmed in Hawaii on the world's biggest and most dangerous waves, the effect is truly breathtaking. What else have we come to expect from 007...

Amongst the action is a strong cast, which includes performances from the now Oscar-clad Halle Berry as Jinx. A character that can only be desrcribed as a female Bond, her impressive fighting skills match Brosnon punch for punch.

The gadgets in this movie are provided by Q, now played by John Clease following the death of Desmond Lewellyn who had stared in all nineteen previous Bond films.

Clease delivers a satisfying performance in the funniest scene of the film, as usual getting annoyed with Bond playing with everything, even the jetpack from Thunderball.

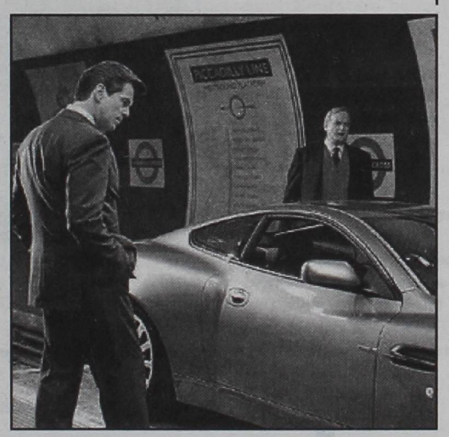
After much discussion about what exactly James Bond should be driving, it is revealed he will stick to the classic Astin Martin, though this new vehicle has an amazing new feature bound to help him out a few sticky situations.

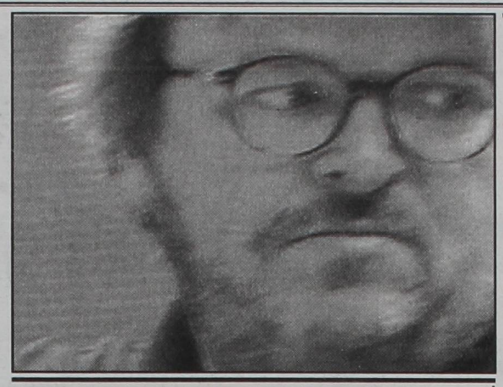
The theme tune is provided by Madonna, who also manages to grab a sneaky cameo as fencing instructor to bad guy Gustav Graves. As with the Bond nasties, Graves comes equipt with his very own suitably scarred and evil face encrusted with diamonds - no prizes for guessing who set off the explosion which caused that.

After a twisting and somewhat unpredictable plot, it's no surprise to see a happy ending, obviously containing some slap and tickle for Bond. We'll have to wait and see if Moneypenny finally gets her wicked way with James...

LINDSAY CLARK & BECKY HUGHES

HOT FLICKS RATING:





BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE

MICHAEL MOORE does not dwell on the horrific massacre at the high school indicated in the title, it is not the subject of the documentary.

Moore takes a broader look and this picture becomes a panoply of America's paranoid infatuation with their right to bear arms. The day the US conducted its largest bombing in the Kosovo War, April 20, 1999, was the same day of the Columbine shootings.

The affable Michael Moore who himself is a life long gun owner and member of the National Rifle Association (NRA) mediates for two hours through this labyrinthine picture.

As a leading American polemicist, he uses his acid wit to lighten the subject matter and never allows the mood of his quest to become too dark. He believes a culture of fear has been created and this fear leads to acts of aggression in the name of defence. The US media's perpetual need for violence is displayed whether it be in the news, Hollywood blockbusters or shoot 'em up arcade games. Americas TV news networks have conditioned their audience into knowing and wanting to watch.

Moore doesn't have the answers instead he is searching and is honestly confused. His abundant charm is evident through the interviews he conducts. There are many hilarious moments where Moore shows he is a satirist of the highest order; opening accounts at banks who give away free guns and talking to teenagers who make their own napalm bombs.

There is shocking footage throughout the film including tape of the school shootings and a montage of violence caused by American intervention abroad accompanied by Louis Armstrong's 'What a wonderful life' as its ironic soundtrack.

Whilst this is far from being a lecture or a left wing diatribe; Bowling For Columbine is an involving piece of film making. This is the funniest yet most horrific film you will see this year. Indefatigably compulsive.

THOM PEARMAN

HOT FLICKS RATING:

SUPER TROOPERS

DO NOT be fooled, this is no Police Academy. The difference being that you might actually see somebody laughing at this film.

The plot of Super Troopers centres around a station of six state troopers who patrol the area surrounding the town of Spurbury on the American/Canadian border, their struggle with the local cops, and their coming to terms with being shut down, due to lack of state funding. It's a great premise for a farcical comedy, bringing a smile to your face from the outset, where we see three of the highway patrolmen terrorising, rather than arresting three stoned teenagers.

Sadly, that smile doesn't stay for the duration. Whilst the film is punctuated by some classic comedy, some jokes fall flat, whilst others go on for far too long, making you wonder why you thought it so funny in the first place. The film is both written by and starring American comedy troupe Broken Lizard, which explains why the chemistry between the troopers is so good, as it is between the rest of the cast (which includes an enjoyable turn by veteran Brian Cox as the leader of the state troopers). In truth, this is what keeps the film going.

Like the majority of the farcical comedy genre, the soundtrack is fairly forgettable, as is the cinematography, with a couple of daft exceptions, such as the 'Cops' style footage that pops up every now and again, and the seventies style split screen action that presents itself towards the film's end. These inclusions are great, as its another opportunity for parody, which the film does very well.



Director, Jay Chandrasekhar, who plays Arcot 'Thorny' Ramathorn, has given us a slapstick comedy which whilst being far from considered a classic, is much better than some of the comedy which has been on offer at the cinema recently, and is worth going to see for no other reason than to remind yourself what its like to laugh out loud at the cinema.

DANIELLE GIBSON

HOT FLICKS RATING:



out to rent...

SLACKERS

Three 'slackers' are caught cheating on a midterm by the college geek, who then blackmails them in return for secrecy. Definitely aimed at a younger audience, due to the crudity of the jokes which are generally of a sexual nature, and the unnecessary amount of female nudity. One for the (prepubescent) boys.

HOT FLICKS RATING:

BIRTHDAY GIRL

John, a socially inept thirty something bachelor attempts to buy a Russian wife on the internet. When she arrives, things don't go quite as planned, and when her Russian friends turn up, the situation changes from unlikely to absurd.
Nicole Kidman's Russian accent is the only interesting factor in this farfetched and wearisome love story, with irritating rather than exciting twists.

HOT FLICKS RATING:

BUSINESS OF STRANGERS

After a top executive (Stockhard Channing) fires her young assistant (Julia Stiles) an unlikely friendship develops between the two women. The relationship is followed for one night only, and the power struggles between them make for an engaging storyline. Although the plot is intriguing, expectations are never quite met, but if you can get past the slow start and be prepared for a lame ending, the main action is worth watching. Bit of a chick flick perhaps, but more bitter than the high school variety.

HOT FLICKS RATING:

NATALIE BARNETT

Arts pages in association with ODEON
FANATICAL ABOUT FILM

exhibition

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY? THE WATER CLOSET WORKSHOP

@ THE HATTON GALLERY



ARE YOU sitting comfortably? The water closet workshop is a new exhibition based around the toilet. A far cry from the ones you find in Ricky Road, these toilets are of a bizarre variety, depicting political and highly controversial images.

The exhibition takes Marcel Duchamp's 'Fountain' as its inspiration, commissioning artists from Europe and America to bring their artistic flair to an individual porcelain toilet. Duchamp, in contempt for the bourgeois conception of art, presented a porcelain toilet, which he had signed at the base to the New York 'Independent Show' in 1917, causing a tremendous outcry against his 'ready-made' which many deemed vulgar and dirty. Today's audience however, are far better prepared to accept the more contemporary artistic displays of our time.



Paul Scott's 'Blue Bottle WC' is printed with swarms of flies in the inner basin, and much like those students venturing to 'the boat' on Monday nights, a certain phrase subsequently springs to mind.

Are you sitting comfortably? is a rhetorical and witty title for an exhibition which brings Conrad Atkinson's toilets to the gallery. Whilst one is decorated with images relating to the HIV virus, the other is embedded with cutlery and inch long nails!

All the WC's make a comment on topical issues within society and the exhibition certainly warrants a visit. Though be warned; it is highly unwise if you've spent the wee hours of the morning downing shots and dining at 'Munchies'.

The exhibition runs from15th November until 11th January 03

HANNAH HINTON

theatre

THE PLAYHOUSE GETS A FACE LIFT

OUR VERY own Playhouse theatre, just a stone's throw away from the Newcastle University Student Union, is about to receive the same star treatment as theatres in the illustrious West End.

The Northern Stage Ensemble, world renowned for their visually driven theatre as presented on the local, national and international stage, has made the Playhouse their home. They have decided to give it a £6 million facelift in order to promote it into a European Centre for Performing Arts. These refurbishments, necessary to keep the company at the cutting edge of the art world, are happening in line with Newcastle's bid to be the European Capital of Culture 2008.

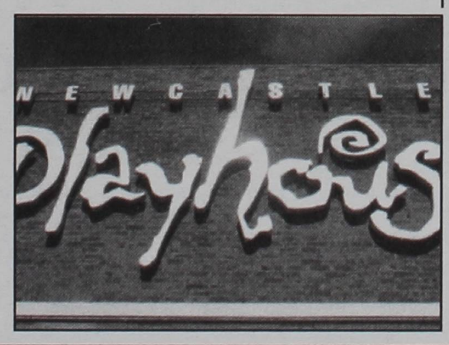
They have entrusted this task to the architect firm Arts Team, who have had previous success with their work on the Donmar Warehouse and Sadler's Wells Theatre. The Northern Stage is delighted with their choice, in view of their current proposals.

The Arts Team are hoping to expand the boundaries of theatre, taking inspiration from the Northern Stage's passion for performance which is the centre of their special working relationship.

The plans for refurbishment are not yet finalised but even at these early stages, the brains behind this operation are looking for a total transformation. This will be an incentive to attract even more national and international touring companies than it does at present.

The brand new Playhouse should be open for the public to marvel at by 2005 but for the moment, the theatre-going public will have to wait in anticipation for the final design, which will be revealed in late Spring 2003.

CHARLOTTE EDGE & KATHERINE MITCHELL



books

DEAD AIR

by IAIN BANKS

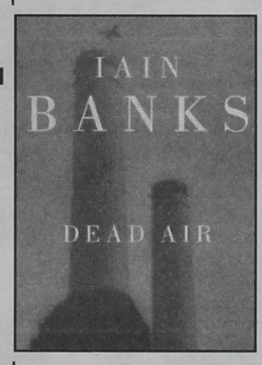
(Littlebrown. £16.99)

OKAY, LET'S get this out of the way. I didn't really like Iain Bank's new book. Sorry.
That said, I didn't hate it at all. But it was enjoyable in the same way I enjoy stealing chocolate from toddlers - it tastes fine but its all too easy and never provides any kind of challenge or satisfaction.

It's not that Dead Air is particularly badly written, or boring, but it's decidedly not great either.

The book is set in London where militant liberal, radio DJ Ken Nott spends eight chapters sleeping with a variety of sexy young media types, ranting a lot, and 'living-on-the-edge', all the while avoiding the clutches of some hit men, the media, oh, and an international gangster lord.

The action, if it can be called that, is all squeezed into the final two chapters. This leaves us with around 300 pages of a self-indulgent fantasy which gives Banks ample opportunity to air a multitude of socio-political rants through Ken, who, despite the odd joke, can't fail to get really fucking annoying.



Banks' attempt to incorporate a range of accents into the dialogue is, at times, laughable: "Fack orrf", etc, and the over characterised social scene at times descends into a parody of a London media scene.

Dead Air just doesn't have the grim situational realism of Banks' early novels. His acclaimed debut The Wasp Factory, (now 16 years ago) or Complicity, or The Crow Road for that matter, were all enthralling due to their well developed and somewhat disturbing plots, a feature now sadly missing.

Oh yeah, ignore the 9/11 reference in Chapter One. Banks does.

Instead he appears to sink into an all-to-clever narrative one might more associate with a Christopher Brookmyre-esque trawl through a dictionary of one liners.

Consequently, way too much of this book is dominated by Banks' ideal fantasy scenario: Witty, Scottish, militant, leftie, radio jock bags a series of charming young things, has exciting sex, battles with corporate bad guys, then with violent bad guys, and has time for a cuppa before his next radio show.

Of course Banks hasn't lost his knack of storytelling, its just that the tale he tells hasn't much of a story.

So while Dead Air would be a good book to read on the train home for Christmas, save yourself some money and steal your brother's copy on Boxing Day. It might inspire you to talk to your relatives.

JAMES GARBETT

THE DRESSING STATION

by JONATHAN KAPLAN

(Picador)

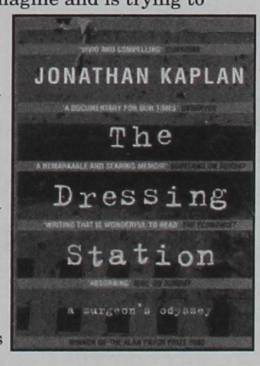
IN A historical rollercoaster of war torn lands, surgeon Jonathan Kaplan takes us on a mesmerising journey through his often harrowing and sometimes humorous experiences a battlefield doctor.

Kaplan, born and educated in South Africa, allows us to witness the atrocities of apartheid through his eyes, and learn of the weird world of African medicine. He recalls one occasion when a Zulu warrior entered his casualty with an 8ft spear through his head. He explains how he managed to save him and subsequently how the warrior asked for its return, so he could throw it back at his enemy!

Treating massacred victims of this brutal regime, gangland corpses and dealing with a foot long parasitic worm that had to be extracted from the nose of a young child were also fascinating insights in to this harsh reality.

In 1980, six days before he was due to be conscripted to the army he fled South Africa and thus began his journey travelling the world. He worked firstly in Britain, where he was virtually homeless before moving on to America. Here he encountered a different kind of hospital where he witnessed a surgeon sobbing hysterically during an operation upon the news that Wall Street had suffered huge losses. He soon realised this wasn't for him, he yearned for the unpredictability and excitement of war. He travelled to Mozambique, Burma, the mountains of Kurdistan and to Iraq where he acted as a surgeon for the Kurds in their struggle against Saddam. He continued on to become a flying doctor and served upon a cruise ship in the China south-seas where he came across "every kind of sexual disease known to man".

He tells his stories in gruesome surgical detail, in a harsh prosaic manner yet mixed with a poetic beauty creating images so vivid they are hard to forget. He tells them with a smile on his face knowing he is able to make you shudder with every incision. This ability results from what he sees as his "symbiosis with suffering". He has no property and no personal relationships he has become a solitary figure chasing after the next war zone to get his next fix, fleeing the nightmares of previous battlefields. "All doctors have their ghosts," Kaplan explains "sometimes they jostle me, the ones I couldn't save: the ones I killed". It's as if you're reading the journals of a man who has seen too much, experienced helplessness on levels we can only imagine and is trying to include us in his world through a lucid and stark depiction of death in the hope of inner peace and redemption.



This award winning memoir is a detailed and compelling account of war from a fresh prospective, and reminds us all at an important time of its devastating effects on human life and suffering.

MARTYN GRIFFIN

Arts pages in association with ODEON
FANATICAL ABOUT FILM

The Courier
27 November 2002

Gambling away the student loan

Trying to make a fast buck on the tables isn't quite so simple. David explains

By DAVID DOBERMAN

I lost the fastest £20 of my life two weeks ago. My friends had suggested spending an evening at the local casino, as a refreshing change to the stereotypical student night out.

I decided to try my hand at roulette because of its simplicity and promptly spread a number of chips haphazardly throughout the table.

After my £20 loss I ambled over to the blackjack table to see if my mates' fortunes were fairing any better. They were about evens for the night and suggested I give blackjack a try because it allegedly held the best odds of all casino games.

With no desire to call a halt to proceedings, I exchanged some cash for chips with the cashier and made my way towards the blackjack table.

And then things are turned rather strange. The faces belonging to the two conspicuous players sitting beside me were extremely familiar.

Racking my brain, I realised they were both students on my degree course, yet for the life of me I could not remember their respective names. In the course of conversation I settled on addressing each of them as 'mate'. As it transpired, my course pals were bigger gamblers than I had previously imagined and their trips to the casino had become a regular occurrence.

Indeed, Messrs. X and Y (whose identity will remain anonymous) could be found at the same blackjack table, in the same seats almost every night. A couple of beers later, while calculating the severity of our losses, X and Y then candidly proceeded to describe how their entire student loans had gone into feeding their gambling habit.

Trying not too appear too horrified at my comrades' somewhat alarming revelation, I suggested they perhaps seek some help for their addiction. X then turned and, looking



quite sincerely into my eyes, replied, "oh, don't worry 'bout us mate, we'll win it back." And with that, I left them to it, vowing never to set foot in a casino again. I hardly slept that night - my mind had become preoccupied with the plight of these two amiable course mates and how the game of blackjack could turn into a dangerous compulsion.

This all coincides neatly with a dusty old book entitled Beat the Dealer by Edward Thorp, that I'd discovered quickly. Quite how this 1964 guide to a winning blackjack strategy had come into my possession is beyond me, though I have the sneaking suspicion it may belong to the apartment's previous occupant.

Professor Thorp devised a gambling system, based on scientific analysis and mathematical theories of probability, which enables players to overcome the odds and gain a small, yet significant advantage against the dealer at blackjack.

For those of you who remain sceptical, allow me to present two indisputable facts. Firstly, in contrast to most casino games, such as craps or roulette, in which each separate play is uninfluenced by past outcomes, what happens in one round of blackjack may affect succeeding plays. This is because the cards are not shuffled until each one has been dealt out by the dealer. Consequently, as the composition of a deck changes during play, the advantage in blackjack will shift back and forth between player and casino. The trick is thus to make large bets when the player has the advantage and very small bets when the odds favour the house.

Second, for the non-mathematicians among you I refer you to the film Rain Man and the scene where Tom Cruise discovers that his brother's (Dustin Hoffman) autism enables him to remember the value of every card previously seen. Cruise realises there is a fortune to be made at the casinos and they promptly leave for Las Vegas. The point being that they won playing blackjack; not roulette, baccarat, faro or craps.

Thorp's strategy is also based on counting cards. Whether I put his plan into action is a different matter. Playing countless numbers of hands in a dreary, smoke-filled casino environment with often just the dealer for company is a rather depressing, lonely experience. As a better idea, I might lend the book to Messrs X and Y.

Week 8:

ABOUT A GIRL

"Soon enough I'll have enough books to create a literary replica of the leaning tower of Piza"

I really don't like this time of year. At all. I should be getting excited about Christmas (only 28 days to go!) and planning end of term parties. But no. Instead I'm holed up in the library along with pretty much everyone else in the world.

I think I've got the End Of Term Blues. It's like a horrible nightmare where I feel like I'm drowning in a sea of books and essay titles – and then I wake up to find it's true. It's getting so bad that I can't even get across my bedroom floor without stubbing my toe on at least three different volumes of English place names. Soon enough I'll have enough books to create a literary replica of the leaning tower of Piza. At least I can console myself with the thought that they'll make good fuel for a campfire in the lounge (heating/ghosts still not working). Don't think the library would be too impressed though.

I don't think it's just me who's got 'the blues.' Everyone I speak to seems to be too busy or too tired from working to be able to function properly. Everyone is surviving off a diet of ready meals and coke (fizzy kind only). Not good for someone who has given up caffeine - whatever made me think that was a good idea? Bring on the holidays. I need to recuperate.

I think I might have to move into the library just to get everything done. Not because I need somewhere quiet to work, but so I can be first in line to get the books I need. Kind of like the academic equivalent of queuing for hours in the rain to get concert tickets for your favourite band – just not as exciting, and a lot more depressing. It seems that everyone has beaten me to it so I'm left with the dregs of the library. I don't understand. The essay titles have only been out a week – what's going on guys?

Oh well, better head back to the library. I've just had news that there's a copy of syntactic theory being handed in tonight at 10pm...

JENNIE LAWRENCE

100 uses for The Courier

In the second of a two part series, we list the next 50 of 100 uses for The Courier. You've had two weeks to do the first 50 , so enjoy doing the next 50.

51 **Scrap book of favourite Courier articles**

52 **Learning new words** Hey it's educational as well.

53 **Camouflage Your Face** - with all that rub-off ink

54 **Soaking up oil** Top tip for the girls in the kitchen

55 **Blinds** Cheaper than IKEA

56 **Container for Chestnuts** Feel the Christmas spirit

57 **Clothes** Go hippy and make a skirt

58 **Covering outside of textbooks** You'll be the coolest dude in the class

59 **Paper towel** ????????????

60 **Christmas decorations** Xmas on the cheap

61 **Colouring in horoscopes** For all those times bored on the bus

62 **Blue Peter Architictural Model** ????????????

63 **Poop a Scoop**

64 **Sounds effects for a radio play** Scrumple it up to make that gravel footstep sound

65 **Drying your eyes** and get print all over your face

66 **Reading dirty magazines** by putting a Courier in front

67 **Wrapping up your bottle of whiskey** and feel like an American tramp

68 **Stuffing your crotch** one for the less-endowed boys

69 **For slapping friends**

70 **Wig/Hat** for those hilarious fancy dress parties

71 **Kindling to start fires** especially useful for those OTC boys

72 **Write a Small Tissue** and put inside to compete with Ric - the Big Issue Vendor outside the Barclays Bank

73 **Beat the world record of 6 folds for paper** Bet you can't!

74 **Jewellary** For someone special

75 **Use as Stencil prints**

76 **Instead of writing home** don't write home just send your folks the weekly Courier to keep them up to date with life in Newcastle.

77 **Lying on bedroom floor before you throw up** Best to prepare before a heavy night at Positive

78 **Making your perfect women** Cut out the pics to paste together the girl of your dreams

79 **Make an alter in your bedroom to The Courier** Grab all the paraphenalia you can and paste it up

80 **Instrument** Imagine it's a blade of grass and blow on the edge to piss off all those around you

81 **Give lethal paper cuts** Very funny during lectures

82 **For moving house** Wrap up all your precious items in The Courier

83 **Weave a table mat from Couriers** The possibilities are endless when it comes to weaving

84 **Rescue money from under vending machines** - and make a million

85 **Poking people** -the quickest way to make friends

86 **Baton for 4x100 metre** practice those all important changeovers with your mates on the way to lectures

87 **Birthday Card** make someone's special day that little bit more special with a customised card.

88 **Oven Glove** avoid nasty scolds and burns by fashioning a heat resistant pair of mits.

89 **Toy for a Cat** keep your pussy entertained for hours with a couple tightly screwed up Courier balls

90 **Toilet Seat Cover** just make sure you cut a hole in the middle

91 **A Tie** great for the that all important first interview.

92 **Hailing a Cab** draw more attention to yourself when trying to hail a cab by holding out a copy of the Courier at arm's length and wave it franticly

93 **Didgaradoo** …actually didgerydon't

94 **Make a Kite** harness the powers of mother nature. Feel like a god.

95 **Drum Skin** beating one sheet of the Courier stretched over a teacup strikes a remakeable resemblence to the sound of a distance African tribe

96 **Cleaning mirrors** stop streaks by using your trusted Courier to wipe your mirror clean.

97 **Read it**

98 **Read it**

99 **Yes, we've run out of ideas**

100 **Read it and enjoy**

PUB FLY Your unique guide to Newcastle's pubs

I'm monumentally hung over after a fantastic time searching for the best pub in town.

This week I thought I'd go out on a limb; to WHITLEY BAY.
This is an alluring place to go on a weekend and merely half an hour from Haymarket on the Metro. Perfect if you just need to get out of town for a while, recharge the batteries, enjoy a few beverages and get a quality dose of fresh sea air. We visited The Bay twice; once on a sun drenched Sunday and once on a soaking wet Thursday night....it was literally roaring with pain..!!

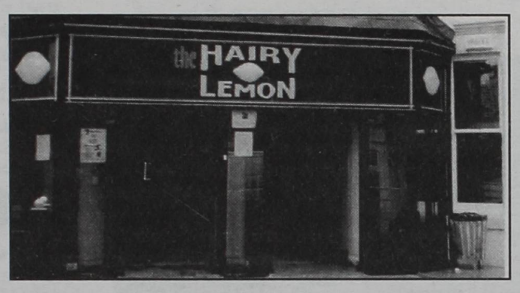
Whitley Bay

Bar OZ

Bar OZ is Bar OZ, whether in Haymarket or Whitley Bay, but saying that, this one on Norham Road is better; a super place to come for a drink. 'Pub Food' is ok, but a "platter to share" should be just that - share it with someone who has just eaten, not someone who's walked for an hour across the beach! £2.21 for a Kronenburg is a fair price, and the atmosphere was fine. Definitely one of the more superior pubs in Whitley Bay.

The Hairy Lemon on South Parade.

Well, with a name like that it was worth a visit! No sign of any lemons, apart from the 3 hairy Cockneys who were watching the football and shouting at the DJ! (He was playing Chesney Hawkes though). With 5 people in the bar & 4 bar staf. Brilliant deals on booze - Sunday to Thursday. I warmed up by the fire, and had a few beers - just the thing.



42nd Street

As 42nd Street on The Promenade was voted the best pub in the North East 2001, we had to take a look. But on a quiet Sunday afternoon, weren't allowed in until after 5pm, because it was "couples only".Well that just takes the biscuit! I visited again, only to be disappointed by the ambience and general feel of the place. I had a pint and looked out of the window, saw the ships passing and thought how pleasant it would be to be on 42nd street!!!



The Fire Station

Particularly apt in terms of the recent press coverage, we thought we'd put the out the fire of our appetite and grab a few swift halves in The Fire Station on Norham Road. A typical Wetherspoons pub, but really one of the best I've seen. You don't get the music, but can relax and have a chat without shouting across Def Leopard or Celion Dion!! A comfortable place and cheap food and a decent pint - especially the guest ales.



Psychic Selina Speaks with the Stars...



A combination of star gazing, female intuition, an active imagination and tendency to fabrication, Selina brings us her unique interpretation of the stars to guide our readers through their week....

PISCES (20 February-20 March):

Reality is what you make of it and if the reality you find yourself in now isn't how you'd like it to be then take a Matrix leap and programme yourself a new one. Transformation is in the air this week so there's no better time to reassess your world and make some adjustments.

ARIES (21 March-20 April):

Strap yourself in and get ready to ride the wave of change which is set to sweep through Aries this week! Relax and go with the flow because this is something you'll have no control over. Be prepared for a piece of news that could turn your world upside down!

TAURUS (21 April-21 May)

Apparently due to some unusual moon activity Taurus has hit repeat button - look back at what was going on in your life 8 years ago to make sense of events this week. So if you do find yourself hanging out at bus stops getting pissed on a litre of White Lightning then don't worry - it's just an astrological phase!

CANCER (23 June-23 July):

If you've been feeling you've been stuck in a rut for the past few weeks, things are about to change. The planets are here to haul you out and put you back on track. It's time to put the past behind you and look to the future. By the end of the week you'll be buzzing with energy and inner peace!

LEO (24 July-23 August):

Quite how my astrological sisters have read this one in the stars I don't know, but apparently electrical or plumbing problems are set to plague you this week. Dry, I know, but I felt it was only right to warn you. I guess keep away from cables and pipes and I'll try to rustle up something a little better for next week!

VIRGO(24 August-23 September):

Reading week's been and gone, Christmas is fast approaching and your books haven't been seeing much evidence of the Virgo instinctive love for work, have they now? It's time to get in touch with your inner self-discipline for which you Virgoans are so famous and reintroduce yourself to the Robinson Library!

LIBRA: (24 September-23 October)

For the healthy and balanced Libran, spirits are high and magic's in the air. You'll be sparkling and glittering your way through this week. But instead of keeping it all to yourself look around you and see who could do with some of that positive energy that you're generating. Spread that love Libras, you've got plenty to give!

GEMINI (22 May-22 June)

The moon has moved in to your house of lurve this week, your heart will be beating hard and fast and we all know how that can terrify Geminis, who tend to be overwhelmed and confused by strong emotions. But don't try to smother your heart – let it feel what it wants to and you may be surprised at the results…

SCORPIO (24 October-22 November):

Did you know it's been 8 YEARS since Venus took residence in Scorpio?! (might explain a few things!) But the wait is finally over my friends, for now she is back and here to stay. Love is about to flood into Scorpio, bringing a magnetism and pulling power that you won't have seen since your teens!

SAGITTARIUS (23 November-21 December)

Normally the most impulsive star sign, you've been hesitant of late and doubting in those gut feelings. Well don't! Have faith in what your gut's telling you, whether it's that a certain someone is equally keen on you or simply that 10 pints last night before a 9am seminar was possibly unwise –don't ignore that inner voice of wisdom!

CAPRICORN (22 December-20 January):

Well, my little horned friends, the god's are smiling down on you this week. Your confidence is back and you'll succeed at whatever you put your mind to – all it takes is a little faith in your judgement and some of that charm that we all know and love you for. So go fourth my friends and achieve great things!

AQUARIUS (21 January-19 February):

I'm not going to lie to you Aquarians - this week ain't looking so good. Planets and moons are colliding all over the shop and creating havoc. If you're anywhere near the cusp then I'd shuffle into Capricorn or Pisces this week and if not then I can only suggest you stay in bed until next week when things should be looking better.

PREVIEWS

Triky Disco @ World Headquarters, 28/11/02

It's that time of the month again. You can't escape the posters and flyers slapped all over the campus. It can mean only one thing - Triky Disco strikes again.

The long-running independent night at World Headquarters still manages to attract more than enough punters to their monthly shenanigans, something which other small nights commonly struggle to achieve.

Last month's event, which was held at The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art's new B-bar was overwhelmingly successful, despite a few teething troubles with the venue itself. At this month's event, which is billed as a celebration of the club night's brand spanking (and very sexy) new website, you can expect all the usual Triky freebies including ice pops for when it gets seriously hot as well as the killer drinks special: just one of your hard-earned pounds for selected doubles.

Providing the sonic delights, Nick Mills, Rich Usher and DJ Tiger, also backroom residents at Newcastle Uni's own Turbulence and Eclectic, are joined by Si Smallwood. The foursome, who have all been with Triky Disco right from the start aim to bring their avid listeners the best in house, funk and soul both old and new along with something a bit different along the way.

In keeping with the ethos of World Headquarters, the night is open to everyone and there is no dress code for the night. At only £4 to get in, my only advice is to get there early for guaranteed entry. Put down the books and get down at Triky Disco this Thursday, I'll see you there.

SARAH CHAPMAN

Check out the new website: www.trikydisco.com



Brighton Beach @ Newcastle Student's Union, 30/11/02

Brighton Beach only comes once a month, which is a shame, but least it's more frequent than Christmas. November's effort will be the last one before the Christmas hols too, so we'd best make the most of it.

Newcastle's leading student indie night will be travelling up from its Leeds home once more to thrill us with a mix of music from the '60s to the '00s (or whatever this stupid decade is called).

The main room (Bassment) will be pulsating to the sound of classic soul, r'n'b (the real stuff, not Destiny's Child or Craig David), britpop, and, as they describe it "new guitar sounds". Well that's the "the" movement then.

The backroom focuses on Northern Soul and Freakbeat sounds, from the heydey of the Twisted Wheel club, only with less amphetamines, and it doesn't go on all weekend, which is a shame.

If you do fancy a bit of a knees-up this weekend the Union's your number one choice then. More soul than your average fishmonger (that's Sole if you didn't get the joke), and more funk than a Bootsy Collins convention.

Let your hair down in style, one last time before Santa comes. With nights in Leicester, Sheffield and Leeds, Brighton Beach have a proven track record at party starting. You know you want to.

AL SMITH

Upfront @ The Hancock, 30/11/02

Nestling between the Robinson Library and the Civic Centre, practically a part of the campus, is student favourite the Hancock.

Famous for it's 'yellow card' prices and 'beer and burger' deals the Hancock also has another thing going for it, a great weekend line-up, with Student Friendly the Positive warm-up on Friday, and the Hancock Quiz on Sunday.

This Saturday there's a special night at the bar, which could act as the perfect warm-up for Brighton Beach, or a night out in its own right. Upfront is an indie night with a twist, taking in the best sounds from the past four decades, as well as showcasing new tunes.

With a mix of indie, downtempo leftfield beats, 90's swagger and northern soul stylings Upfront is the ideal night out for any discerning music fan. From Oasis to Otis (Redding not Aardvark) this night has something for everyone.

The night also boasts prize giveaways as well as the usual cheap drinks prices, and with a 12 o'clock licence and free entrance, it could prove to be the night out you were waiting for.

With Brighton Beach on the same night, this Saturday is an essential date for your diary.

LIVE REVIEWS

Foo Fighters @ Telewest Arena, 17/11/02

After a gap of eleven years Dave Grohl finally returned to Newcastle, it was worth the wait. From the first thunderous chords of 'One by One' to the climax of 'This is a Call' the Foo Fighters hardly paused for breath as they further enhanced their reputation as one of the most rocking live acts in the world.



FOOS... Not at a rave

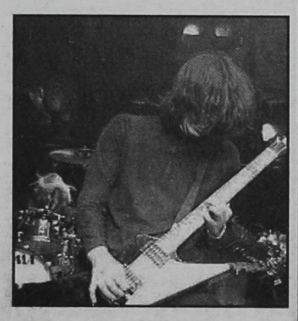
In only the second show of a six-date tour, they displayed why there recent performances have been described as the best of the band's seven year history.

Grohl, reinvigorated by his stint on the drums with Queens of Stone Age lived up to the adoration of the crowd who chanted his name for much of the night.

Foo Fighters have found it hard to escape the shadow of their front man's previous band, but with four albums behind them now, they have carved out an existence apart from Nirvana. Grohl has become a front man few can match, proving his credentials above your average Ringo. His in-between song chat is hilarious, at one point picking up on of the many glow sticks that the nu-metal kids have thrown on the stage he has the lights turned down before remarking "you are not at a rave!".The sell out crowd lap it all up, before the band break into another of the hits that are all rolled out tonight, 'Learn to Fly', 'Breakout' and 'Everlong' being highlights.

"A big fucking show" is what Grohl described this as, and he wasn't wrong.

While other bands may be more profound or controversial, Foo Fighters have come into their own delivering uncomplicated rock. The crowd was manifest to their appeal, from old rockers in leather, to some younger members of the audience who would not have been born when 'Nevermind' came out.



GROHL... Rocks!

Grohl and his Foo Fighters have always been good but now they have got past proving themselves they can enjoy it. In a two word review; they rocked!

CHARLIE WHITE

Margaret Frayne @ Intermezzo, 04/11/02

On arriving at Intermezzo I notice Margaret Frayne's synopsis on the door as I enter. I discover minutes before the performance that she is an actress and singer who improvises blues acapella (with no accompaniment). I ask at the bar where she will be setting up only to be told that she is standing right next to me. We are both shocked and embarrassed. She wryly says, "Don't say you're here especially".

This is clearly a remarkable of woman whose courage I am forced to admire before she even sings a note. There is no PA system, no accompaniment, no microphone, not even a piece of paper with some kind of set list written on. This is the ultimate in low-tech performances. Instead Margaret Frayne sits on a stool looking fabulous in fish net tights, a little pink dress and black jewellery singing unamplified to an audience who at first are indifferent to her.

However, after the first song she captures the audience. Her voice is deep, resonant and controlled. She refuses to "over do" any ornamentation but keeps a calm, clear sound. It is almost baritone in depth but rich in quality. She begins taking requests almost straight away. At first there isn't much of a response until someone shouts out 'One For My Baby' which she begins to recite flawlessly.

The sounds incidentally are from the 1920's era including 'Fever' and 'Fly Me To the Moon'. The mood is much more like a sing-a-long than a performance. She creates an atmosphere which is entirely relaxed and informal to the point where I am brave enough to ask for a song my self -'Somewhere Beyond the Sea'-. She didn't know it, but you get my point.

She is completely approachable and towards the end we found ourselves talking musicals and show tunes with Margaret humming and singing the songs we would suddenly shout out as they come flooding back to us. This led to her renditions of 'Don't Cry For Me Argentina' and 'Sunrise Sunset'.

Laid back and serene, Margaret Frayne is not only extremely brave and greatly talented but a receptive communicator as a performer.

VERITY BURTON

My Next Girlfriend @ Newcastle Student's Union, 16/11/02

With the impending and long awaited backlash to reality Popstars-like shows, the world will need bands that can deliver professional catchy songs in a fashion appealing to all.

My Next Girlfriend could fill this gap quite nicely. The five piece organised and backed up this gig themselves and were joined by around about Fifty people who saw them deliver a polished performance (surprising when the band claimed not have practised in two months).

The band dished out a well endowed slice of good old British guitar music, influences obvious from the covers they played, Beatles, Rolling Stones, Blur all were evident in the bands own songs which sat well next to the covers, highlights included 'Window Shopping' (recently playlisted by NSR) their opener, and 'Bikeshed Schoolgirl'.

Hailing from Edinburgh, My Next Girlfriend have been together for about two years, gigging around Edinburgh and at the four different universities the band members attend. It is not hard to see why the band has found success in numerous 'Battle of the Bands' competitions.

Singer Will Howell sought to pull off as many rockstar moves as possible, jumping and twisting he seemed to be revelling in the attention, as does the whole band.

While former trends saw bands rarely being able to play their instruments, the fashion now is for slick players and this was no exception. Although My Next Girlfriend are not quite the finished article, some of their songs suffer from cliched lyrics and a tendency to miss the killer finish.

In this only their second year, My Next Girlfriend are on the right track towards finding success, more gigs and greater time together is certainly what they need. It is unlikely that anyone leaving would have thought themselves witness to the next big thing, but the band can be sure they left a good impression.

CHARLIE WHITE

The Doves @ Northumbria Student's Union, 18/11/02

As support bands go the Delgados were perhaps understated. However, they reminded the crowd who they were early on with a poignant rendition of 'American Trilogy'. From this point on they seemed to be winning, and despite a shortened set were a great lead into the Doves.

The crowd was entirely silent as the Doves came on. Not through lack of enthusiasm or anticipation, but rather bemusement brought on by five minutes of bizarre film screened on the backdrop to the stage. We are sure that having characters dressed as Santa Claus or in Pavarotti masks running around an industrial wasteland does have some deep intrinsic meaning, but it was lost on us.

For a band with a fairly subdued reputation, the Doves certainly provide a visual feast of a show. Every song was accompanied by its own film, and together with impressive lighting, the crowd was enthralled from start to finish.



DELGADOS... Supportive

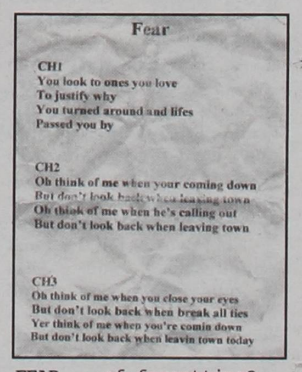
Their start was in fact what many expected to be their finish, stunning from the start with the anthemic 'Pounding' and 'There Goes The Fear'. Perhaps it is dangerous for a band to begin a set with their most popular numbers, but in this case it merely whipped the crowd into a frenzy which lasted for the rest of the gig. Most of the set was comprised of material from their most recent album 'The Last Broadcast', clearly an album which has been warmly received as a superb follow up to 'Lost Souls'.



DOVES... Learning to fly

Inevitably the crowd pleasers stood out, 'Caught By The River' and title track 'Last Broadcast' making for a highly vocal crowd. If the Doves ever had anything to prove in these post Sub Sub days, it is done here. A storming night on a tour that can't fail to be a success.

RACHEL LUND
& ALISON HARVIE


Fear

CH1
You look to ones you love
To justify why
You turned around and lifes
Passed you by

CH2
Oh think of me when your coming down
But don't look back when leaving town
Oh think of me when he's calling out
But don't look back when leaving town

CH3
Oh think of me when you close your eyes
But don't look back when break all ties
Yer think of me when you're comin down
But don't look back when leavin town today

FEAR... of forgetting?

ALBUMS

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Electro Burna Volume One

This album took me completely by surprise. Not knowing what really took expect, upon hearing the opening bars of the firsts track, 'Where R U' by Slow Sparkle to the closing bars of the last track 'Night Trains' by Lovesick I was instantly impressed with the craftsmanship and attention to detail bestowed on this collection of lo-fi electronica.

Each song builds up step by step, with decks, effects (and some of the best guitar work I have ever heard in dance music) to a climax that is never over dramatic or elaborate. Subtlety is definitely the key here.

Although I personally like electronica/techno etc, those who spend most of their lives listening to pop can often find bands such as Squarepusher and Two Lone Swordsmen hard work. This album is a little more accessible and more focus is put on some sort of melody and obvious progression, and you'll be surprised at just how catchy it is.

If only more dance music was like this, maybe we could finally get rid of the euro trance pop shite that is dumbing down our senses to absolute zero.

ADAM BERMAN

MINISTRY OF SOUND
The Annual 2003

Another year, another Ministry of Sound annual. Obviously there's no shortage of dance compilations on the market, so whichever you buy it comes down to a matter of personal taste.



X PRESS 2... Ministers

On offer here is three cds worth, sixty-three tracks to be precise, of all the tracks you've been hearing in clubland of late.

The perfect soundtrack to remember all the good nights out by, but be warned, it may bring back unwanted memories of drunken mistakes!

As there are sixty-three tracks here, undoubtedly there is something for everyone, so if Las Ketchup don't do it for you (hard to think why that might be), maybe DJ Sammi, Warrior or X-Press 2 is more your thing.

The awards for the most appearances on this compilation go to Scooter and Flip & Fill, giving you a sense of which club anthems are given priority. Not everything on these three cds is as mainstream as those artists mentioned.

More hardcore dance fans are sure to find something to suit them as well, look more on the second and third cds however.



SCOOTER... Obviously!

Overall, a good definitive compilation, the clubbers amongst you will love it, Indie/rock fans maybe steer clear.

Another use of this cd, if you're short of a bit of cash, invite people around to your room, stick this on as loud as your stereo will allow, get a strobe light, and it's like you're in a club!

Enjoy it, I did.

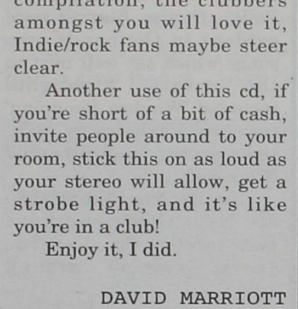
DAVID MARRIOTT

TORI AMOS
Scarlet's Walk

This is the return of the 'Cornflake Girl', and as ever with such an established artist you worry that the output could start to get stagnant. So take a deep sigh of relief, one that should have been expected, that as ever Tori Amos doesn't disappoint.

The approach of this album is a slight departure to that taken on the previous albums, here she uses that great literary style of a road trip as a basis of her work, yet she keeps the album as beautiful and soulful as ever.

The thing with Tori is that she writes songs that are so personal that you are easily drawn in. And it has been noted that "Tori Amos is heavier than most metal bands". This of course isn't a reference to her music, which as ever is haunting pianos and Rhodes, and very little else.



TORI... Cornflake girl

It's a beautiful, reflective and minimal album, and even 74 minutes in to her stride you never get bored of this album and the feelings it draws out of you.

MATT FRANCE

BIRD
Early EP

Listening to this CD was entirely effortless. The four songs are good (although the third one is a little bit cheesy), easy on the ear and generally enjoyable.

The gentle guitar and lovely vocals on the somewhat interestingly named first track, 'Stalker', give a certain Norah Jones feel which is certainly no bad thing and the cello gives it a bit of added depth.

It's nice to see a few tracks on this as well, which is a bonus when compared to the crap remixes you're normally forced to listen to. It's nothing you haven't heard before but who cares?

FRAN NAISH

The D4
Come On!

My fleeting interest in New Zealand garage rock band 'the D4' has completely dissipated due to the release of this single. I wanted to believe that this band weren't contrived like their NME endorsed counterparts, The Vines, and The Datsuns but they're all the same. They're all straining to look like they smoke weed so much, they look like they've been date raped. This ain't the Crue or G N'R.

Craig David aside, 'Come on!' includes some of the most bullshit lyrics around(see title as an example). The song itself is derivative, it's never going anywhere and it's about 3 minutes too long.

Apart from this there are two Christmas numbers one called, 'Don't believe in Xmas' and 'teabag Santa, Claus he likes rimming the reindeer', or something like that, but Christmas songs suck.

I haven't heard everything this band have done and maybe I'm gonna have a crisis of conscience but fuck it, even the cover of this single looks like a cheap Russian copy of an early 90s Dance compilation cd.

PAUL KETTLEBOROUGH

MISSY ELLIOTT
Work It

Missy has reappeared with yet another original track to add to her collection. Similar to her most recent hits 'Get Ur Freak On' and '4 My People' this new electronic style hip hop beat is undoubtedly going to be a hit on the dance floors in the near future. And why not?



Missy Elliott is one of the few artists around these days who continually churn out a variety of refreshing and innovative music. And her newest attempt certainly won't disappoint. Hip hop fans simply won't be able to resist.

But don't be fooled into thinking that this style of music is for everyone. By now listeners should know if they're a fan of Missy Elliott or not. If you are you'll love it. If you're not you probably won't. Simple as that.

There's just one thing left for me to say - Missy fans enjoy!

LOUISE OVENELL

DARREN HAYES
I Miss You

I never really formed an opinion where Savage Garden were concerned. Their blase brand of cheesy pop verging on the softer side of rock never appealed to me or inspired me to buy one of their records, but nor would I make a particular effort to find another station when they were playing on the radio.



It was music I could tolerate. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for Darren Hayes as a solo artist. Latest track "I Miss You" from the album "Spin" is what I can only describe as offensively bland.

The instrumental arrangements in this single are as predictable as the lyrics - with such GCSE music-standard gems as "Give me a reason why I can't feel my heart, Every time you leave my side I just fall apart." Die-hard Savage Garden afficionados will no doubt be satisfied with "I Miss You", as will those who follow Hayes as a solo artist, but it's unlikely that this particular single will attract any 'new' fans.

SALLY COOK

WYCLEF JEAN (FEAT. TOM JONES)
Pussycat

Our old friend Wyclef has apparently seen fit to sample Tom Jones' 'What's New Pussycat' which many of you may have heard by now. No matter how I knock this song you will all be dancing to it drunkenly at some point. It therefore succeeds on some levels but then didn't we all dance to 'Macarena'?

It is certainly not to be taken seriously. We know that and Wyclef knows that. He probably just likes the song and wanted to cover it but rather than do karaoke like the rest of us he created a single.

The track features distinctive clips from the original song while Wyclef produces a 21st century rap version of what Tom is essentially singing about. Something about honeys and stroking them. This is combined with an acoustic guitar riff and a hip hop beat thrown in for good measure. As you might expect it is the same all the way through with Tom Jones singing the original to remind us which song is being covered.



This is a case of love it or hate it. It will sell either way but I doubt anyone will remember it this time next year. It is quick and easy disposable music and not a patch on the original. Buy some Tom Jones instead.

VERITY BURTON

MILLIONAIRE
Champagne

I rather feel for the poor boys of Millionaire. Currently mid-tour in support of the current hell raisers of the rock scene, Queens of the Stone Age, we can only hope they will survive intact. On the merits of this single however, they give the impression of being more than able to look after themselves.

Hailing from Belgium (what is it with good music coming from these areas?) their sleazy vocals over heavy guitar and electronic riffs make for a compulsive sound, though with a certain tinge of Marilyn Manson around the edges.

ALISON HARVIE

RAINBOW
It's a Rainbow

Every now and then a record comes along that can change your life shift your perspective on everything, love, politics, work, art, anything. 'It's a Rainbow' is such a record, because it is so absolutely, unbelievably dire.

You will ask yourself why, why has this record been made? Think of the records made during the acid house craze when any theme tune was up for grabs, Sesame street, Orville etc. I thought we had got past this semi-ironic phase, but someone with the artistic integrity of a photocopier has thought this is a good idea.

The fun doesn't stop there, on the CD there's also a rock mix, which isn't as bad as the dance mix, but then Bernard Manning farting the theme from Happy Days would be better.

Rainbow was an integral part of many people's childhood and has had a resurgence with the presenter appearing at the Edinburgh festival. But there is no need for this record it's just wrong.

CHARLIE WHITE

SINGLES

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS
See America Right

Strange name, intriguing band. The image of Tenacious D, the American comedy-rock (god help us) duo, briefly flashed in my mind on first hearing this single. Almost-spoken vocals with an ironic isn't-America-beautiful slant? Check. Constant references to that same 'saviour of the free world' nation? Check.

Never rely on first impressions though I say, so I duly listened on. Maybe I was too hasty to class them in the comedy bracket as theirs is rather music of a storytelling variety, often poignant in its description of the minutiae of life, but certainly with a humorous tinge.

ALISON HARVIE

CAESARS
Fun and Games EP

This Swedish band certainly didn't place much emphasis on originality. At one glance I notice instantly that three out of the four song titles on this EP have already been used by other artists decades ago: 'Crackin' Up', 'Only You', 'Since You've Been Gone'. Only the title track is original, it's also the best, and shortest, song, incorporating bongos and a simple two note guitar riff. There is a nice unpretentious air about it with positive undertones.

The other three, despite my judgemental view on the titles, have their good qualities. 'Crackin' Up' has a more grungy sound in a one-dimensional way but the lyrics are unabashedly trite. The harmonies contribute a thicker chorus but the uncomplicated pattern is unavoidable.

'Only You' certainly has the best guitar riff which is brisk and energetic. However, one cannot help put raise an eyebrow at the lyrics "baby you've got ears just like Dumbo, it's so sweet". Perhaps they like Dumbo in Sweden or women who look similar?

The final track 'Since You've Been Gone' is another direct contrast. Some of the sounds on this track are quite cool with a sub-aqua quality. The result is a very chilled out song which is surprisingly far from tacky. That is, if you can manage to ignore the repetitive lyrics which sometimes dampen the whole mood.

Every track seems concerned with being infatuated with one's girlfriend, which grows tiresome. It has the shameless cheese factor throughout the lyrics. It works if you can master ignoring them in favour of the music. The music itself however, is another Indie orientated effort which cannot be escaped if you have moved on from there. Having said that, they don't all sound exactly the same the way I would have assumed. You have got to give them credit for that.

VERITY BURTON

UNIVERSITY SPORTING ROUND-UP

MENS BADMINTON

After suffering their first loss of the season last week to Durham, the mens firsts had to get back to winning ways against Liverpool!
Having already won the away leg, they knew they could take the points again, but it needed to be by as many points as possible in order to stay in contention, with things being very close at the top.
In a fairly uneventful match Newcastle won 8-0.
Newcastle now lead the table from Manchester and Durham who are just two points behind.
Another big win is needed, and expected, next week, against bottom of the league Northumbria.
Wednesday Fixture: Northumbria @ home

MENS BASKETBALL

Another excellent win for the mens basketball team, beating Chester 79 - 60.
It was another good all around team performance, with Vas Giannakoudakis the games leading scorer with 33 points.
However, everyone was instrumental in a good defensive performance, keeping, among others, a professional from the Chester Jets to a modest 15 points.
With Sheffield also beating their competition Keele, both remain level on points at the top of the table.
Wednesday Fixture: Keele @ Claremont Sports Hall 7pm

WOMENS BASKETBALL

A tight game saw the ladies clock up their second win of the season, this time against York, 59-51.
Newcastle remain in fourth place, with the two teams above them on equal points.
Wednesday Fixture: Sunderland @ Claremonts Sports Hall 6pm

CAVING

On their last weekend trip 13 club members spent 24 hours underground to raise money for Cancer Research UK and the Caving Rescue Organisation.

FENCING

The mens team cruised to victory against the University of Central Lancashire beating them 135-59 away, making it their third consecutive BUSA victory.
Newcastle were always in control, beating them 45-23 Sabre, 45-13 Foil and finally 45-23 in the Epee.
A brilliant team performance which may see them take top position in the 1st division away from current leaders Leeds.
The women weren't so successful, going down to Manchester who still have a game in hand, which leaves Newcastle behing the Mancs, but currently level on points.
Today sees them face bottom place Keele, which will prove to be a crucial fixture Newcastle will be looking to win.
Wednesday Fixture: Men and Women v. Keele @ Kings Walk

MENS FOOTBALL

Newcastle finally managed to get some points on the table, but unfortunately no goals on the score sheet, with a 0-0 draw against Leeds Met.
That leaves the lads in last place, with a win crucial in the next vital match against the Poly, who are four points ahead of them in the table.
The seconds beat Trinity & All Saints 3-2, taking them to second place in their division, just one point behind leaders Leeds Met fourths with a game in hand.
The thirds are just two places behind them after crushing the Poly 2-4 at Close House.
Wednesday Fixtures:
Firsts v. Northumbria @ Close House
Seconds v.Northumbria thirds @ Cochrane Park 2pm
Thirds v. Leeds Met fourths

GOLF

The squad beat Licoln 5-1 last Wednesday, and with Loughborough also winning, they remain top of the table alongside the Uni, both with 15 points and an unbeaten record.
Wednesday Fixture: Teeside away

WOMENS HOCKEY

Last weeks game against Nottingham was a very close match, and with several bad umpiring decisions going against Newcastle in the second half they unfortunately lost the match 2-1.
This leaves the team at the bottom of the Northern Premier League, with Leeds Met ahead by just one point.
The next match will be a tough one, against league leaders Loughborough, but luckily the girls have home advantage.
The seconds won 1-0 against Durham 3's, taking them to second spot, just one point behind Durham 2nds.
The thirds won 9-1 against York maintaining their top place position.
Wednesday Fixtures:
Firsts v. Loughborough @ Longbenton
Seconds v. Sheffield Hallam @ Longbenton
Thirds v. Northumbria 2nds @Longbenton

MENS RUGBY

All three teams recorded wins last week, with the firsts beat Birmingham 27-11, bringing them within three points of third place Northumbria who lost to leaders Loughborough.
The seconds remain third in the table after defeating Durham thirds 25-8, meaning each of the top three teams are each just three points apart from each other.
The thirds secured a victory over York 2nds, 25-14, and they also remain in the third spot, behind Northumbria.
Wednesday Fixtures:
Firsts v. Durham away
Seconds v. Durham 2nds away
Thirds v. Northumbria 3rds @ Cochrane Park

WOMENS RUGBY

The girls romped to an impressive 46-0 win over Manchester on Wednesday.
Centre, Leena Faulder and winger, Rachel McKibbin are finally back from injury, but unfortunately, Hooker, Liz Garvey is out with ligament problems in her shoulder.
Build-up is now focusing around Stan Calvert, and the BUSA match against the Poly next week should prove to be not only a good warm-up but also a good indicator of where the girls are at in their preparation.
Wednesday Fixture: Northumbria @ Bullockstead

SUB-AQUA

13 industrious members from the sub-aqua club went diving in Crummock, a fresh water lake South of Carlisle last Sunday.
A number of divers were there to do "warm-up" (take the term loosely as far as temperature was concerned,water temp 9oC) dives in preparation of the big club trip to Loch Alinenear Oban on the West Coast of Scotland.
A few also managed to complete some drills towards their next diving grades.
Unfortunately, there was not a huge amount to see underwater, apart from mud, silt, the occasional fallen tree and one or two fish only measuring about an inch!!

SWIMMING

The University Swimming Team produced a gutsy team performance last weekend, grounding out a good enough result to avoid relegation from Division One of the Northern Universities Swimming League held at the City Pool, Newcastle.
The team is now placed 8th out of 12, and only 6 points shy of a top 6 finish.
With only three full time swimmers on the club register this year, Team Coach Paul Hogg told Sport Centre Supremo Graham Rayner that his aim for the year was to avoid relegation, a feat achieved on Saturday by just one place.
"Nick Jackson and David Baldwin produced the best individual performances on the day, but it really was a team effort which helped us to 8th place", Captain Pete Germain commented after the event.
The team are now hoping for individual swimmers such as former elite athletes Nick Jackson and Chris Hulme and newcomer Linda Strettle to burn bright at the forthcoming national championships in three weeks time to reconsolidate what should have been another successful year for the Swimming & Water Polo Team.

TABLE TENNIS

Neither the BUSA team or the local league A team were in action this week, meaning the B team's local league match took centre stage.
Raymond Lee, Meira Zolotar and Patrick Griffin did not disappoint as they battled to a 6-4 victory against Cramlington Lions.
Debutant Lee won all three of his games, Zolotar claimed 2 victories, and a successful doubles performance ensured the triumph.
This result leaves the B team with 6 wins from 8 outings.
Hopefully this will spur on the A team to keep up their good form, and close in on the divison 2 leaders with a victory away to Cramlington Tigers next week.

MENS TENNIS

The lads missed the opportunity to leapfrog Durham to second place in the table after they were beaten 5-1 by the toffs.
Newcastle now have a six point difference to make up if they want to get into the Cup Championship, and look to take three points from bottom placed Bangor today.
Wednesday Fixture: Bangor @ home

WOMENS TENNIS

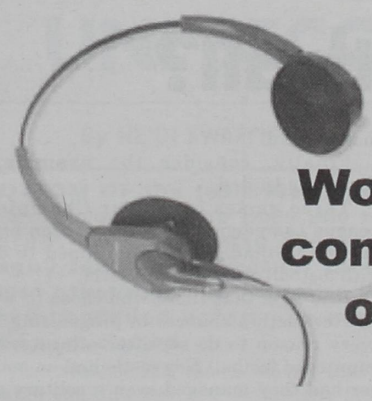
Liverpool cancelled their match against the Uni ladies on Wednesday, handing Newcastle the three points to reinforce their domination at the top of the table.
Second place Leeds Met and Newcastle look set to battle it out for the top spot, with just three points currently in it, and third place Leeds trailing by 12 points.
Newcastle take on bottom place Northumbria today, and will be expected to increase their lead further.
Wednesday Fixture: Northumbria @ home

TEN PIN BOWLING

Last weekend the team attended the main BUSA event for the year and fielding a slightly weakened team they finished a respectable seventh place.
Special mention must go to Gareth Evans for his superb 611 series a new Personal Best.
If anyone is interested in joining the club then contact Stuart Walton on s.r.walton@ncl.ac.uk

MENS VOLLEYBALL

With an impressive five out of five wins this season, the team increased their lead at the top of the table by beating bottom place Central Lancashire 3-0.
This gives them a comfortable nine point lead over Sheffield Hallam, who, in second place, have two games in hand.
Newcastle will be looking for a win against them in their match today, in order to assert their dominance further.
Wednesday Fixture: Sheffield Hallam @ Claremont Sports Centre



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BLUE ANGELS'S CHEER LEAD UNI TO VICTORY

By HEIDI SWAFFIELD

Pom poms, short skirts and high kicks were the order of the day as Newcastle University Cheerleading Squad cheered the men's basketball team to a glorious victory over Manchester Met University.

The girls helped create a competitive yet carnival atmosphere and turn it into a memorable occasion for all involved.

Director of Sport, Graham Raynor, was surprised to see the "Blue Angels" at the match as he was unaware that they existed.

Understanding the benefit the girls could bring to University sport he was quick to offer his support.

The squad of approximately 25 girls was formed last year under the expertise and captaincy of Kat Palmer, a 3rd year psychology student.

Kat is very enthusiastic about the future of the club: "Its rewarding to see so many new members, and we're really excited about cheering for basketball now as well as American Football."

"Everyone is looking forward to Stan Calvert as it will be like our first official 'launch' as a squad."

"We are also getting new tops to go with the fab skirts which will look great!"

The girls have an impressive array of dance routines and uplifting cheers, which they have creatively choreographed themselves.

Their presence at the annual Stan Calvert is expected to help a number of teams to achieve victory over arch-rivals Northumbria.

The Poly have also jumped on the bandwagon by creating a cheerleading team but our squad are easily expected to both outnumber and outperform their opposition.

It has been noticed however that coaches may have to warn the mens' teams not to get distracted and instead keep their eyes firmly on the ball.

If you are interested in becoming part of the team then e-mail Kat at K.J.Palmer@ncl.ac.uk.



DURHAM DRENCHED IN POLO 10 - 0 WIN

By DAVID BALDWIN

A FRIENDLY tournament against Durham gave both the men and women's water polo clubs not only a win, but extra confidence in anticipation of a successful season.

The men's team trounced Durham 10-0 in their first game of the season, when things got off to a very good start with Newcastle leading 4-0 at the end of the first quarter thanks to some very controlled play and good finishing.

Newcastle continued to dominate the game, going to 5-0 by half time.

With the match pretty much sewn up, Newcastle switched goalkeepers for the quarter and were 6-0 up by the end of the third.

A very strong last quarter saw Newcastle completely out class Durham, recording a very easy victory.

The match saw some impressive team play with a few individual moments of brilliance.

Captain Nick Caulfield led the way with four goals including a final period hat-trick.

Other scorers were Former Captain Tom Girling and Yannis Sarbannis, scoring two goals each, and another former captain Steven Green and debutant Jason Korbetis scoring a goal a piece.

Durham never really looked like scoring thanks to some very good goal keeping from former Greek under 21 international Jason Korbetis.

Afterwards Captain Nick Caulfield said: "It was a very good team performance especially for our first game."

"We started very well and that enabled us to rotate all our players and try out various tactics." "We know we'll be playing better teams later on this year but this should stand us in good stead for BUSA next month."

The women's water polo team followed up the men's success with a convincing 7-2 victory over their Durham counterparts.

Despite falling behind to an early goal, Newcastle always looked to be in control and were never behind again, soon establishing a 4-1 lead by half time.

The second half continued pretty much like the first with Newcastle again looking like the stronger team and controlling proceedings.

Three further goals followed and despite a consolation goal from Durham late on, the win was ensured.

Emily Rowbotham notched a hat-trick whilst captain Claire Troakes and debutant Rachel Lundean bagged two goals apiece.

Speaking after the match captain Claire Troakes said: "We were delighted with this victory and we fully deserved it."

"We failed to win last season so this is a great start."

"Everyone played really well and we hope we can build on this for the forthcoming season."

"We're really looking forward to our first BUSA games next month."

The fickle fate of football?

By DANIEL BRENNAN

THEY SAY the only thing certain in football is that nothing is ever certain, and that it's this unpredictable nature which makes football such an enduringly popular pastime.

Take for example Arsenal, who began the season like a train and had even the most reserved pundits purring with superlatives. However no sooner had Arsene Wenger said that they could go the entire season unbeaten than they then proceeded to lose their next four games and before you knew it, all the talk was about the crisis at Arsenal.

Of course the crisis was short lived and Arsenal were soon back on the top of the Premiership.

It was almost as though Football itself wanted to remind Arsene Wenger that even the strongest of sides are not infallible.

And, how about the recent Liverpool vs. Sunderland 0-0 stalemate at Anfield. At the end of the match it was honours even.

However the statistics showed that this game was anything but even, with Liverpool registering 21 efforts on goal compared to Sunderland's paltry and embarrassing 0.

Yet at the end of the ninety minutes, despite the ineptitude of the Sunderland attack or the dominance of Liverpool, both teams picked up the same number of points for their troubles.

Liverpool considered themselves unlucky, while Sunderland crowed over their defensive strengths.

Some may say that it may not be fair, but thats football.

Finally, consider the example of Newcastle United.

Three games into their Champion's League campaign they were written off as naive and inadequately equipped to deal with football at the highest level.

It is true that those who chose to write off Newcastle's chances of progressing had every reason to do so, after all, after 270 minutes of football Newcastle had no points, nor had they managed even a solitary goal in the competition.

However qualification was still mathematically possible and just to prove that anything that can happen probably will, Newcastle went on to win their next three games in the Champion's League and in doing so complete the biggest comeback in the history of the competition.

The sort of comeback even Lazarus would be proud of.

Meanwhile, in the same competition, Liverpool, considered to be a stronger team than Newcastle, found themselves in what was generally thought to be an easier group, but were still humbled by an allegedly inferior Swiss team not once but twice and as a result failed to progress in the competition.

What would the behemoth of twentieth century punditry have said had his characteristic bone stucture and nostalgic tangents still been gracing our screens?

Probably more than Martin O 'Neill.

BLUES GRAB POINT IN TENSE UWIC TIE

By ROBERT LINE

IN A re-match of last years BUSA Cup Final, Newcastle made the long journey to Cardiff for their first ever overnight trip in the history of the club, highlighting the progress made in the past few years.

Despite UWIC being among the favourites for the title, they were on the back of a two game losing streak, and had to face a rejuvinated Uni team, fired up after their first win of the season last week.

The early going was tough against this well drilled team, who train five times a week, and were keen to spread the ball wide.

Some ferocious running up the middle sucked in the Newcastle defence, which UWIC used to their advantage to score on the wing.

A tight first half saw only a Hamilton penalty as reward for sustained pressure, and as the Welsh lads' fitness told, they scored a late first half try to stretch the lead to 10-2.

The half time whistle was brought forward as Newcastle scrum half John Farrell joined a UWIC lad on the ambulance to Cardiff hospital with a medically diagnosed hypochondriacs injury.

Another UWIC try in the early minutes of the second half, left Newcastle looking down and out, but a scintillating try from irrepressible man-beast Alan Robinson roused the troops as the tempo picked up.

With fullback Graham Stephenson leading the counter-attack through his hard-hitting tackles and searing breaks, the Uni were in charge of proceedings.

But basic errors and bad decision-making, that have left Coach Powell exasperated all season, threatened to leave the lads with a depressingly long journey back home.

Half-back Rob Spurr was bossing an increasingly dangerous pack, with prop Richard Jones defying his rock'n'roll lifestyle to take the Royal Blues towards the danger zone.

Fellow forward Rob Line followed his lead to break the line and ground the ball despite the attentions of a number of would-be tacklers.

Hamilton kept his cool to square the match and earn Newcastle a well deserved point.



The Courier
27 November 2002

'UBIQUITOUS' BLUES GO TOP AFTER WINNING CHESTER TESTER

By ROB WALKER

A colourful carnival atmosphere laced with blue and green shirts, and the occasional red pompom pervaded the Claremont Sports Centre as Newcastle basketball team took on the unknown force of Chester.

The large crowd was confident of victory from the outset, a feeling which was enhanced when Chester fielded a point guard who obviously couldn't fit into their teams' shirts, having to wear a white tent instead.

He made it three fat useless messes on the court for the start of the game, the two referees making up the numbers.

Annoyingly for the Newcastle crowd he was a fine player, and was the main instigator of Chester's better moves as the visitors sprung to a shock 1-4 early lead.

However Newcastle's Craig Usiak established control in mid court and his reliable and accurate passing allowed Vas and Tom Higham the freedom to score and get Newcastle back in the match.

At 10-8 Richard Rees collected the ball under his own basket, showed good strength to hold off Chester's fat man, swiftly offloaded to Usiak who dummied one way and passed blind to Higham who narrowly missed the three.



With slick direct moves like this, Newcastle were beginning to show their superior class.

One of the finest moves of the game came when Elnayal fed Usiak with a beautiful ball, who then passed to Vas in the top right corner of Chester's half.

Vas, who was just beyond the three line, sold the Chester defender an audacious dummy and returned the ball to Usiak who, without looking, dispatched the ball to Elnayal.

Newcastle were making a mockery of Chester's defence, pulling them all over the court, and despite their high tempo game, the Uni only ended the first quarter 19-17 up.

Early in the second quarter Stavros Giatras and Robert McCoubrey were introduced into the fray, they linked up well on the break for Newcastle with Giatras running the entire length of the court to score an effortless lay-up.

Shortly after, Giatras also set up Elnayal to float up above the crowd of players, casually in mid flight putting home the ball for another two.

Giatras was pulling the strings for Newcastle, and Chester began to double press and harass him.

This didn't distract Newcastle, who fought on against a vicious and aggressive Chester defence to end the second quarter 34-28 up.

With the start of the second half, the team began playing with superb energy and aggression, treating the Chester defence with arrogant distain.

	P	W	L	D	Wo	S	F	A	D	Points
Sheffield 1st	6	5	1	0	0	0	473	352	121	15
Newcastle 1st	6	5	1	0	0	0	424	371	53	15
Manchester Metropolitan 1st	4	3	1	0	0	0	302	281	21	9
Leeds 1st	5	2	3	0	0	0	386	366	20	6
Chester 1st	5	1	4	0	0	0	325	394	-69	3
Keele 1st	6	0	6	0	0	0	358	504	-146	0

Vas drove home Newcastle's continued superiority with a cheeky behind the back pass to put Abu-issa in to score an easy two, and by the end of the third Newcastle were 16 points clear of a disheartened Chester.

But Newcastle were still scoring regularly on the break, ending with Unwin slotting home an effortless two towards the end of the match.

The match ended with a comfortable 79-60 win for Newcastle.

Newcastle's coaches Dom Page and Phil Percival were delighted with the teams' performance, emphasising the strength in depth throughout the squad.

Dom hailed the performance as "a cohesive team effort."

"Our players were simply ubiquitous on court; it was only a matter of time until Chester broke down."

Phil nodded in agreement and added that "the squad as a whole are really starting to gel and we're now confident to throw anyone on from the bench and we know that they have something to contribute to the team."

Undoubtedly Newcastle had taken their rightful place as joint league leaders with fantastic support from the packed out balcony and excellent display from the cheerleaders.

DURHAM EDGE OUT UNI IN TENSE THRILLER

By ANDREW HAWKE

LAST WEDNESDAY saw a crucial match for the Newcastle Mens Tennis team, at home against arch rivals Durham, with a win required to boost their chances of promotion.

Prior to the match, Newcastle were precariously balanced in 3rd place in the league, with a finish in the top two required to make the play-offs.

The match took on even greater meaning after the away fixture at Durham earlier in the season, where Newcastle had had the points snatched from under their noses by some dubious sportsmanship.

However, despite Newcastle's recent run of good form they could not stop the charge of a determined Durham side.

The unbeaten run of top player Amru Alabidi came to a bizarre end when he lost 6-0 6-0 to the renowned Durham number 1, despite defeating the same player in the previous fixture. Alabidi, clearly suffering from fatigue, could not muster the mental or physical toughness required to repeat his earlier feat.

Matt Parry, playing at number two, was hoping to add to his recent outstanding performances, but despite battling hard went down in a tight 3 setter against a tough opponent.

There was an encouraging performance from Chris Ross at number three, up against a player who had beaten him in straight sets last time.

Ross managed to push his opponent to a 3rd set, but again Newcastle's luck seemed to be out, as the Durham player raised his game to win the decider 6-0.

Jamie Harrison, in at number four, also found the going tough, and never captured his true form, losing 6-1 6-4.

The doubles saw two tightly contested matches which could have gone either way.

Malaysian superstar Charles Fong was brought in to partner Alabidi in the top pair, and the two managed to capture Newcastle's only rubber of the day, winning their pro-set 9-7.

Parry and Harrison had an even closer contest, and were extremely unlucky to lose 9-8, making the final score a rather flattering 5-1 win for Durham.

Captain Andy Hawke, unavailable for the match said: "From the reports I've had from the players, the fixture could have been won by either side."

"You only have to look at the number of close matches to see that we weren't too far away from stealing at least a draw."

"We knew this was going to be tough, and Durham have beaten us fair and square this time round."

"It's just a shame that they cheated us a bit last time, as one win for each Uni would have been a much fairer end result."

Newcastle now need results to go in their favour and some resounding victories to have any hope of attaining a top two finish.

"It looks as though we may be destined for a year battling it out in the Shield as opposed to the top Cup competition" said Hawke.

"I don't think anyone is too disappointed as we probably aren't ready for the Premier League yet."

"If we finish 3rd or 4th in the league then we will be in the Shield and it's a good chance to get some silverware!"

MANCS FLATTENED BY UNI SECOND STRING

By HEIDI SWAFFIELD

BOTTOM OF the table Manchester were never going to pose any real threat to Newcastle Women's rugby team, so in actual fact it wasn't that much of a surprise that they conceded before the match had even started.

The absence of a referee meant that the match couldn't proceed within the BUSA rules but the Manchester coach filled the gap, so as to allow the game to go ahead as a friendly.

Newcastle eased to a simple 46-0 victory, barely breaking a sweat.

The game counted for nothing and, disappointingly, the play reflected this.

Newcastle, resting many players for the big up and coming matches, were seriously depleted, especially in the forwards and this showed as the rucking was often non-existent.

However, the poorest performance on the pitch actually came from the referee, his pedantic use of the rules and his inability to read the game made a mockery out of what should have been an enjoyable afternoon, and totally destroyed the flow of the game.

However, there were a lot of positives from the game as it gave Newcastle a chance to try out some new players and allowed established players to try new positions.

Second Row for the day, Leena Faulder, made some extremely decisive runs putting a number of points on the board.

Similarily, No.8 and Captain Kat Page, consistently broke through the Manchester defence, scoring four of the tries.

Camilla Nicholson, moved from her usual position, had an excellent match retrieving the ball well from a number of poorly formed rucks.

Fullback, Sarah Martin, had some good runs, and a special mention must go to Tamara Taylor, usually No.8, who stood in at fly-half and did a good job of making the backs work as a unit.

It was a day when Newcastle did what they had to do in order to win, but they all knew that a performance like that against sterner opposition such as Loughborough or Northumbria would not suffice.



courier sport

WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2002

BRUMMIES BEATEN BY BRAVE BLUES

By HARRY SYMS

COCHRANE PARK lay enveloped last Wednesday afternoon in a primeval gloaming, a half-light that strained the eyes.

Saturated conditions, and the continual wind that bore with it an invisible drizzle, completed an environment so hostile that the few congregated spectators were driven into the refuge of the pavilion.

It was from there that they were to witness, hot chocolate in hand, a sporting contest of epic proportions as Newcastle entertained their garishly clothed counterparts from Birmingham.

As the game commenced, with the conditions such as they were, there seemed little alternative for either side but to keep play in the forwards and trust in their ability to retain possession at the breakdown.

It soon transpired though that neither Newcastle nor Birmingham could truly threaten a score as knock-ons, encouraged by the sodden pitch, grew in number and left the game a bitter stalemate from which breaks were rare and overly complex.

Both sides also conceded several penalties, and whilst Gaule, the Blues' scrum half successfully kicked five penalties in reply to Birmingham's one, the Visitors, it appeared, had secured a slight domination on the ground, scoring an unconverted but well-worked try after half an hour.

There was little other excitement though and soon the interval was called.

Play resumed with the score at 15 - 8 and the ball was sent end over end and up into the hungry dusk.

It landed in a seemingly different game though, as Newcastle now appeared eager to play a more expansive and flowing game, employing width and incisive pace in an attempt to beat Birmingham's stoical defence.

In this however, they were initially doomed to failure as, having conceded a string of penalties, the Brummie fly half kicked successfully for three points and narrowed the gap to four.



Yet the home side persevered.

Their forwards, rampant as usual, took a lineout on the Birmingham five-metre line and mauled with a rather terrifying ferocity over the line to score a very important try.

Gaule seemed keen to emulate the mechanical reliability of a certain Jonny Wilkinson and duly slotted the conversion from just inside the touchline in spite of a wind that gained power with every minute that passed.

With the momentum that followed this score, Newcastle kicked well from hand and soon battered through a Brummie defence, that by now looked both tired and demoralised, registering one further unconverted try through inside centre James Beck.

Even with the very last play of the game the Visitors were stretched when Folarin Kuku, who played exceptionally on the right wing, almost scored in the corner after a strong run from the 22.

A score at the final whistle of 27 points to 11 disguised the true nature of this close contest, the result of which had, until the last ten minutes, remained uncertain.

Newcastle's victorious coach, John Fenn, expressed his anxiety, saying nervous matches such as this "shouldn't happen to an old man like me", complaining that his side had "made hard work of the win." In this he was true, and although the forwards kept possession, made yards and offered a stable platform from which play could be spread, the lack of cohesion and understanding in the backs allowed Birmingham to stay in a game they should have lost by half time.

Coach Fenn indeed was ready to admit these failings, saying: "We were too fancy in the backs, but the forwards were absolutely fantastic."

Confidence and experience must be taken however from a strong finish and another home win which leaves the Blues in high spirits before their clash with Durham today.

DURHAM DEFEATED

By MICHAEL McCLEERY

NEWCASTLE RUGBY Union Seconds had a crucial game against leaders Durham last Wednesday, and proved their worth by taking them 25-8.

The match started evenly, with both teams probing but the Royal Blues looking the stronger of the two.

The first score came from Back Row Alisdair Cradock after an impressive charge down by Back Row partner, Gareth Jones.

The next try was executed by newly promoted Richard Davies at Fly Half, who followed up with the conversion to give a 12-0 lead in the Blues favour.

Flatteringly for the Uni, the Durham team never rose from this early deficit, despite a penalty kick just before half time, with the score at 12-3.

After a solid ten minute spell some impressive back-forward interlinking allowed Outside Centre Olly Lunt, to storm over the line for another try.

It was then substitute Dom Varley's turn to rack up some more points with a try, with Davies converting again.

With a score at an impressive 25-3 to Newcastle, the only reply was a lucky try from a down beat Durham team.

The match ended with a comfortable win for the Seconds at 25-8.

Check out the sports round up – p. 13